



Wordsworth, William, 1770-1850: [from The Prelude (1850)]

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**The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem; By William Wordsworth**

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Preliminaries and introductory matter omitted including preface

### Volume

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**Wordsworth, William, 1770-1850: THE PRELUDE,  
OR GROWTH OF A POET'S MIND;**

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEM; [from *The Prelude* (1850)]

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## BOOK I. INTRODUCTION---CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-TIME.

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1     **O** there is blessing in this gentle breeze,  
2     A visitant that while it fans my cheek  
3     Doth seem half-conscious of the joy it brings  
4     From the green fields, and from yon azure sky.  
5     Whate'er its mission, the soft breeze can come  
6     To none more grateful than to me; escaped  
7     From the vast city, where I long had pined  
8     A discontented sojourner: now free,  
9     Free as a bird to settle where I will.  
10    What dwelling shall receive me? in what vale  
11    Shall be my harbour? underneath what grove  
12    Shall I take up my home? and what clear stream  
13    Shall with its murmur lull me into rest?  
14    The earth is all before me. With a heart  
15    Joyous, nor scared at its own liberty,

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16    I look about; and should the chosen guide  
17    Be nothing better than a wandering cloud,  
18    I cannot miss my way. I breathe again!  
19    Trances of thought and mountings of the mind  
20    Come fast upon me: it is shaken off,  
21    That burthen of my own unnatural self,  
22    The heavy weight of many a weary day  
23    Not mine, and such as were not made for me.  
24    Long months of peace (if such bold word accord  
25    With any promises of human life),  
26    Long months of ease and undisturbed delight  
27    Are mine in prospect; whither shall I turn,  
28    By road or pathway, or through trackless field,  
29    Up hill or down, or shall some floating thing  
30    Upon the river point me out my course?  
  
31    Dear Liberty! Yet what would it avail  
32    But for a gift that consecrates the joy?

33 For I, methought, while the sweet breath of heaven  
34 Was blowing on my body, felt within  
35 A correspondent breeze, that gently moved  
36 With quickening virtue, but is now become  
37 A tempest, a redundant energy,  
38 Vexing its own creation. Thanks to both,  
39 And their congenial powers, that, while they join

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40 In breaking up a long-continued frost,  
41 Bring with them vernal promises, the hope  
42 Of active days urged on by flying hours,---  
43 Days of sweet leisure, taxed with patient thought  
44 Abstruse, nor wanting punctual service high,  
45 Matins and vespers of harmonious verse!

46 Thus far, O Friend! did I, not used to make  
47 A present joy the matter of a song,  
48 Pour forth that day my soul in measured strains  
49 That would not be forgotten, and are here  
50 Recorded: to the open fields I told  
51 A prophecy: poetic numbers came  
52 Spontaneously to clothe in priestly robe  
53 A renovated spirit singled out,  
54 Such hope was mine, for holy services.  
55 My own voice cheered me, and, far more, the mind's  
56 Internal echo of the imperfect sound;  
57 To both I listened, drawing from them both  
58 A cheerful confidence in things to come.

59 Content and not unwilling now to give  
60 A respite to this passion, I paced on  
61 With brisk and eager steps; and came, at length,  
62 To a green shady place, where down I sate

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63 Beneath a tree, slackening my thoughts by choice,  
64 And settling into gentler happiness.  
65 'Twas autumn, and a clear and placid day,  
66 With warmth, as much as needed, from a sun  
67 Two hours declined towards the west; a day  
68 With silver clouds, and sunshine on the grass,  
69 And in the sheltered and the sheltering grove  
70 A perfect stillness. Many were the thoughts  
71 Encouraged and dismissed, till choice was made  
72 Of a known Vale, whither my feet should turn,  
73 Nor rest till they had reached the very door  
74 Of the one cottage which methought I saw.  
75 No picture of mere memory ever looked

76 So fair; and while upon the fancied scene  
77 I gazed with growing love, a higher power  
78 Than Fancy gave assurance of some work  
79 Of glory there forthwith to be begun,  
80 Perhaps too there performed. Thus long I mused,  
81 Nor e'er lost sight of what I mused upon,  
82 Save when, amid the stately grove of oaks,  
83 Now here, now there, an acorn, from its cup  
84 Dislodged, through sere leaves rustled, or at once  
85 To the bare earth dropped with a startling sound.  
86 From that soft couch I rose not, till the sun  
87 Had almost touched the horizon; casting then

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88 A backward glance upon the curling cloud  
89 Of city smoke, by distance ruralised;  
90 Keen as a Truant or a Fugitive,  
91 But as a Pilgrim resolute, I took,  
92 Even with the chance equipment of that hour,  
93 The road that pointed toward the chosen Vale.  
94 It was a splendid evening, and my soul  
95 Once more made trial of her strength, nor lacked  
96 Æolian visitations; but the harp  
97 Was soon defrauded, and the banded host  
98 Of harmony dispersed in straggling sounds,  
99 And lastly utter silence! "Be it so;  
100 Why think of any thing but present good?"  
101 So, like a home-bound labourer I pursued  
102 My way beneath the mellowing sun, that shed  
103 Mild influence; nor left in me one wish  
104 Again to bend the Sabbath of that time  
105 To a servile yoke. What need of many words?  
106 A pleasant loitering journey, through three days  
107 Continued, brought me to my hermitage.  
108 I spare to tell of what ensued, the life  
109 In common things---the endless store of things,  
110 Rare, or at least so seeming, every day  
111 Found all about me in one neighbourhood---  
112 The self-congratulation, and, from morn

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113 To night, unbroken cheerfulness serene.  
114 But speedily an earnest longing rose  
115 To brace myself to some determined aim,  
116 Reading or thinking; either to lay up  
117 New stores, or rescue from decay the old  
118 By timely interference: and there with  
119 Came hopes still higher, that with outward life  
120 I might endue some airy phantasies

121 That had been floating loose about for years,  
122 And to such beings temperately deal forth  
123 The many feelings that oppressed my heart.  
124 That hope hath been discouraged; welcome light  
125 Dawns from the east, but dawns to disappear  
126 And mock me with a sky that ripens not  
127 Into a steady morning: if my mind,  
128 Remembering the bold promise of the past,  
129 Would gladly grapple with some noble theme,  
130 Vain is her wish; where'er she turns she finds  
131 Impediments from day to day renewed.

132 And now it would content me to yield up  
133 Those lofty hopes awhile, for present gifts  
134 Of humbler industry. But, oh, dear Friend!  
135 The Poet, gentle creature as he is,  
136 Hath, like the Lover, his unruly times;

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137 His fits when he is neither sick nor well,  
138 Though no distress be near him but his own  
139 Unmanageable thoughts: his mind, best pleased  
140 While she as duteous as the mother dove  
141 Sits brooding, lives not always to that end,  
142 But like the innocent bird, hath goadings on  
143 That drive her as in trouble through the groves;  
144 With me is now such passion, to be blamed  
145 No otherwise than as it lasts too long.


146 When, as becomes a man who would prepare  
147 For such an arduous work, I through myself  
148 Make rigorous inquisition, the report  
149 Is often cheering; for I neither seem  
150 To lack that first great gift, the vital soul,  
151 Nor general Truths, which are themselves a sort  
152 Of Elements and Agents, Under-powers,  
153 Subordinate helpers of the living mind:  
154 Nor am I naked of external things,  
155 Forms, images, nor numerous other aids  
156 Of less regard, though won perhaps with toil  
157 And needful to build up a Poet's praise.  
158 Time, place, and manners do I seek, and these  
159 Are found in plenteous store, but nowhere such  
160 As may be singled out with steady choice;

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161 No little band of yet remembered names  
162 Whom I, in perfect confidence, might hope  
163 To summon back from lonesome banishment,

164 And make them dwellers in the hearts of men  
 165 Now living, or to live in future years.  
 166 Sometimes the ambitious Power of choice, mistaking  
 167 Proud spring-tide swellings for a regular sea,  
 168 Will settle on some British theme, some old  
 169 Romantic tale by Milton left unsung;  
 170 More often turning to some gentle place  
 171 Within the groves of Chivalry, I pipe  
 172 To shepherd swains, or seated harp in hand,  
 173 Amid reposing knights by a river side  
 174 Or fountain, listen to the grave reports  
 175 Of dire enchantments faced and overcome  
 176 By the strong mind, and tales of warlike feats,  
 177 Where spear encountered spear, and sword with sword  
 178 Fought, as if conscious of the blazonry  
 179 That the shield bore, so glorious was the strife;  
 180 Whence inspiration for a song that winds  
 181 Through ever changing scenes of votive quest  
 182 Wrongs to redress, harmonious tribute paid  
 183 To patient courage and unblemished truth,  
 184 To firm devotion, zeal unquenchable,  
 185 And Christian meekness hallowing faithful loves.

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186 Sometimes, more sternly moved, I would relate  
 187 How vanquished Mithridates northward passed,  
 188 And, hidden in the cloud of years, became  
 189 Odin, the Father of a race by whom  
 190 Perished the Roman Empire: how the friends  
 191 And followers of Sertorius, out of Spain  
 192 Flying, found shelter in the Fortunate Isles,  
 193 And left their usages, their arts and laws,  
 194 To disappear by a slow gradual death,  
 195 To dwindle and to perish one by one,  
 196 Starved in those narrow bounds: but not the soul  
 197 Of Liberty, which fifteen hundred years  
 198 Survived, and, when the European came  
 199 With skill and power that might not be withstood,  
 200 Did, like a pestilence, maintain its hold  
 201 And wasted down by glorious death that race  
 202 Of natural heroes: or I would record  
 203 How, in tyrannic times, some high-souled man,  
 204 Unnamed among the chronicles of kings,  
 205 Suffered in silence for Truth's sake: or tell,  
 206 How that one Frenchman, <sup>[End note 1: 1Kb]</sup>  through continued force  
 207 Of meditation on the inhuman deeds  
 208 Of those who conquered first the Indian Isles,  
 209 Went single in his ministry across  
 210 The Ocean; not to comfort the oppressed,

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211 But, like a thirsty wind, to roam about  
212 Withering the Oppressor: how Gustavus sought  
213 Help at his need in Dalecarlia's mines:  
214 How Wallace fought for Scotland; left the name  
215 Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,  
216 All over his dear Country; left the deeds  
217 Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,  
218 To people the steep rocks and river banks,  
219 Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul  
220 Of independence and stern liberty.  
221 Sometimes it suits me better to invent  
222 A tale from my own heart, more near akin  
223 To my own passions and habitual thoughts;  
224 Some variegated story, in the main  
225 Lofty, but the unsubstantial structure melts  
226 Before the very sun that brightens it,  
227 Mist into air dissolving! Then a wish,  
228 My best and favourite aspiration, mounts  
229 With yearning toward some philosophic song  
230 Of Truth that cherishes our daily life;  
231 With meditations passionate from deep  
232 Recesses in man's heart, immortal verse  
233 Thoughtfully fitted to the Orphean lyre;  
234 But from this awful burthen I full soon  
235 Take refuge and beguile myself with trust

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236 That mellow years will bring a riper mind  
237 And clearer insight. Thus my days are past  
238 In contradiction; with no skill to part  
239 Vague longing, haply bred by want of power,  
240 From paramount impulse not to be withstood,  
241 A timorous capacity from prudence,  
242 From circumspection, infinite delay.  
243 Humility and modest awe themselves  
244 Betray me, serving often for a cloak  
245 To a more subtle selfishness; that now  
246 Locks every function up in blank reserve,  
247 Now dupes me, trusting to an anxious eye  
248 That with intrusive restlessness beats off  
249 Simplicity and self-presented truth.  
250 Ah! better far than this, to stray about  
251 Voluptuously through fields and rural walks,  
252 And ask no record of the hours, resigned  
253 To vacant musing, unproved neglect  
254 Of all things, and deliberate holiday.  
255 Far better never to have heard the name  
256 Of zeal and just ambition, than to live



257 Baffled and plagued by a mind that every hour  
 258 Turns recreant to her task; takes heart again,  
 259 Then feels immediately some hollow thought  
 260 Hang like an interdict upon her hopes.

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261 This is my lot; for either still I find  
 262 Some imperfection in the chosen theme,  
 263 Or see of absolute accomplishment  
 264 Much wanting, so much wanting, in myself,  
 265 That I recoil and droop, and seek repose  
 266 In listlessness from vain perplexity,  
 267 Unprofitably travelling toward the grave,  
 268 Like a false steward who hath much received  
 269 And renders nothing back.

269 Was it for this  
 270 That one, the fairest of all rivers, loved  
 271 To blend his murmurs with my nurse's song,  
 272 And, from his alder shades and rocky falls,  
 273 And from his fords and shallows, sent a voice  
 274 That flowed along my dreams? For this, didst thou,  
 275 O Derwent! winding among grassy holms  
 276 Where I was looking on, a babe in arms,  
 277 Make ceaseless music that composed my thoughts  
 278 To more than infant softness, giving me  
 279 Amid the fretful dwellings of mankind  
 280 A foretaste, a dim earnest, of the calm  
 281 That Nature breathes among the hills and groves.  
 282 When he had left the mountains and received  
 283 On his smooth breast the shadow of those towers  
 284 That yet survive, a shattered monument

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285 Of feudal sway, the bright blue river passed  
 286 Along the margin of our terrace walk;  
 287 A tempting playmate whom we dearly loved.  
 288 Oh, many a time have I, a five years' child,  
 289 In a small mill-race severed from his stream,  
 290 Made one long bathing of a summer's day;  
 291 Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again  
 292 Alternate, all a summer's day, or scoured  
 293 The sandy fields, leaping through flowery groves  
 294 Of yellow ragwort; or when rock and hill,  
 295 The woods, and distant Skiddaw's lofty height,  
 296 Were bronzed with deepest radiance, stood alone  
 297 Beneath the sky, as if I had been born  
 298 On Indian plains, and from my mother's hut  
 299 Had run abroad in wantonness, to sport



300 A naked savage, in the thunder shower.  
 301 Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up  
 302 Fostered alike by beauty and by fear:  
 303 Much favoured in my birth-place, and no less  
 304 In that beloved Vale to which erelong  
 305 We were transplanted---there were we let loose  
 306 For sports of wider range. Ere I had told  
 307 Ten birth-days, when among the mountain slopes  
 308 Frost, and the breath of frosty wind, had snapped

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309 The last autumnal crocus, 'twas my joy  
 310 With store of springes o'er my shoulder hung  
 311 To range the open heights where woodcocks run  
 312 Along the smooth green turf. Through half the night,  
 313 Scudding away from snare to snare, I plied  
 314 That anxious visitation;---moon and stars  
 315 Were shining o'er my head. I was alone,  
 316 And seemed to be a trouble to the peace  
 317 That dwelt among them. Sometimes it befel  
 318 In these night wanderings, that a strong desire  
 319 O'erpowered my better reason, and the bird  
 320 Which was the captive of another's toil  
 321 Became my prey; and when the deed was done  
 322 I heard among the solitary hills  
 323 Low breathings coming after me, and sounds  
 324 Of undistinguishable motion, steps  
 325 Almost as silent as the turf they trod.

326 Nor less when spring had warmed the cultured Vale,  
 327 Moved we as plunderers where the mother-bird  
 328 Had in high places built her lodge; though mean  
 329 Our object and inglorious, yet the end  
 330 Was not ignoble. Oh! when I have hung  
 331 Above the raven's nest, by knots of grass  
 332 And half-inch fissures in the slippery rock

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333 But ill sustained, and almost (so it seemed)  
 334 Suspended by the blast that blew amain,  
 335 Shouldering the naked crag, oh, at that time  
 336 While on the perilous ridge I hung alone,  
 337 With what strange utterance did the loud dry wind  
 338 Blow through my ear! the sky seemed not a sky  
 339 Of earth---and with what motion moved the clouds!

340 Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows  
 341 Like harmony in music; there is a dark

342 Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles  
343 Discordant elements, makes them cling together  
344 In one society. How strange that all  
345 The terrors, pains, and early miseries,  
346 Regrets, vexations, lassitudes interfused  
347 Within my mind, should e'er have borne a part,  
348 And that a needful part, in making up  
349 The calm existence that is mine when I  
350 Am worthy of myself! Praise to the end!  
351 Thanks to the means which Nature deigned to employ;  
352 Whether her fearless visitings, or those  
353 That came with soft alarm, like hurtless light  
354 Opening the peaceful clouds; or she may use  
355 Severer interventions, ministry  
356 More palpable, as best might suit her aim.


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357 One summer evening (led by her) I found  
358 A little boat tied to a willow tree  
359 Within a rocky cave, its usual home.  
360 Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in  
361 Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth  
362 And troubled pleasure, nor without the voice  
363 Of mountain-echoes did my boat move on;  
364 Leaving behind her still, on either side,  
365 Small circles glittering idly in the moon,  
366 Until they melted all into one track  
367 Of sparkling light. But now, like one who rows,  
368 Proud of his skill, to reach a chosen point  
369 With an unswerving line, I fixed my view  
370 Upon the summit of a craggy ridge,  
371 The horizon's utmost boundary; far above  
372 Was nothing but the stars and the grey sky.  
373 She was an elfin pinnace; lustily  
374 I dipped my oars into the silent lake,  
375 And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat  
376 Went heaving through the water like a swan;  
377 When, from behind that craggy steep till then  
378 The horizon's bound, a huge peak, black and huge,  
379 As if with voluntary power instinct  
380 Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,  
381 And growing still in stature the grim shape

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382 Towered up between me and the stars, and still,  
383 For so it seemed, with purpose of its own  
384 And measured motion like a living thing,  
385 Strode after me. With trembling oars I turned,

386 And through the silent water stole my way  
 387 Back to the covert of the willow tree;  
 388 There in her mooring-place I left my bark,---  
 389 And through the meadows homeward went, in grave  
 390 And serious mood; but after I had seen  
 391 That spectacle, for many days, my brain  
 392 Worked with a dim and undetermined sense  
 393 Of unknown modes of being; o'er my thoughts  
 394 There hung a darkness, call it solitude  
 395 Or blank desertion. No familiar shapes  
 396 Remained, no pleasant images of trees,  
 397 Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;  
 398 But huge and mighty forms, that do not live  
 399 Like living men, moved slowly through the mind  
 400 By day, and were a trouble to my dreams.

[End note 2: 1Kb] 

401 Wisdom and Spirit of the universe!  
 402 Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,  
 403 That givest to forms and images a breath  
 404 And everlasting motion, not in vain  
 405 By day or star-light thus from my first dawn

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406 Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me  
 407 The passions that build up our human soul;  
 408 Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,  
 409 But with high objects, with enduring things---  
 410 With life and nature, purifying thus  
 411 The elements of feeling and of thought,  
 412 And sanctifying, by such discipline,  
 413 Both pain and fear, until we recognise  
 414 A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.  
 415 Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me  
 416 With stinted kindness. In November days,  
 417 When vapours rolling down the valley made  
 418 A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,  
 419 At noon and 'mid the calm of summer nights,  
 420 When, by the margin of the trembling lake,  
 421 Beneath the gloomy hills homeward I went  
 422 In solitude, such intercourse was mine;  
 423 Mine was it in the fields both day and night,  
 424 And by the waters, all the summer long.

425 And in the frosty season, when the sun  
 426 Was set, and visible for many a mile  
 427 The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,  
 428 I heeded not their summons: happy time  
 429 It was indeed for all of us---for me

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430 It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud  
431 The village clock tolled six,---I wheeled about,  
432 Proud and exulting like an untired horse  
433 That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,  
434 We hissed along the polished ice in games  
435 Confederate, imitative of the chase  
436 And woodland pleasures,---the resounding horn,  
437 The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.  
438 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,  
439 And not a voice was idle; with the din  
440 Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;  
441 The leafless trees and every icy crag  
442 Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills  
443 Into the tumult sent an alien sound  
444 Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars  
445 Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west  
446 The orange sky of evening died away.  
447 Not seldom from the uproar I retired  
448 Into a silent bay, or sportively  
449 Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,  
450 To cut across the reflex of a star  
451 That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed  
452 Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,  
453 When we had given our bodies to the wind,  
454 And all the shadowy banks on either side

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455 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still  
456 The rapid line of motion, then at once  
457 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,  
458 Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs  
459 Wheeled by me---even as if the earth had rolled  
460 With visible motion her diurnal round!  
461 Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,  
462 Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched  
463 Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

464 Ye Presences of Nature in the sky  
465 And on the earth! Ye Visions of the hills!  
466 And Souls of lonely places! can I think  
467 A vulgar hope was yours when ye employed  
468 Such ministry, when ye through many a year  
469 Haunting me thus among my boyish sports,  
470 On caves and trees, upon the woods and hills,  
471 Impressed upon all forms the characters  
472 Of danger or desire; and thus did make  
473 The surface of the universal earth  
474 With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,  
475 Work like a sea?

475                                   Not uselessly employed,  
476   Might I pursue this theme through every change  
477   Of exercise and play, to which the year

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478   Did summon us in his delightful round.

479   We were a noisy crew; the sun in heaven  
480   Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours;  
481   Nor saw a band in happiness and joy  
482   Richer, or worthier of the ground they trod.  
483   I could record with no reluctant voice  
484   The woods of autumn, and their hazel bowers  
485   With milk-white clusters hung; the rod and line,  
486   True symbol of hope's foolishness, whose strong  
487   And unreprieved enchantment led us on  
488   By rocks and pools shut out from every star,  
489   All the green summer, to forlorn cascades  
490   Among the windings hid of mountain brooks.  
491   ---Unfading recollections! at this hour  
492   The heart is almost mine with which I felt,  
493   From some hill-top on sunny afternoons,  
494   The paper kite high among fleecy clouds  
495   Pull at her rein like an impetuous courser;  
496   Or, from the meadows sent on gusty days,  
497   Beheld her breast the wind, then suddenly  
498   Dashed headlong, and rejected by the storm.

499   Ye lowly cottages wherein we dwelt,  
500   A ministration of your own was yours;

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501   Can I forget you, being as you were  
502   So beautiful among the pleasant fields  
503   In which ye stood? or can I here forget  
504   The plain and seemly countenance with which  
505   Ye dealt out your plain comforts? Yet had ye  
506   Delights and exultations of your own.  
507   Eager and never weary we pursued  
508   Our home-amusements by the warm peat-fire  
509   At evening, when with pencil, and smooth slate  
510   In square divisions parcelled out and all  
511   With crosses and with cyphers scribbled o'er,  
512   We schemed and puzzled, head opposed to head  
513   In strife too humble to be named in verse:  
514   Or round the naked table, snow-white deal,  
515   Cherry or maple, sate in close array,  
516   And to the combat, Loo or Whist, led on

517 A thick-ribbed army; not, as in the world,  
 518 Neglected and ungratefully thrown by  
 519 Even for the very service they had wrought,  
 520 But husbanded through many a long campaign.  
 521 Uncouth assemblage was it, where no few  
 522 Had changed their functions; some, plebeian cards  
 523 Which Fate, beyond the promise of their birth,  
 524 Had dignified, and called to represent  
 525 The persons of departed potentates.

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526 Oh, with what echoes on the board they fell!  
 527 Ironic diamonds,---clubs, hearts, diamonds, spades,  
 528 A congregation piteously akin!  
 529 Cheap matter offered they to boyish wit,  
 530 Those sooty knaves, precipitated down  
 531 With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of heaven:  
 532 The paramount ace, a moon in her eclipse,  
 533 Queens gleaming through their splendour's last decay,  
 534 And monarchs surly at the wrongs sustained  
 535 By royal visages. Meanwhile abroad  
 536 Incessant rain was falling, or the frost  
 537 Raged bitterly, with keen and silent tooth;  
 538 And, interrupting oft that eager game,  
 539 From under Esthwaite's splitting fields of ice  
 540 The pent-up air, struggling to free itself,  
 541 Gave out to meadow grounds and hills a loud  
 542 Protracted yelling, like the noise of wolves  
 543 Howling in troops along the Bothnic Main.

544 Nor, sedulous as I have been to trace  
 545 How Nature by extrinsic passion first  
 546 Peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair,  
 547 And made me love them, may I here omit  
 548 How other pleasures have been mine, and joys  
 549 Of subtler origin; how I have felt,

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550 Not seldom even in that tempestuous time,  
 551 Those hallowed and pure motions of the sense  
 552 Which seem, in their simplicity, to own  
 553 An intellectual charm; that calm delight  
 554 Which, if I err not, surely must belong  
 555 To those first-born affinities that fit  
 556 Our new existence to existing things,  
 557 And, in our dawn of being, constitute  
 558 The bond of union between life and joy.

559 Yes, I remember when the changeful earth,

560 And twice five summers on my mind had stamped  
561 The faces of the moving year, even then  
562 I held unconscious intercourse with beauty  
563 Old as creation, drinking in a pure  
564 Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths  
565 Of curling mist, or from the level plain  
566 Of waters coloured by impending clouds.

567 The sands of Westmoreland, the creeks and bays  
568 Of Cumbria's rocky limits, they can tell  
569 How, when the Sea threw off his evening shade,  
570 And to the shepherd's hut on distant hills  
571 Sent welcome notice of the rising moon,  
572 How I have stood, to fancies such as these

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573 A stranger, linking with the spectacle  
574 No conscious memory of a kindred sight,  
575 And bringing with me no peculiar sense  
576 Of quietness or peace; yet have I stood,  
577 Even while mine eye hath moved o'er many a league  
578 Of shining water, gathering as it seemed  
579 Through every hair-breadth in that field of light  
580 New pleasure like a bee among the flowers.

581 Thus oft amid those fits of vulgar joy  
582 Which, through all seasons, on a child's pursuits  
583 Are prompt attendants, 'mid that giddy bliss  
584 Which, like a tempest, works along the blood  
585 And is forgotten; even then I felt  
586 Gleams like the flashing of a shield;---the earth  
587 And common face of Nature spake to me  
588 Rememberable things; sometimes, 'tis true,  
589 By chance collisions and quaint accidents  
590 (Like those ill-sorted unions, work supposed  
591 Of evil-minded fairies), yet not vain  
592 Nor profitless, if haply they impressed  
593 Collateral objects and appearances,  
594 Albeit lifeless then, and doomed to sleep  
595 Until maturer seasons called them forth  
596 To impregnate and to elevate the mind.

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597 ---And if the vulgar joy by its own weight  
598 Wearied itself out of the memory,  
599 The scenes which were a witness of that joy  
600 Remained in their substantial lineaments  
601 Depicted on the brain, and to the eye  
602 Were visible, a daily sight; and thus



603 By the impressive discipline of fear,  
 604 By pleasure and repeated happiness,  
 605 So frequently repeated, and by force  
 606 Of obscure feelings representative  
 607 Of things forgotten, these same scenes so bright,  
 608 So beautiful, so majestic in themselves,  
 609 Though yet the day was distant, did become  
 610 Habitually dear, and all their forms  
 611 And changeful colours by invisible links  
 612 Were fastened to the affections.

612 I began  
 613 My story early---not misled, I trust,  
 614 By an infirmity of love for days  
 615 Disowned by memory---ere the breath of spring  
 616 Planting my snowdrops among winter snows:  
 617 Nor will it seem to thee, O Friend! so prompt  
 618 In sympathy, that I have lengthened out  
 619 With fond and feeble tongue a tedious tale.

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620 Meanwhile, my hope has been, that I might fetch  
 621 Invigorating thoughts from former years;  
 622 Might fix the wavering balance of my mind,  
 623 And haply meet reproaches too, whose power  
 624 May spur me on, in manhood now mature,  
 625 To honourable toil. Yet should these hopes  
 626 Prove vain, and thus should neither I be taught  
 627 To understand myself, nor thou to know  
 628 With better knowledge how the heart was framed  
 629 Of him thou lovest; need I dread from thee  
 630 Harsh judgments, if the song be loth to quit  
 631 Those recollected hours that have the charm  
 632 Of visionary things, those lovely forms  
 633 And sweet sensations that throw back our life,  
 634 And almost make remotest infancy  
 635 A visible scene, on which the sun is shining?

636 One end at least hath been attained; my mind  
 637 Hath been revived, and if this genial mood  
 638 Desert me not, forth with shall be brought down  
 639 Through later years the story of my life.  
 640 The road lies plain before me;---'tis a theme  
 641 Single and of determined bounds; and hence  
 642 I choose it rather at this time, than work

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643 Of ampler or more varied argument,  
 644 Where I might be discomfited and lost:

645 And certain hopes are with me, that to thee  
646 This labour will be welcome, honoured Friend!

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## BOOK II. SCHOOL-TIME.---(Continued.)

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1 **Thus** far, O Friend! have we, though leaving much  
2 Unvisited, endeavoured to retrace  
3 The simple ways in which my childhood walked;  
4 Those chiefly that first led me to the love  
5 Of rivers, woods, and fields. The passion yet  
6 Was in its birth, sustained as might befall  
7 By nourishment that came unsought; for still  
8 From week to week, from month to month, we lived  
9 A round of tumult. Duly were our games  
10 Prolonged in summer till the day-light failed:  
11 No chair remained before the doors; the bench  
12 And threshold steps were empty; fast asleep  
13 The labourer, and the old man who had sate  
14 A later lingerer; yet the revelry  
15 Continued and the loud uproar: at last,

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16 When all the ground was dark, and twinkling stars  
17 Edged the black clouds, home and to bed we went,  
18 Feverish with weary joints and beating minds.  
19 Ah! is there one who ever has been young,  
20 Nor needs a warning voice to tame the pride  
21 Of intellect and virtue's self-esteem?  
22 One is there, though the wisest and the best  
23 Of all mankind, who covets not at times  
24 Union that cannot be;---who would not give,  
25 If so he might, to duty and to truth  
26 The eagerness of infantine desire?  
27 A tranquillising spirit presses now  
28 On my corporeal frame, so wide appears  
29 The vacancy between me and those days  
30 Which yet have such self-presence in my mind,  
31 That, musing on them, often do I seem  
32 Two consciousnesses, conscious of myself  
33 And of some other Being. A rude mass  
34 Of native rock, left midway in the square

35 Of our small market village, was the goal  
36 Or centre of these sports; and when, returned  
37 After long absence, thither I repaired,  
38 Gone was the old grey stone, and in its place  
39 A smart Assembly-room usurped the ground  
40 That had been ours. There let the fiddle scream,

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41 And be ye happy! Yet, my Friends! I know  
42 That more than one of you will think with me  
43 Of those soft starry nights, and that old Dame  
44 From whom the stone was named, who there had sate,  
45 And watched her table with its huckster's wares  
46 Assiduous, through the length of sixty years.

47 We ran a boisterous course; the year span round  
48 With giddy motion. But the time approached  
49 That brought with it a regular desire  
50 For calmer pleasures, when the winning forms  
51 Of Nature were collaterally attached  
52 To every scheme of holiday delight  
53 And every boyish sport, less grateful else  
54 And languidly pursued.

54                                      When summer came,  
55 Our pastime was, on bright half-holidays,  
56 To sweep along the plain of Windermere  
57 With rival oars; and the selected bourne  
58 Was now an Island musical with birds  
59 That sang and ceased not; now a Sister Isle  
60 Beneath the oaks' umbrageous covert, sown  
61 With lilies of the valley like a field;  
62 And now a third small Island, where survived  
63 In solitude the ruins of a shrine

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64 Once to Our Lady dedicate, and served  
65 Daily with chaunted rites. In such a race  
66 So ended, disappointment could be none,  
67 Uneasiness, or pain, or jealousy:  
68 We rested in the shade, all pleased alike,  
69 Conquered and conqueror. Thus the pride of strength,  
70 And the vain-glory of superior skill,  
71 Were tempered; thus was gradually produced  
72 A quiet independence of the heart;  
73 And to my Friend who knows me I may add,  
74 Fearless of blame, that hence for future days  
75 Ensued a diffidence and modesty,  
76 And I was taught to feel, perhaps too much,

77 The self-sufficing power of Solitude.  
78 Our daily meals were frugal, Sabine fare!  
79 More than we wished we knew the blessing then  
80 Of vigorous hunger---hence corporeal strength  
81 Unsapped by delicate viands; for, exclude  
82 A little weekly stipend, and we lived  
83 Through three divisions of the quartered year  
84 In penniless poverty. But now to school  
85 From the half-yearly holidays returned,  
86 We came with weightier purses, that sufficed  
87 To furnish treats more costly than the Dame

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88 Of the old grey stone, from her scant board, supplied.  
89 Hence rustic dinners on the cool green ground,  
90 Or in the woods, or by a river side  
91 Or shady fountains, while among the leaves  
92 Soft airs were stirring, and the mid-day sun  
93 Unfelt shone brightly round us in our joy.  
94 Nor is my aim neglected if I tell  
95 How sometimes, in the length of those half-years,  
96 We from our funds drew largely;---proud to curb,  
97 And eager to spur on, the galloping steed;  
98 And with the courteous inn-keeper, whose stud  
99 Supplied our want, we haply might employ  
100 Sly subterfuge, if the adventure's bound  
101 Were distant: some famed temple where of yore  
102 The Druids worshipped, or the antique walls  
103 Of that large abbey, where within the Vale  
104 Of Nightshade, to St. Mary's honour built,  
105 Stands yet a mouldering pile with fractured arch,  
106 Belfry, and images, and living trees,  
107 A holy scene! Along the smooth green turf  
108 Our horses grazed. To more than inland peace  
109 Left by the west wind sweeping overhead  
110 From a tumultuous ocean, trees and towers  
111 In that sequestered valley may be seen.  
112 Both silent and both motionless alike;

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113 Such the deep shelter that is there, and such  
114 The safeguard for repose and quietness.  
115 Our steeds remounted and the summons given,  
116 With whip and spur we through the chantry flew  
117 In uncouth race, and left the cross-legged knight,  
118 And the stone-abbot, and that single wren  
119 Which one day sang so sweetly in the nave

120 Of the old church, that---though from recent showers  
121 The earth was comfortless, and touched by faint  
122 Internal breezes, sobbings of the place  
123 And respirations, from the roofless walls  
124 The shuddering ivy dripped large drops---yet still  
125 So sweetly 'mid the gloom the invisible bird  
126 Sang to herself, that there I could have made  
127 My dwelling-place, and lived for ever there  
128 To hear such music. Through the walls we flew  
129 And down the valley, and, a circuit made  
130 In wantonness of heart, through rough and smooth  
131 We scampered homewards. Oh, ye rocks and streams,  
132 And that still spirit shed from evening air!  
133 Even in this joyous time I sometimes felt  
134 Your presence, when with slackened step we breathed  
135 Along the sides of the steep hills, or when  
136 Lighted by gleams of moonlight from the sea

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137 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.  
  
138 Midway on long Winander's eastern shore,  
139 Within the crescent of a pleasant bay,  
140 A tavern stood; no homely-featured house,  
141 Primeval like its neighbouring cottages,  
142 But 'twas a splendid place, the door beset  
143 With chaises, grooms, and liveries, and within  
144 Decanters, glasses, and the blood-red wine.  
145 In ancient times, and ere the Hall was built  
146 On the large island, had this dwelling been  
147 More worthy of a poet's love, a hut,  
148 Proud of its own bright fire and sycamore shade.  
149 But---though the rhymes were gone that once inscribed  
150 The threshold, and large golden characters,  
151 Spread o'er the spangled sign-board, had dislodged  
152 The old Lion and usurped his place, in slight  
153 And mockery of the rustic painter's hand---  
154 Yet, to this hour, the spot to me is dear  
155 With all its foolish pomp. The garden lay  
156 Upon a slope surmounted by a plain  
157 Of a small bowling-green; beneath us stood  
158 A grove, with gleams of water through the trees  
159 And over the tree-tops; nor did we want  
160 Refreshment, strawberries and mellow cream.

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161 There, while through half an afternoon we played  
162 On the smooth platform, whether skill prevailed  
163 Or happy blunder triumphed, bursts of glee

164 Made all the mountains ring. But, ere night-fall,  
165 When in our pinnace we returned at leisure  
166 Over the shadowy lake, and to the beach  
167 Of some small island steered our course with one,  
168 The Minstrel of the Troop, and left him there,  
169 And rowed off gently, while he blew his flute  
170 Alone upon the rock---oh, then, the calm  
171 And dead still water lay upon my mind  
172 Even with a weight of pleasure, and the sky,  
173 Never before so beautiful, sank down  
174 Into my heart, and held me like a dream!  
175 Thus were my sympathies enlarged, and thus  
176 Daily the common range of visible things  
177 Grew dear to me: already I began  
178 To love the sun; a boy I loved the sun,  
179 Not as I since have loved him, as a pledge  
180 And surety of our earthly life, a light  
181 Which we behold and feel we are alive;  
182 Nor for his bounty to so many worlds---  
183 But for this cause, that I had seen him lay  
184 His beauty on the morning hills, had seen  
185 The western mountain touch his setting orb,

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186 In many a thoughtless hour, when, from excess  
187 Of happiness, my blood appeared to flow  
188 For its own pleasure, and I breathed with joy.  
189 And, from like feelings, humble though intense,  
190 To patriotic and domestic love  
191 Analogous, the moon to me was dear;  
192 For I could dream away my purposes,  
193 Standing to gaze upon her while she hung  
194 Midway between the hills, as if she knew  
195 No other region, but belonged to thee,  
196 Yea, appertained by a peculiar right  
197 To thee and thy grey huts, thou one dear Vale!

198 Those incidental charms which first attached  
199 My heart to rural objects, day by day  
200 Grew weaker, and I hasten on to tell  
201 How Nature, intervenient till this time  
202 And secondary, now at length was sought  
203 For her own sake. But who shall parcel out  
204 His intellect by geometric rules,  
205 Split like a province into round and square?  
206 Who knows the individual hour in which  
207 His habits were first sown, even as a seed?  
208 Who that shall point as with a wand and say  
209 "This portion of the river of my mind

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210 Came from yon fountain?" Thou, my Friend! art one  
 211 More deeply read in thy own thoughts; to thee  
 212 Science appears but what in truth she is,  
 213 Not as our glory and our absolute boast,  
 214 But as a succedaneum, and a prop  
 215 To our infirmity. No officious slave  
 216 Art thou of that false secondary power  
 217 By which we multiply distinctions, then  
 218 Deem that our puny boundaries are things  
 219 That we perceive, and not that we have made.  
 220 To thee, unblinded by these formal arts,  
 221 The unity of all hath been revealed,  
 222 And thou wilt doubt, with me less aptly skilled  
 223 Than many are to range the faculties  
 224 In scale and order, class the cabinet  
 225 Of their sensations, and in voluble phrase  
 226 Run through the history and birth of each  
 227 As of a single independent thing.  
 228 Hard task, vain hope, to analyse the mind,  
 229 If each most obvious and particular thought,  
 230 Not in a mystical and idle sense,  
 231 But in the words of Reason deeply weighed,  
 232 Hath no beginning.

232 Blest the infant Babe,  
 233 (For with my best conjecture I would trace

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234 Our Being's earthly progress,) blest the Babe,  
 235 Nursed in his Mother's arms, who sinks to sleep  
 236 Rocked on his Mother's breast; who with his soul  
 237 Drinks in the feelings of his Mother's eye!  
 238 For him, in one dear Presence, there exists  
 239 A virtue which irradiates and exalts  
 240 Objects through widest intercourse of sense.  
 241 No outcast he, bewildered and depressed:  
 242 Along his infant veins are interfused  
 243 The gravitation and the filial bond  
 244 Of nature that connect him with the world.  
 245 Is there a flower, to which he points with hand  
 246 Too weak to gather it, already love  
 247 Drawn from love's purest earthly fount for him  
 248 Hath beautified that flower; already shades  
 249 Of pity cast from inward tenderness  
 250 Do fall around him upon aught that bears  
 251 Unsightly marks of violence or harm  
 252 Emphatically such a Being lives,  
 253 Frail creature as he is, helpless as frail,



254 An inmate of this active universe.  
255 For feeling has to him imparted power  
256 That through the growing faculties of sense  
257 Doth like an agent of the one great Mind  
258 Create, creator and receiver both,

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259 Working but in alliance with the works  
260 Which it beholds.---Such, verily, is the first  
261 Poetic spirit of our human life,  
262 By uniform control of after years,  
263 In most, abated or suppressed; in some,  
264 Through every change of growth and of decay,  
265 Pre-eminent till death.

265                                      From early days,  
266 Beginning not long after that first time  
267 In which, a Babe, by intercourse of touch  
268 I held mute dialogues with my Mother's heart,  
269 I have endeavoured to display the means  
270 Whereby this infant sensibility,  
271 Great birthright of our being, was in me  
272 Augmented and sustained. Yet is a path  
273 More difficult before me; and I fear  
274 That in its broken windings we shall need  
275 The chamois' sinews, and the eagle's wing:  
276 For now a trouble came into my mind  
277 From unknown causes. I was left alone  
278 Seeking the visible world, nor knowing why.  
279 The props of my affections were removed,  
280 And yet the building stood, as if sustained  
281 By its own spirit! All that I beheld  
282 Was dear, and hence to finer influxes

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283 The mind lay open to a more exact  
284 And close communion. Many are our joys  
285 In youth, but oh! what happiness to live  
286 When every hour brings palpable access  
287 Of knowledge, when all knowledge is delight,  
288 And sorrow is not there! The seasons came,  
289 And every season wheresoe'er I moved  
290 Unfolded transitory qualities,  
291 Which, but for this most watchful power of love,  
292 Had been neglected; left a register  
293 Of permanent relations, else unknown.  
294 Hence life, and change, and beauty, solitude  
295 More active even than "best society"---  
296 Society made sweet as solitude


297 By silent inobtrusive sympathies,  
 298 And gentle agitations of the mind  
 299 From manifold distinctions, difference  
 300 Perceived in things, where, to the unwatchful eye,  
 301 No difference is, and hence, from the same source,  
 302 Sublimer joy; for I would walk alone,  
 303 Under the quiet stars, and at that time  
 304 Have felt whate'er there is of power in sound  
 305 To breathe an elevated mood, by form  
 306 Or image unprofaned; and I would stand,  
 307 If the night blackened with a coming storm,

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308 Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are  
 309 The ghostly language of the ancient earth,  
 310 Or make their dim abode in distant winds.  
 311 Thence did I drink the visionary power;  
 312 And deem not profitless those fleeting moods  
 313 Of shadowy exultation: not for this,  
 314 That they are kindred to our purer mind  
 315 And intellectual life; but that the soul,  
 316 Remembering how she felt, but what she felt  
 317 Remembering not, retains an obscure sense  
 318 Of possible sublimity, whereto  
 319 With growing faculties she doth aspire,  
 320 With faculties still growing, feeling still  
 321 That whatsoever point they gain, they yet  
 322 Have something to pursue.

322                                   And not alone,  
 323 'Mid gloom and tumult, but no less 'mid fair  
 324 And tranquil scenes, that universal power  
 325 And fitness in the latent qualities  
 326 And essences of things, by which the mind  
 327 Is moved with feelings of delight, to me  
 328 Came, strengthened with a superadded soul,  
 329 A virtue not its own. My morning walks  
 330 Were early;---oft before the hours of school  
 331 I travelled round our little lake, five miles

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332 Of pleasant wandering. Happy time! more dear  
 333 For this, that one was by my side, a Friend, [End note 3: 1Kb]   
 334 Then passionately loved; with heart how full  
 335 Would he peruse these lines! For many years  
 336 Have since flowed in between us, and, our minds  
 337 Both silent to each other, at this time  
 338 We live as if those hours had never been.  
 339 Nor seldom did I lift our cottage latch

340 Far earlier, ere one smoke-wreath had risen  
341 From human dwelling, or the vernal thrush  
342 Was audible; and sate among the woods  
343 Alone upon some jutting eminence,  
344 At the first gleam of dawn-light, when the Vale,  
345 Yet slumbering, lay in utter solitude.  
346 How shall I seek the origin? where find  
347 Faith in the marvellous things which then I felt?  
348 Oft in these moments such a holy calm  
349 Would overspread my soul, that bodily eyes  
350 Were utterly forgotten, and what I saw  
351 Appeared like something in myself, a dream,  
352 A prospect in the mind.

352 'Twere long to tell  
353 What spring and autumn, what the winter snows,  
354 And what the summer shade, what day and night,  
355 Evening and morning, sleep and waking, thought

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356 From sources inexhaustible, poured forth  
357 To feed the spirit of religious love  
358 In which I walked with Nature. But let this  
359 Be not forgotten, that I still retained  
360 My first creative sensibility;  
361 That by the regular action of the world  
362 My soul was unsubdued. A plastic power  
363 Abode with me; a forming hand, at times  
364 Rebellious, acting in a devious mood;  
365 A local spirit of his own, at war  
366 With general tendency, but, for the most,  
367 Subservient strictly to external things  
368 With which it communed. An auxiliar light  
369 Came from my mind, which on the setting sun  
370 Bestowed new splendour; the melodious birds,  
371 The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on  
372 Murmuring so sweetly in themselves, obeyed  
373 A like dominion, and the midnight storm  
374 Grew darker in the presence of my eye:  
375 Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,  
376 And hence my transport.

376 Nor should this, perchance,  
377 Pass unrecorded, that I still had loved  
378 The exercise and produce of a toil,  
379 Than analytic industry to me

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380 More pleasing, and whose character I deem

381 Is more poetic as resembling more  
382 Creative agency. The song would speak  
383 Of that interminable building reared  
384 By observation of affinities  
385 In objects where no brotherhood exists  
386 To passive minds. My seventeenth year was come;  
387 And, whether from this habit rooted now  
388 So deeply in my mind, or from excess  
389 In the great social principle of life  
390 Coercing all things into sympathy,  
391 To unorganic natures were transferred  
392 My own enjoyments; or the power of truth  
393 Coming in revelation, did converse  
394 With things that really are; I, at this time,  
395 Saw blessings spread around me like a sea.  
396 Thus while the days flew by, and years passed on,  
397 From Nature and her overflowing soul,  
398 I had received so much, that all my thoughts  
399 Were steeped in feeling; I was only then  
400 Contented, when with bliss ineffable  
401 I felt the sentiment of Being spread  
402 O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;  
403 O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought  
404 And human knowledge, to the human eye

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405 Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;  
406 O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,  
407 Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides  
408 Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,  
409 And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not  
410 If high the transport, great the joy I felt,  
411 Communing in this sort through earth and heaven  
412 With every form of creature, as it looked  
413 Towards the Uncreated with a countenance  
414 Of adoration, with an eye of love.  
415 One song they sang, and it was audible,  
416 Most audible, then, when the fleshly ear,  
417 O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,  
418 Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed.

419 If this be error, and another faith  
420 Find easier access to the pious mind,  
421 Yet were I grossly destitute of all  
422 Those human sentiments that make this earth  
423 So dear, if I should fail with grateful voice  
424 To speak of you, ye mountains, and ye lakes  
425 And sounding cataracts, ye mists and winds  
426 That dwell among the hills where I was born.  
427 If in my youth I have been pure in heart,

428 If, mingling with the world, I am content

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429 With my own modest pleasures, and have lived  
430 With God and Nature communing, removed  
431 From little enmities and low desires,  
432 The gift is yours; if in these times of fear,  
433 This melancholy waste of hopes o'erthrown,  
434 If, 'mid indifference and apathy,  
435 And wicked exultation when good men  
436 On every side fall off, we know not how,  
437 To selfishness, disguised in gentle names  
438 Of peace and quiet and domestic love,  
439 Yet mingled not unwillingly with sneers  
440 On visionary minds; if, in this time  
441 Of dereliction and dismay, I yet  
442 Despair not of our nature, but retain  
443 A more than Roman confidence, a faith  
444 That fails not, in all sorrow my support,  
445 The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,  
446 Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,  
447 Ye mountains! thine, O Nature! Thou hast fed  
448 My lofty speculations; and in thee,  
449 For this uneasy heart of ours, I find  
450 A never-failing principle of joy  
451 And purest passion.

451                                   Thou, my Friend! wert reared  
452 In the great city, 'mid far other scenes;

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453 But we, by different roads, at length have gained  
454 The self-same bourne. And for this cause to thee  
455 I speak, unapprehensive of contempt,  
456 The insinuated scoff of coward tongues,  
457 And all that silent language which so oft  
458 In conversation between man and man  
459 Blots from the human countenance all trace  
460 Of beauty and of love. For thou hast sought  
461 The truth in solitude, and, since the days  
462 That gave thee liberty, full long desired,  
463 To serve in Nature's temple, thou hast been  
464 The most assiduous of her ministers;  
465 In many things my brother, chiefly here  
466 In this our deep devotion.

466                                   Fare thee well!  
467 Health and the quiet of a healthful mind  
468 Attend thee! seeking oft the haunts of men,

469 And yet more often living with thyself,  
 470 And for thyself, so haply shall thy days  
 471 Be many, and a blessing to mankind.

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### BOOK III. RESIDENCE AT CAMBRIDGE.

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1 **I**t was a dreary morning when the wheels  
 2 Rolled over a wide plain o'erhung with clouds,  
 3 And nothing cheered our way till first we saw  
 4 The long-roofed chapel of King's College lift  
 5 Turrets and pinnacles in answering files,  
 6 Extended high above a dusky grove.

7 Advancing, we espied upon the road  
 8 A student clothed in gown and tasselled cap,  
 9 Striding along as if o'ertasked by Time,  
 10 Or covetous of exercise and air;  
 11 He passed---nor was I master of my eyes  
 12 Till he was left an arrow's flight behind.  
 13 As near and nearer to the spot we drew,  
 14 It seemed to suck us in with an eddy's force.

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15 Onward we drove beneath the Castle; caught,  
 16 While crossing Magdalene Bridge, a glimpse of Cam;  
 17 And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn.

18 My spirit was up, my thoughts were full of hope;  
 19 Some friends I had, acquaintances who there  
 20 Seemed friends, poor simple school-boys, now hung round  
 21 With honour and importance: in a world  
 22 Of welcome faces up and down I roved;  
 23 Questions, directions, warnings and advice,  
 24 Flowed in upon me, from all sides; fresh day  
 25 Of pride and pleasure! to myself I seemed  
 26 A man of business and expense, and went  
 27 From shop to shop about my own affairs,  
 28 To Tutor or to Tailor, as befel,  
 29 From street to street with loose and careless mind.

30 I was the Dreamer, they the Dream; I roamed

31 Delighted through the motley spectacle;  
 32 Gowns grave, or gaudy, doctors, students, streets,  
 33 Courts, cloisters, flocks of churches, gateways, towers:  
 34 Migration strange for a stripling of the hills,  
 35 A northern villager.

35 As if the change

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36 Had waited on some Fairy's wand, at once  
 37 Behold me rich in monies, and attired  
 38 In splendid garb, with hose of silk, and hair  
 39 Powdered like rimy trees, when frost is keen.  
 40 My lordly dressing-gown, I pass it by,  
 41 With other signs of manhood that supplied  
 42 The lack of beard.---The weeks went roundly on,  
 43 With invitations, suppers, wine and fruit,  
 44 Smooth housekeeping within, and all without  
 45 Liberal, and suiting gentleman's array.

46 The Evangelist St. John my patron was:  
 47 Three Gothic courts are his, and in the first  
 48 Was my abiding-place, a nook obscure;  
 49 Right underneath, the College kitchens made  
 50 A humming sound, less tuneable than bees,  
 51 But hardly less industrious; with shrill notes  
 52 Of sharp command and scolding intermixed.  
 53 Near me hung Trinity's loquacious clock,  
 54 Who never let the quarters, night or day,  
 55 Slip by him unproclaimed, and told the hours  
 56 Twice over with a male and female voice.  
 57 Her pealing organ was my neighbour too;  
 58 And from my pillow, looking forth by light  
 59 Of moon or favouring stars, I could behold

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60 The antechapel where the statue stood  
 61 Of Newton with his prism and silent face,  
 62 The marble index of a mind for ever  
 63 Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

64 Of College labours, of the Lecturer's room  
 65 All studded round, as thick as chairs could stand,  
 66 With loyal students faithful to their books,  
 67 Half-and-half idlers, hardy recusants,  
 68 And honest dunces---of important days,  
 69 Examinations, when the man was weighed  
 70 As in a balance! of excessive hopes,  
 71 Tremblings withal and commendable fears,



72 Small jealousies, and triumphs good or bad,  
73 Let others that know more speak as they know.  
74 Such glory was but little sought by me,  
75 And little won. Yet from the first crude days  
76 Of settling time in this untried abode,  
77 I was disturbed at times by prudent thoughts,  
78 Wishing to hope without a hope, some fears  
79 About my future worldly maintenance,  
80 And, more than all, a strangeness in the mind,  
81 A feeling that I was not for that hour,  
82 Nor for that place. But wherefore be cast down?  
83 For (not to speak of Reason and her pure

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84 Reflective acts to fix the moral law  
85 Deep in the conscience, nor of Christian Hope,  
86 Bowing her head before her sister Faith  
87 As one far mightier), hither I had come,  
88 Bear witness Truth, endowed with holy powers  
89 And faculties, whether to work or feel.  
90 Oft when the dazzling show no longer new  
91 Had ceased to dazzle, oftentimes did I quit  
92 My comrades, leave the crowd, buildings and groves,  
93 And as I paced alone the level fields  
94 Far from those lovely sights and sounds sublime  
95 With which I had been conversant, the mind  
96 Drooped not; but there into herself returning,  
97 With prompt rebound seemed fresh as heretofore.  
98 At least I more distinctly recognised  
99 Her native instincts: let me dare to speak  
100 A higher language, say that now I felt  
101 What independent solaces were mine,  
102 To mitigate the injurious sway of place  
103 Or circumstance, how far soever changed  
104 In youth, or *to* be changed in manhood's prime;  
105 Or for the few who shall be called to look  
106 On the long shadows in our evening years,  
107 Ordained precursors to the night of death.  
108 As if awakened, summoned, roused, constrained,

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109 I looked for universal things; perused  
110 The common countenance of earth and sky:  
111 Earth, nowhere unembellished by some trace  
112 Of that first Paradise whence man was driven;  
113 And sky, whose beauty and bounty are expressed  
114 By the proud name she bears---the name of Heaven.  
115 I called on both to teach me what they might;  
116 Or turning the mind in upon herself

117 Pored, watched, expected, listened, spread my thoughts  
 118 And spread them with a wider creeping; felt  
 119 Incumbencies more awful, visitings  
 120 Of the Upholder of the tranquil soul,  
 121 That tolerates the indignities of Time,  
 122 And, from the centre of Eternity  
 123 All finite motions overruling, lives  
 124 In glory immutable. But peace! enough  
 125 Here to record that I was mounting now  
 126 To such community with highest truth---  
 127 A track pursuing, not untrod before,  
 128 From strict analogies by thought supplied  
 129 Or consciousnesses not to be subdued.  
 130 To every natural form, rock, fruit or flower,  
 131 Even the loose stones that cover the high-way,  
 132 I gave a moral life: I saw them feel,  
 133 Or linked them to some feeling: the great mass

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134 Lay bedded in a quickening soul, and all  
 135 That I beheld respired with inward meaning.  
 136 Add that whate'er of Terror or of Love  
 137 Or Beauty, Nature's daily face put on  
 138 From transitory passion, unto this  
 139 I was as sensitive as waters are  
 140 To the sky's influence in a kindred mood  
 141 Of passion; was obedient as a lute  
 142 That waits upon the touches of the wind.  
 143 Unknown, unthought of, yet I was most rich---  
 144 I had a world about me---'twas my own;  
 145 I made it, for it only lived to me,  
 146 And to the God who sees into the heart.  
 147 Such sympathies, though rarely, were betrayed  
 148 By outward gestures and by visible looks:  
 149 Some called it madness---so indeed it was,  
 150 If child-like fruitfulness in passing joy,  
 151 If steady moods of thoughtfulness matured  
 152 To inspiration, sort with such a name;  
 153 If prophecy be madness; if things viewed  
 154 By poets in old time, and higher up  
 155 By the first men, earth's first inhabitants,  
 156 May in these tutored days no more be seen  
 157 With undisordered sight. But leaving this,  
 158 It was no madness, for the bodily eye

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159 Amid my strongest workings evermore  
 160 Was searching out the lines of difference  
 161 As they lie hid in all external forms,

162 Near or remote, minute or vast, an eye  
163 Which from a tree, a stone, a withered leaf,  
164 To the broad ocean and the azure heavens  
165 Spangled with kindred multitudes of stars,  
166 Could find no surface where its power might sleep;  
167 Which spake perpetual logic to my soul,  
168 And by an unrelenting agency  
169 Did bind my feelings even as in a chain.

170 And here, O Friend! have I retraced my life  
171 Up to an eminence, and told a tale  
172 Of matters which not falsely may be called  
173 The glory of my youth. Of genius, power,  
174 Creation and divinity itself  
175 I have been speaking, for my theme has been  
176 What passed within me. Not of outward things  
177 Done visibly for other minds, words, signs,  
178 Symbols or actions, but of my own heart  
179 Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind.  
180 O Heavens! how awful is the might of souls,  
181 And what they do within themselves while yet  
182 The yoke of earth is new to them, the world

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183 Nothing but a wild field where they were sown.  
184 This is, in truth, heroic argument,  
185 This genuine prowess, which I wished to touch  
186 With hand however weak, but in the main  
187 It lies far hidden from the reach of words.  
188 Points have we all of us within our souls  
189 Where all stand single; this I feel, and make  
190 Breathings for incommunicable powers;  
191 But is not each a memory to himself,  
192 And, therefore, now that we must quit this theme,  
193 I am not heartless, for there's not a man  
194 That lives who hath not known his god-like hours,  
195 And feels not what an empire we inherit  
196 As natural beings in the strength of Nature.

197 No more: for now into a populous plain  
198 We must descend. A Traveller I am,  
199 Whose tale is only of himself; even so,  
200 So be it, if the pure of heart be prompt  
201 To follow, and if thou, my honoured Friend!  
202 Who in these thoughts art ever at my side,  
203 Support, as heretofore, my fainting steps.

204 It hath been told, that when the first delight  
205 That flashed upon me from this novel show

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206 Had failed, the mind returned into herself;  
 207 Yet true it is, that I had made a change  
 208 In climate, and my nature's outward coat  
 209 Changed also slowly and insensibly.  
 210 Full oft the quiet and exalted thoughts  
 211 Of loneliness gave way to empty noise  
 212 And superficial pastimes; now and then  
 213 Forced labour, and more frequently forced hopes;  
 214 And, worst of all, a treasonable growth  
 215 Of indecisive judgments, that impaired  
 216 And shook the mind's simplicity.---And yet  
 217 This was a gladsome time. Could I behold---  
 218 Who, less insensible than sodden clay  
 219 In a sea-river's bed at ebb of tide,  
 220 Could have beheld,---with undelighted heart,  
 221 So many happy youths, so wide and fair  
 222 A congregation in its budding-time  
 223 Of health, and hope, and beauty, all at once  
 224 So many divers samples from the growth  
 225 Of life's sweet season---could have seen unmoved  
 226 That miscellaneous garland of wild flowers  
 227 Decking the matron temples of a place  
 228 So famous through the world? To me, at least,  
 229 It was a goodly prospect: for, in sooth,  
 230 Though I had learnt betimes to stand unpropped,

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231 And independent musings pleased me so  
 232 That spells seemed on me when I was alone,  
 233 Yet could I only cleave to solitude  
 234 In lonely places; if a throng was near  
 235 That way I leaned by nature; for my heart  
 236 Was social, and loved idleness and joy.

237 Not seeking those who might participate  
 238 My deeper pleasures (nay, I had not once,  
 239 Though not unused to mutter lonesome songs,  
 240 Even with myself divided such delight,  
 241 Or looked that way for aught that might be clothed  
 242 In human language), easily I passed  
 243 From the remembrances of better things,  
 244 And slipped into the ordinary works  
 245 Of careless youth, unburthened, unalarmed.  
 246 *Caverns* there were within my mind which sun  
 247 Could never penetrate, yet did there not  
 248 Want store of leafy *arbours* where the light  
 249 Might enter in at will. Companionships,  
 250 Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.

251 We sauntered, played, or rioted; we talked  
252 Unprofitable talk at morning hours;  
253 Drifted about along the streets and walks,  
254 Read lazily in trivial books, went forth

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255 To gallop through the country in blind zeal  
256 Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast  
257 Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars  
258 Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought.

259 Such was the tenor of the second act  
260 In this new life. Imagination slept,  
261 And yet not utterly. I could not print  
262 Ground where the grass had yielded to the steps  
263 Of generations of illustrious men,  
264 Unmoved. I could not always lightly pass  
265 Through the same gateways, sleep where they had slept,  
266 Wake where they waked, range that inclosure old,  
267 That garden of great intellects, undisturbed.  
268 Place also by the side of this dark sense  
269 Of noble feeling, that those spiritual men,  
270 Even the great Newton's own ethereal self,  
271 Seemed humbled in these precincts thence to be  
272 The more endeared. Their several memories here  
273 (Even like their persons in their portraits clothed  
274 With the accustomed garb of daily life)  
275 Put on a lowly and a touching grace  
276 Of more distinct humanity, that left  
277 All genuine admiration unimpaired.

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278 Beside the pleasant Mill of Trompington  
279 I laughed with Chaucer in the hawthorn shade;  
280 Heard him, while birds were warbling, tell his tales  
281 Of amorous passion. And that gentle Bard,  
282 Chosen by the Muses for their Page of State---  
283 Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven  
284 With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace,  
285 I called him Brother, Englishman, and Friend!  
286 Yea, our blind Poet, who, in his later day,  
287 Stood almost single; uttering odious truth---  
288 Darkness before, and danger's voice behind  
289 Soul awful---if the earth has ever lodged  
290 An awful soul---I seemed to see him here  
291 Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress  
292 Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth---  
293 A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks

294 Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,  
 295 And conscious step of purity and pride.  
 296 Among the band of my compeers was one  
 297 Whom chance had stationed in the very room  
 298 Honoured by Milton's name. O temperate Bard!  
 299 Be it confest that, for the first time, seated  
 300 Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,  
 301 One of a festive circle, I poured out  
 302 Libations, to thy memory drank, till pride

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303 And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain  
 304 Never excited by the fumes of wine  
 305 Before that hour, or since. Then, forth I ran  
 306 From the assembly; through a length of streets,  
 307 Ran, ostrich-like, to reach our chapel door  
 308 In not a desperate or opprobrious time,  
 309 Albeit long after the importunate bell  
 310 Had stopped, with wearisome Cassandra voice  
 311 No longer haunting the dark winter night.  
 312 Call back, O Friend! a moment to thy mind  
 313 The place itself and fashion of the rites.  
 314 With careless ostentation shouldering up  
 315 My surplice, through the inferior throng I clove  
 316 Of the plain Burghers, who in audience stood  
 317 On the last skirts of their permitted ground,  
 318 Under the pealing organ. Empty thoughts!  
 319 I am ashamed of them: and that great Bard,  
 320 And thou, O Friend! who in thy ample mind  
 321 Hast placed me high above my best deserts,  
 322 Ye will forgive the weakness of that hour,  
 323 In some of its unworthy vanities,  
 324 Brother to many more.

324 In this mixed sort  
 325 The months passed on, remissly, not given up  
 326 To wilful alienation from the right,

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327 Or walks of open scandal, but in vague  
 328 And loose indifference, easy likings, aims  
 329 Of a low pitch---duty and zeal dismissed,  
 330 Yet Nature, or a happy course of things  
 331 Not doing in their stead the needful work.  
 332 The memory languidly revolved, the heart  
 333 Reposed in noontide rest, the inner pulse  
 334 Of contemplation almost failed to beat.  
 335 Such life might not inaptly be compared  
 336 To a floating island, an amphibious spot

337 Unsound, of spongy texture, yet withal  
 338 Not wanting a fair face of water weeds  
 339 And pleasant flowers. The thirst of living praise,  
 340 Fit reverence for the glorious Dead, the sight  
 341 Of those long vistas, sacred catacombs,  
 342 Where mighty *minds* lie visibly entombed,  
 343 Have often stirred the heart of youth, and bred  
 344 A fervent love of rigorous discipline.---  
 345 Alas! such high emotion touched not me.  
 346 Look was there none within these walls to shame  
 347 My easy spirits, and discountenance  
 348 Their light composure, far less to instil  
 349 A calm resolve of mind, firmly addressed  
 350 To puissant efforts. Nor was this the blame  
 351 Of others but my own; I should, in truth,

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352 As far as doth concern my single self,  
 353 Misdeem most widely, lodging it elsewhere:  
 354 For I, bred up 'mid Nature's luxuries,  
 355 Was a spoiled child, and rambling like the wind,  
 356 As I had done in daily intercourse  
 357 With those crystalline rivers, solemn heights,  
 358 And mountains, ranging like a fowl of the air,  
 359 I was ill-tutored for captivity;  
 360 To quit my pleasure, and, from month to month,  
 361 Take up a station calmly on the perch  
 362 Of sedentary peace. Those lovely forms  
 363 Had also left less space within my mind,  
 364 Which, wrought upon instinctively, had found  
 365 A freshness in those objects of her love,  
 366 A winning power, beyond all other power.  
 367 Not that I slighted books,---that were to lack  
 368 All sense,---but other passions in me ruled,  
 369 Passions more fervent, making me less prompt  
 370 To in-door study than was wise or well,  
 371 Or suited to those years. Yet I, though used  
 372 In magisterial liberty to rove,  
 373 Culling such flowers of learning as might tempt  
 374 A random choice, could shadow forth a place  
 375 (If now I yield not to a flattering dream)  
 376 Whose studious aspect should have bent me down

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377 To instantaneous service; should at once  
 378 Have made me pay to science and to arts  
 379 And written lore, acknowledged my liege lord,  
 380 A homage frankly offered up, like that  
 381 Which I had paid to Nature. Toil and pains



382 In this recess, by thoughtful Fancy built,  
 383 Should spread from heart to heart; and stately groves,  
 384 Majestic edifices, should not want  
 385 A corresponding dignity within.  
 386 The congregating temper that pervades  
 387 Our unripe years, not wasted, should be taught  
 388 To minister to works of high attempt---  
 389 Works which the enthusiast would perform with love.  
 390 Youth should be awed, religiously possessed  
 391 With a conviction of the power that waits  
 392 On knowledge, when sincerely sought and prized  
 393 For its own sake, on glory and on praise  
 394 If but by labour won, and fit to endure  
 395 The passing day; should learn to put aside  
 396 Her trappings here, should strip them off abashed  
 397 Before antiquity and stedfast truth  
 398 And strong book-mindedness; and over all  
 399 A healthy sound simplicity should reign,  
 400 A seemly plainness, name it what you will,  
 401 Republican or pious.

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401                                    If these thoughts  
 402 Are a gratuitous emblazonry  
 403 That mocks the recreant age *we* live in, then  
 404 Be Folly and False-seeming free to affect  
 405 Whatever formal gait of discipline  
 406 Shall raise them highest in their own esteem---  
 407 Let them parade among the Schools at will,  
 408 But spare the House of God. Was ever known  
 409 The witless shepherd who persists to drive  
 410 A flock that thirsts not to a pool disliked?  
 411 A weight must surely hang on days begun  
 412 And ended with such mockery. Be wise,  
 413 Ye Presidents and Deans, and, till the spirit  
 414 Of ancient times revive, and youth be trained  
 415 At home in pious service, to your bells  
 416 Give seasonable rest, for 'tis a sound  
 417 Hollow as ever vexed the tranquil air;  
 418 And your officious doings bring disgrace  
 419 On the plain steeples of our English Church,  
 420 Whose worship, 'mid remotest village trees,  
 421 Suffers for this. Even Science, too, at hand  
 422 In daily sight of this irreverence,  
 423 Is smitten thence with an unnatural taint,  
 424 Loses her just authority, falls beneath  
 425 Collateral suspicion, else unknown.

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426 This truth escaped me not, and I confess,  
 427 That having 'mid my native hills given loose  
 428 To a schoolboy's vision, I had raised a pile  
 429 Upon the basis of the coming time,  
 430 That fell in ruins round me. Oh, what joy  
 431 To see a sanctuary for our country's youth  
 432 Informed with such a spirit as might be  
 433 Its own protection; a primeval grove,  
 434 Where, though the shades with cheerfulness were filled,  
 435 Nor indigent of songs warbled from crowds  
 436 In under-coverts, yet the countenance  
 437 Of the whole place should bear a stamp of awe;  
 438 A habitation sober and demure  
 439 For ruminating creatures; a domain  
 440 For quiet things to wander in; a haunt  
 441 In which the heron should delight to feed  
 442 By the shy rivers, and the pelican  
 443 Upon the cypress spire in lonely thought  
 444 Might sit and sun himself.---Alas! Alas!  
 445 In vain for such solemnity I looked;  
 446 Mine eyes were crossed by butterflies, ears vexed  
 447 By chattering popinjays; the inner heart  
 448 Seemed trivial, and the impresses without  
 449 Of a too gaudy region.

449 Different sight

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450 Those venerable Doctors saw of old,  
 451 When all who dwelt within these famous walls  
 452 Led in abstemiousness a studious life;  
 453 When, in forlorn and naked chambers cooped  
 454 And crowded, o'er the ponderous books they hung  
 455 Like caterpillars eating out their way  
 456 In silence, or with keen devouring noise  
 457 Not to be tracked or fathered. Princes then  
 458 At matins froze, and couched at curfew-time,  
 459 Trained up through piety and zeal to prize  
 460 Spare diet, patient labour, and plain weeds.  
 461 O seat of Arts! renowned throughout the world!  
 462 Far different service in those homely days  
 463 The Muses' modest nurslings underwent  
 464 From their first childhood: in that glorious time  
 465 When Learning, like a stranger come from far,  
 466 Sounding through Christian lands her trumpet, roused  
 467 Peasant and king; when boys and youths, the growth  
 468 Of ragged villages and crazy huts,  
 469 Forsook their homes, and, errant in the quest  
 470 Of Patron, famous school or friendly nook,

471 Where, pensioned, they in shelter might sit down,  
 472 From town to town and through wide scattered realms  
 473 Journeyed with ponderous folios in their hands;  
 474 And often, starting from some covert place,

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475 Saluted the chance comer on the road,  
 476 Crying, "An obolus, a penny give  
 477 To a poor scholar!"---when illustrious men,  
 478 Lovers of truth, by penury constrained,  
 479 Bucer, Erasmus, or Melancthon, read  
 480 Before the doors or windows of their cells  
 481 By moonshine through mere lack of taper light.

482 But peace to vain regrets! We see but darkly  
 483 Even when we look behind us, and best things  
 484 Are not so pure by nature that they needs  
 485 Must keep to all, as fondly all believe,  
 486 Their highest promise. If the mariner,  
 487 When at reluctant distance he hath passed  
 488 Some tempting island, could but know the ills  
 489 That must have fallen upon him had he brought  
 490 His bark to land upon the wished-for shore,  
 491 Good cause would oft be his to thank the surf  
 492 Whose white belt scared him thence, or wind that blew  
 493 Inexorably adverse: for myself  
 494 I grieve not; happy is the gownèd youth,  
 495 Who only misses what I missed, who falls  
 496 No lower than I fell.

496 I did not love,  
 497 Judging not ill perhaps, the timid course

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498 Of our scholastic studies; could have wished  
 499 To see the river flow with ampler range  
 500 And freer pace; but more, far more, I grieved  
 501 To see displayed among an eager few,  
 502 Who in the field of contest persevered,  
 503 Passions unworthy of youth's generous heart  
 504 And mounting spirit, pitiably repaid,  
 505 When so disturbed, whatever palms are won.  
 506 From these I turned to travel with the shoal  
 507 Of more unthinking natures, easy minds  
 508 And pillowy; yet not wanting love that makes  
 509 The day pass lightly on, when foresight sleeps,  
 510 And wisdom and the pledges interchanged  
 511 With our own inner being are forgot.

512 Yet was this deep vacation not given up  
513 To utter waste. Hitherto I had stood  
514 In my own mind remote from social life,  
515 (At least from what we commonly so name,)  
516 Like a lone shepherd on a promontory  
517 Who lacking occupation looks far forth  
518 Into the boundless sea, and rather makes  
519 Than finds what he beholds. And sure it is,  
520 That this first transit from the smooth delights  
521 And wild outlandish walks of simple youth

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522 To something that resembles an approach  
523 Towards human business, to a privileged world  
524 Within a world, a midway residence  
525 With all its intervenient imagery,  
526 Did better suit my visionary mind,  
527 Far better, than to have been bolted forth,  
528 Thrust out abruptly into Fortune's way  
529 Among the conflicts of substantial life;  
530 By a more just gradation did lead on  
531 To higher things; more naturally matured,  
532 For permanent possession, better fruits,  
533 Whether of truth or virtue, to ensue.  
534 In serious mood, but oftener, I confess,  
535 With playful zest of fancy did we note  
536 (How could we less?) the manners and the ways  
537 Of those who lived distinguished by the badge  
538 Of good or ill report; or those with whom  
539 By frame of Academic discipline  
540 We were perforce connected, men whose sway  
541 And known authority of office served  
542 To set our minds on edge, and did no more.  
543 Nor wanted we rich pastime of this kind,  
544 Found everywhere, but chiefly in the ring  
545 Of the grave Elders, men unscoured, grotesque  
546 In character, tricked out like aged trees

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547 Which through the lapse of their infirmity  
548 Give ready place to any random seed  
549 That chooses to be reared upon their trunks.

550 Here on my view, confronting vividly  
551 Those shepherd swains whom I had lately left,  
552 Appeared a different aspect of old age;  
553 How different! yet both distinctly marked,  
554 Objects embossed to catch the general eye,  
555 Or portraitures for special use designed,

556 As some might seem, so aptly do they serve  
 557 To illustrate Nature's book of rudiments---  
 558 That book upheld as with maternal care  
 559 When she would enter on her tender scheme  
 560 Of teaching comprehension with delight,  
 561 And mingling playful with pathetic thoughts.

562 The surfaces of artificial life  
 563 And manners finely wrought, the delicate race  
 564 Of colours, lurking, gleaming up and down  
 565 Through that state arras woven with silk and gold:  
 566 This wily interchange of snaky hues,  
 567 Willingly or unwillingly revealed,  
 568 I neither knew nor cared for; and as such  
 569 Were wanting here, I took what might be found

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570 Of less elaborate fabric. At this day  
 571 I smile, in many a mountain solitude  
 572 Conjuring up scenes as obsolete in freaks  
 573 Of character, in points of wit as broad,  
 574 As aught by wooden images performed  
 575 For entertainment of the gaping crowd  
 576 At wake or fair. And oftentimes do flit  
 577 Remembrances before me of old men---  
 578 Old humourists, who have been long in their graves,  
 579 And having almost in my mind put off  
 580 Their human names, have into phantoms passed  
 581 Of texture midway between life and books.

582 I play the loiterer: 'tis enough to note  
 583 That here in dwarf proportions were expressed  
 584 The limbs of the great world; its eager strifes  
 585 Collaterally portrayed, as in mock fight,  
 586 A tournament of blows, some hardly dealt  
 587 Though short of mortal combat; and whate'er  
 588 Might in this pageant be supposed to hit  
 589 An artless rustic's notice, this way less,  
 590 More that way, was not wasted upon me---  
 591 And yet the spectacle may well demand  
 592 A more substantial name, no mimic show,  
 593 Itself a living part of a live whole,

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594 A creek in the vast sea; for, all degrees  
 595 And shapes of spurious fame and short-lived praise  
 596 Here sate in state, and fed with daily alms  
 597 Retainers won away from solid good;  
 598 And here was Labour, his own bond-slave; Hope,

599 That never set the pains against the prize;  
 600 Idleness halting with his weary clog,  
 601 And poor misguided Shame, and witless Fear,  
 602 And simple Pleasure foraging for Death;  
 603 Honour misplaced, and Dignity astray;  
 604 Feuds, factions, flatteries, enmity, and guile  
 605 Murmuring submission, and bald government,  
 606 (The idol weak as the idolator,)  
 607 And Decency and Custom starving Truth,  
 608 And blind Authority beating with his staff  
 609 The child that might have led him; Emptiness  
 610 Followed as of good omen, and meek Worth  
 611 Left to herself unheard of and unknown.

612 Of these and other kindred notices  
 613 I cannot say what portion is in truth  
 614 The naked recollection of that time,  
 615 And what may rather have been called to life  
 616 By after-meditation. But delight  
 617 That, in an easy temper lulled asleep,

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618 Is still with Innocence its own reward,  
 619 This was not wanting. Carelessly I roamed  
 620 As through a wide museum from whose stores  
 621 A casual rarity is singled out  
 622 And has its brief perusal, then gives way  
 623 To others, all supplanted in their turn;  
 624 Till 'mid this crowded neighbourhood of things  
 625 That are by nature most unneighbourly,  
 626 The head turns round and cannot right itself;  
 627 And though an aching and a barren sense  
 628 Of gay confusion still be uppermost,  
 629 With few wise longings and but little love,  
 630 Yet to the memory something cleaves at last,  
 631 Whence profit may be drawn in times to come.

632 Thus in submissive idleness, my Friend!  
 633 The labouring time of autumn, winter, spring,  
 634 Eight months! rolled pleasingly away; the ninth  
 635 Came and returned me to my native hills.


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#### BOOK IV. SUMMER VACATION.

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1       **Bright** was the summer's noon when quickening steps  
 2       Followed each other till a dreary moor  
 3       Was crossed, a bare ridge clomb, upon whose top  
 4       Standing alone, as from a rampart's edge,  
 5       I overlooked the bed of Windermere,  
 6       Like a vast river, stretching in the sun.  
 7       With exultation, at my feet I saw  
 8       Lake, islands, promontories, gleaming bays,  
 9       A universe of Nature's fairest forms  
 10      Proudly revealed with instantaneous burst,  
 11      Magnificent, and beautiful, and gay.  
 12      I bounded down the hill shouting amain  
 13      For the old Ferryman; to the shout the rocks  
 14      Replied, and when the Charon of the flood  
 15      Had staid his oars, and touched the jutting pier,

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16      I did not step into the well-known boat  
 17      Without a cordial greeting. Thence with speed  
 18      Up the familiar hill I took my way  
 19      Towards that sweet Valley <sup>[End note 4: 1Kb]</sup>  where I had been reared;  
 20      'Twas but a short hour's walk, ere veering round  
 21      I saw the snow-white church upon her hill  
 22      Sit like a thronèd Lady, sending out  
 23      A gracious look all over her domain.  
 24      Yon azure smoke betrays the lurking town;  
 25      With eager footsteps I advance and reach  
 26      The cottage threshold where my journey closed.  
 27      Glad welcome had I, with some tears, perhaps,  
 28      From my old Dame, so kind and motherly,  
 29      While she perused me with a parent's pride.  
 30      The thoughts of gratitude shall fall like dew  
 31      Upon thy grave, good creature! While my heart  
 32      Can beat never will I forget thy name.  
 33      Heaven's blessing be upon thee where thou liest  
 34      After thy innocent and busy stir  
 35      In narrow cares, thy little daily growth  
 36      Of calm enjoyments, after eighty years,  
 37      And more than eighty, of untroubled life,  
 38      Childless, yet by the strangers to thy blood  
 39      Honoured with little less than filial love.  
 40      What joy was mine to see thee once again,

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41      Thee and thy dwelling, and a crowd of things  
 42      About its narrow precincts all beloved,



43 And many of them seeming yet my own!  
44 Why should I speak of what a thousand hearts  
45 Have felt, and every man alive can guess?  
46 The rooms, the court, the garden were not left  
47 Long unsaluted, nor the sunny seat  
48 Round the stone table under the dark pine,  
49 Friendly to studious or to festive hours;  
50 Nor that unruly child of mountain birth,  
51 The famous brook, who, soon as he was boxed  
52 Within our garden, found himself at once,  
53 As if by trick insidious and unkind,  
54 Stripped of his voice and left to dimple down  
55 (Without an effort and without a will)  
56 A channel paved by man's officious care.  
57 I looked at him and smiled, and smiled again,  
58 And in the press of twenty thousand thoughts,  
59 "Ha," quoth I, "pretty prisoner, are you there!"  
60 Well might sarcastic Fancy then have whispered,  
61 "An emblem here behold of thy own life;  
62 In its late course of even days with all  
63 Their smooth enthrallment;" but the heart was full,  
64 Too full for that reproach. My aged Dame  
65 Walked proudly at my side: she guided me;

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66 I willing, nay---nay, wishing to be led.  
67 ---The face of every neighbour whom I met  
68 Was like a volume to me; some were hailed  
69 Upon the road, some busy at their work,  
70 Unceremonious greetings interchanged  
71 With half the length of a long field between.  
72 Among my schoolfellows I scattered round  
73 Like recognitions, but with some constraint  
74 Attended, doubtless, with a little pride,  
75 But with more shame, for my habiliments,  
76 The transformation wrought by gay attire.  
77 Not less delighted did I take my place  
78 At our domestic table: and, dear Friend!  
79 In this endeavour simply to relate  
80 A Poet's history, may I leave untold  
81 The thankfulness with which I laid me down  
82 In my accustomed bed, more welcome now  
83 Perhaps than if it had been more desired  
84 Or been more often thought of with regret;  
85 That lowly bed whence I had heard the wind  
86 Roar and the rain beat hard, where I so oft  
87 Had lain awake on summer nights to watch  
88 The moon in splendour couched among the leaves  
89 Of a tall ash, that near our cottage stood;  
90 Had watched her with fixed eyes while to and fro

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91 In the dark summit of the waving tree  
92 She rocked with every impulse of the breeze.

93 Among the favourites whom it pleased me well  
94 To see again, was one by ancient right  
95 Our inmate, a rough terrier of the hills;  
96 By birth and call of nature pre-ordained  
97 To hunt the badger and unearth the fox  
98 Among the impervious crags, but having been  
99 From youth our own adopted, he had passed  
100 Into a gentler service. And when first  
101 The boyish spirit flagged, and day by day  
102 Along my veins I kindled with the stir,  
103 The fermentation, and the vernal heat  
104 Of poesy, affecting private shades  
105 Like a sick Lover, then this dog was used  
106 To watch me, an attendant and a friend,  
107 Obsequious to my steps early and late,  
108 Though often of such dilatory walk  
109 Tired, and uneasy at the halts I made.  
110 A hundred times when, roving high and low,  
111 I have been harassed with the toil of verse,  
112 Much pains and little progress, and at once  
113 Some lovely Image in the song rose up  
114 Full-formed, like Venus rising from the sea;

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115 Then have I darted forwards to let loose  
116 My hand upon his back with stormy joy,  
117 Caressing him again and yet again.  
118 And when at evening on the public way  
119 I sauntered, like a river murmuring  
120 And talking to itself when all things else  
121 Are still, the creature trotted on before;  
122 Such was his custom; but whene'er he met  
123 A passenger approaching, he would turn  
124 To give me timely notice, and straightway,  
125 Grateful for that admonishment, I hushed  
126 My voice, composed my gait, and, with the air  
127 And mien of one whose thoughts are free, advanced  
128 To give and take a greeting that might save  
129 My name from piteous rumours, such as wait  
130 On men suspected to be crazed in brain.

131 Those walks well worthy to be prized and loved---  
132 Regretted!---that word, too, was on my tongue,  
133 But they were richly laden with all good,

134 And cannot be remembered but with thanks  
135 And gratitude, and perfect joy of heart---  
136 Those walks in all their freshness now came back  
137 Like a returning Spring. When first I made  
138 Once more the circuit of our little lake,

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139 If ever happiness hath lodged with man,  
140 That day consummate happiness was mine,  
141 Wide-spreading, steady, calm, contemplative.  
142 The sun was set, or setting, when I left  
143 Our cottage door, and evening soon brought on  
144 A sober hour, not winning or serene,  
145 For cold and raw the air was, and untuned;  
146 But as a face we love is sweetest then  
147 When sorrow damps it, or, whatever look  
148 It chance to wear, is sweetest if the heart  
149 Have fulness in herself; even so with me  
150 It fared that evening. Gently did my soul  
151 Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood  
152 Naked, as in the presence of her God.  
153 While on I walked, a comfort seemed to touch  
154 A heart that had not been disconsolate:  
155 Strength came where weakness was not known to be,  
156 At least not felt; and restoration came  
157 Like an intruder knocking at the door  
158 Of unacknowledged weariness. I took  
159 The balance, and with firm hand weighed myself.  
160 ---Of that external scene which round me lay,  
161 Little, in this abstraction, did I see;  
162 Remembered less; but I had inward hopes  
163 And swellings of the spirit, was rapt and soothed,

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164 Conversed with promises, had glimmering views  
165 How life pervades the undecaying mind;  
166 How the immortal soul with God-like power  
167 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep  
168 That time can lay upon her; how on earth,  
169 Man, if he do but live within the light  
170 Of high endeavours, daily spreads abroad  
171 His being armed with strength that cannot fail.  
172 Nor was there want of milder thoughts, of love  
173 Of innocence, and holiday repose;  
174 And more than pastoral quiet, 'mid the stir  
175 Of boldest projects, and a peaceful end  
176 At last, or glorious, by endurance won.  
177 Thus musing, in a wood I sate me down  
178 Alone, continuing there to muse: the slopes

179 And heights meanwhile were slowly overspread  
 180 With darkness, and before a rippling breeze  
 181 The long lake lengthened out its hoary line,  
 182 And in the sheltered coppice where I sate,  
 183 Around me from among the hazel leaves,  
 184 Now here, now there, moved by the straggling wind,  
 185 Came ever and anon a breath-like sound,  
 186 Quick as the pantings of the faithful dog,  
 187 The off and on companion of my walk;  
 188 And such, at times, believing them to be,

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189 I turned my head to look if he were there;  
 190 Then into solemn thought I passed once more.  
  
 191 A freshness also found I at this time  
 192 In human Life, the daily life of those  
 193 Whose occupations really I loved;  
 194 The peaceful scene oft filled me with surprise  
 195 Changed like a garden in the heat of spring  
 196 After an eight-days' absence. For (to omit  
 197 The things which were the same and yet appeared  
 198 Far otherwise) amid this rural solitude,  
 199 A narrow Vale where each was known to all,  
 200 'Twas not indifferent to a youthful mind  
 201 To mark some sheltering bower or sunny nook,  
 202 Where an old man had used to sit alone,  
 203 Now vacant; pale-faced babes whom I had left  
 204 In arms, now rosy prattlers at the feet  
 205 Of a pleased grandame tottering up and down;  
 206 And growing girls whose beauty, filched away  
 207 With all its pleasant promises, was gone  
 208 To deck some slighted playmate's homely cheek.  
  
 209 Yes, I had something of a subtler sense,  
 210 And often looking round was moved to smiles  
 211 Such as a delicate work of humour breeds;

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212 I read, without design, the opinions, thoughts,  
 213 Of those plain-living people now observed  
 214 With clearer knowledge; with another eye  
 215 I saw the quiet woodman in the woods,  
 216 The shepherd roam the hills. With new delight,  
 217 This chiefly, did I note my grey-haired Dame;  
 218 Saw her go forth to church or other work  
 219 Of state, equipped in monumental trim;  
 220 Short velvet cloak, (her bonnet of the like),  
 221 A mantle such as Spanish Cavaliers

222 Wore in old time. Her smooth domestic life,  
 223 Affectionate without disquietude,  
 224 Her talk, her business, pleased me; and no less  
 225 Her clear though shallow stream of piety  
 226 That ran on Sabbath days a fresher course;  
 227 With thoughts unfelt till now I saw her read  
 228 Her Bible on hot Sunday afternoons,  
 229 And loved the book, when she had dropped asleep  
 230 And made of it a pillow for her head.

231 Nor less do I remember to have felt,  
 232 Distinctly manifested at this time,  
 233 A human-heartedness about my love  
 234 For objects hitherto the absolute wealth  
 235 Of my own private being and no more:

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236 Which I had loved, even as a blessed spirit  
 237 Or Angel, if he were to dwell on earth,  
 238 Might love in individual happiness.  
 239 But now there opened on me other thoughts  
 240 Of change, congratulation or regret,  
 241 A pensive feeling! It spread far and wide;  
 242 The trees, the mountains shared it, and the brooks,  
 243 The stars of Heaven, now seen in their old haunts---  
 244 White Sirius glittering o'er the southern crags,  
 245 Orion with his belt, and those fair Seven,  
 246 Acquaintances of every little child,  
 247 And Jupiter, my own beloved star!  
 248 Whatever shadings of mortality,  
 249 Whatever imports from the world of death  
 250 Had come among these objects heretofore,  
 251 Were, in the main, of mood less tender: strong,  
 252 Deep, gloomy were they, and severe; the scatterings  
 253 Of awe or tremulous dread, that had given way  
 254 In later youth to yearnings of a love  
 255 Enthusiastic, to delight and hope.

256 As one who hangs down-bending from the side  
 257 Of a slow-moving boat, upon the breast  
 258 Of a still water, solacing himself  
 259 With such discoveries as his eye can make

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260 Beneath him in the bottom of the deep,  
 261 Sees many beauteous sights---weeds, fishes, flowers,  
 262 Grotts, pebbles, roots of trees, and fancies more,  
 263 Yet often is perplexed and cannot part  
 264 The shadow from the substance, rocks and sky,

265 Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth  
 266 Of the clear flood, from things which there abide  
 267 In their true dwelling; now is crossed by gleam  
 268 Of his own image, by a sun-beam now,  
 269 And wavering motions sent he knows not whence,  
 270 Impediments that make his task more sweet;  
 271 Such pleasant office have we long pursued  
 272 Incumbent o'er the surface of past time  
 273 With like success, nor often have appeared  
 274 Shapes fairer or less doubtfully discerned  
 275 Than these to which the Tale, indulgent Friend!  
 276 Would now direct thy notice. Yet in spite  
 277 Of pleasure won, and knowledge not withheld,  
 278 There was an inner falling off---I loved,  
 279 Loved deeply all that had been loved before,  
 280 More deeply even than ever: but a swarm  
 281 Of heady schemes jostling each other, gawds,  
 282 And feast and dance, and public revelry,  
 283 And sports and games (too grateful in themselves,  
 284 Yet in themselves less grateful, I believe,

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285 Than as they were a badge glossy and fresh  
 286 Of manliness and freedom) all conspired  
 287 To lure my mind from firm habitual quest  
 288 Of feeding pleasures, to depress the zeal  
 289 And damp those yearnings which had once been mine  
 290 A wild, unworldly-minded youth, given up  
 291 To his own eager thoughts. It would demand  
 292 Some skill, and longer time than may be spared,  
 293 To paint these vanities, and how they wrought  
 294 In haunts where they, till now, had been unknown.  
 295 It seemed the very garments that I wore  
 296 Preyed on my strength, and stopped the quiet stream  
 297 Of self-forgetfulness.

297 Yes, that heartless chase  
 298 Of trivial pleasures was a poor exchange  
 299 For books and nature at that early age.  
 300 'Tis true, some casual knowledge might be gained  
 301 Of character or life; but at that time,  
 302 Of manners put to school I took small note,  
 303 And all my deeper passions lay elsewhere.  
 304 Far better had it been to exalt the mind  
 305 By solitary study, to uphold  
 306 Intense desire through meditative peace;  
 307 And yet, for chastisement of these regrets,  
 308 The memory of one particular hour

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309 Doth here rise up against me. 'Mid a throng  
 310 Of maids and youths, old men, and matrons staid,  
 311 A medley of all tempers, I had passed  
 312 The night in dancing, gaiety, and mirth,  
 313 With din of instruments and shuffling feet,  
 314 And glancing forms, and tapers glittering,  
 315 And unaimed prattle flying up and down;  
 316 Spirits upon the stretch, and here and there  
 317 Slight shocks of young love-liking interspersed,  
 318 Whose transient pleasure mounted to the head,  
 319 And tingled through the veins. Ere we retired,  
 320 The cock had crowed, and now the eastern sky  
 321 Was kindling, not unseen, from humble copse  
 322 And open field, through which the pathway wound,  
 323 And homeward led my steps. Magnificent  
 324 The morning rose, in memorable pomp,  
 325 Glorious as e'er I had beheld---in front,  
 326 The sea lay laughing at a distance; near,  
 327 The solid mountains shone, bright as the clouds,  
 328 Grain-tinctured, drenched in empyrean light;  
 329 And in the meadows and the lower grounds  
 330 Was all the sweetness of a common dawn---  
 331 Dews, vapours, and the melody of birds,  
 332 And labourers going forth to till the fields.

333 Ah! need I say, dear Friend! that to the brim

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334 My heart was full; I made no vows, but vows  
 335 Were then made for me; bond unknown to me  
 336 Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,  
 337 A dedicated Spirit. On I walked  
 338 In thankful blessedness, which yet survives.

339 Strange rendezvous! My mind was at that time  
 340 A parti-coloured show of grave and gay,  
 341 Solid and light, short-sighted and profound;  
 342 Of inconsiderate habits and sedate,  
 343 Consorting in one mansion unreprieved.  
 344 The worth I knew of powers that I possessed,  
 345 Though slighted and too oft misused. Besides,  
 346 That summer, swarming as it did with thoughts  
 347 Transient and idle, lacked not intervals  
 348 When Folly from the frown of fleeting Time  
 349 Shrunk, and the mind experienced in herself  
 350 Conformity as just as that of old  
 351 To the end and written spirit of God's works,  
 352 Whether held forth in Nature or in Man,  
 353 Through pregnant vision, separate or conjoined.



354 When from our better selves we have too long  
355 Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,  
356 Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,

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357 How gracious, how benign, is Solitude;  
358 How potent a mere image of her sway;  
359 Most potent when impressed upon the mind  
360 With an appropriate human centre---hermit,  
361 Deep in the bosom of the wilderness;  
362 Votary (in vast cathedral, where no foot  
363 Is treading, where no other face is seen)  
364 Kneeling at prayers; or watchman on the top  
365 Of lighthouse, beaten by Atlantic waves;  
366 Or as the soul of that great Power is met  
367 Sometimes embodied on a public road,  
368 When, for the night deserted, it assumes  
369 A character of quiet more profound  
370 Than pathless wastes.

370   Once, when those summer months  
371 Were flown, and autumn brought its annual show  
372 Of oars with oars contending, sails with sails,  
373 Upon Winander's spacious breast, it chanced  
374 That---after I had left a flower-decked room  
375 (Whose in-door pastime, lighted up, survived  
376 To a late hour), and spirits overwrought  
377 Were making night do penance for a day  
378 Spent in a round of strenuous idleness---  
379 My homeward course led up a long ascent,  
380 Where the road's watery surface, to the top

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381 Of that sharp rising, glittered to the moon  
382 And bore the semblance of another stream  
383 Stealing with silent lapse to join the brook  
384 That murmured in the vale. All else was still;  
385 No living thing appeared in earth or air,  
386 And, save the flowing water's peaceful voice,  
387 Sound there was none---but, lo! an uncouth shape,  
388 Shown by a sudden turning of the road,  
389 So near that, slipping back into the shade  
390 Of a thick hawthorn, I could mark him well,  
391 Myself unseen. He was of stature tall,  
392 A span above man's common measure, tall,  
393 Stiff, lank, and upright; a more meagre man  
394 Was never seen before by night or day.  
395 Long were his arms, pallid his hands; his mouth

396 Looked ghastly in the moonlight: from behind,  
397 A mile-stone propped him; I could also ken  
398 That he was clothed in military garb,  
399 Though faded, yet entire. Companionless,  
400 No dog attending, by no staff sustained,  
401 He stood, and in his very dress appeared  
402 A desolation, a simplicity,  
403 To which the trappings of a gaudy world  
404 Make a strange back-ground. From his lips, ere long,  
405 Issued low muttered sounds, as if of pain

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406 Or some uneasy thought; yet still his form  
407 Kept the same awful steadiness---at his feet  
408 His shadow lay, and moved not. From self-blame  
409 Not wholly free, I watched him thus; at length  
410 Subduing my heart's specious cowardice,  
411 I left the shady nook where I had stood  
412 And hailed him. Slowly from his resting-place  
413 He rose, and with a lean and wasted arm  
414 In measured gesture lifted to his head  
415 Returned my salutation; then resumed  
416 His station as before; and when I asked  
417 His history, the veteran, in reply,  
418 Was neither slow nor eager; but, unmoved,  
419 And with a quiet uncomplaining voice,  
420 A stately air of mild indifference,  
421 He told in few plain words a soldier's tale---  
422 That in the Tropic Islands he had served,  
423 Whence he had landed scarcely three weeks past;  
424 That on his landing he had been dismissed,  
425 And now was travelling towards his native home.  
426 This heard, I said, in pity, "Come with me."  
427 He stooped, and straightway from the ground took up  
428 An oaken staff by me yet unobserved---  
429 A staff which must have dropt from his slack hand  
430 And lay till now neglected in the grass.

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431 Though weak his step and cautious, he appeared  
432 To travel without pain, and I beheld,  
433 With an astonishment but ill suppressed,  
434 His ghostly figure moving at my side;  
435 Nor could I, while we journeyed thus, forbear  
436 To turn from present hardships to the past,  
437 And speak of war, battle, and pestilence,  
438 Sprinkling this talk with questions, better spared,  
439 On what he might himself have seen or felt.  
440 He all the while was in demeanour calm,

441 Concise in answer; solemn and sublime  
 442 He might have seemed, but that in all he said  
 443 There was a strange half-absence, as of one  
 444 Knowing too well the importance of his theme,  
 445 But feeling it no longer. Our discourse  
 446 Soon ended, and together on we passed  
 447 In silence through a wood gloomy and still.  
 448 Up-turning, then, along an open field,  
 449 We reached a cottage. At the door I knocked,  
 450 And earnestly to charitable care  
 451 Commended him as a poor friendless man,  
 452 Belated and by sickness overcome.  
 453 Assured that now the traveller would repose  
 454 In comfort, I entreated that henceforth  
 455 He would not linger in the public ways,

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456 But ask for timely furtherance and help  
 457 Such as his state required. At this reproof,  
 458 With the same ghastly mildness in his look,  
 459 He said, "My trust is in the God of Heaven,  
 460 And in the eye of him who passes me!"

461 The cottage door was speedily unbarred,  
 462 And now the soldier touched his hat once more  
 463 With his lean hand, and in a faltering voice,  
 464 Whose tone bespoke reviving interests  
 465 Till then unfelt, he thanked me; I returned  
 466 The farewell blessing of the patient man,  
 467 And so we parted. Back I cast a look,  
 468 And lingered near the door a little space,  
 469 Then sought with quiet heart my distant home.

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## BOOK V. BOOKS.

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1 **When** Contemplation, like the night-calm felt  
 2 Through earth and sky, spreads widely, and sends deep  
 3 Into the soul its tranquillising power,  
 4 Even then I sometimes grieve for thee, O Man,  
 5 Earth's paramount Creature! not so much for woes  
 6 That thou endurest; heavy though that weight be,

7 Cloud-like it mounts, or touched with light divine  
 8 Doth melt away; but for those palms achieved,  
 9 Through length of time, by patient exercise  
 10 Of study and hard thought; there, there, it is  
 11 That sadness finds its fuel. Hitherto,  
 12 In progress through this Verse, my mind hath looked  
 13 Upon the speaking face of earth and heaven  
 14 As her prime teacher, intercourse with man  
 15 Established by the sovereign Intellect,  
 16 Who through that bodily image hath diffused,

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17 As might appear to the eye of fleeting time,  
 18 A deathless spirit. Thou also, man! hast wrought,  
 19 For commerce of thy nature with herself,  
 20 Things that aspire to unconquerable life;  
 21 And yet we feel---we cannot choose but feel---  
 22 That they must perish. Tremblings of the heart  
 23 It gives, to think that our immortal being  
 24 No more shall need such garments; and yet man,  
 25 As long as he shall be the child of earth,  
 26 Might almost "weep to have" what he may lose,  
 27 Nor be himself extinguished, but survive,  
 28 Abject, depressed, forlorn, disconsolate.  
 29 A thought is with me sometimes, and I say,---  
 30 Should the whole frame of earth by inward throes  
 31 Be wrenched, or fire come down from far to scorch  
 32 Her pleasant habitations, and dry up  
 33 Old Ocean, in his bed left singed and bare,  
 34 Yet would the living Presence still subsist  
 35 Victorious, and composure would ensue,  
 36 And kindlings like the morning---presage sure  
 37 Of day returning and of life revived.  
 38 But all the meditations of mankind,  
 39 Yea, all the adamantine holds of truth  
 40 By reason built, or passion, which itself  
 41 Is highest reason in a soul sublime;

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42 The consecrated works of Bard and Sage,  
 43 Sensuous or intellectual, wrought by men,  
 44 Twin labourers and heirs of the same hopes;  
 45 Where would they be? Oh! why hath not the Mind,  
 46 Some element to stamp her image on  
 47 In nature somewhat nearer to her own?  
 48 Why, gifted with such powers to send abroad  
 49 Her spirit, must it lodge in shrines so frail?

50 One day, when from my lips a like complaint

51 Had fallen in presence of a studious friend,  
 52 He with a smile made answer, that in truth  
 53 'Twas going far to seek disquietude;  
 54 But on the front of his reproof confessed  
 55 That he himself had oftentimes given way  
 56 To kindred hauntings. Whereupon I told,  
 57 That once in the stillness of a summer's noon,  
 58 While I was seated in a rocky cave  
 59 By the sea-side, perusing, so it chanced,  
 60 The famous history of the errant knight  
 61 Recorded by Cervantes, these same thoughts  
 62 Beset me, and to height unusual rose,  
 63 While listlessly I sate, and, having closed  
 64 The book, had turned my eyes toward the wide sea.  
 65 On poetry and geometric truth,

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66 And their high privilege of lasting life,  
 67 From all internal injury exempt,  
 68 I mused, upon these chiefly: and at length,  
 69 My senses yielding to the sultry air,  
 70 Sleep seized me, and I passed into a dream.  
 71 I saw before me stretched a boundless plain  
 72 Of sandy wilderness, all black and void,  
 73 And as I looked around, distress and fear  
 74 Came creeping over me, when at my side,  
 75 Close at my side, an uncouth shape appeared  
 76 Upon a dromedary, mounted high.  
 77 He seemed an Arab of the Bedouin tribes:  
 78 A lance he bore, and underneath one arm  
 79 A stone, and in the opposite hand a shell  
 80 Of a surpassing brightness. At the sight  
 81 Much I rejoiced, not doubting but a guide  
 82 Was present, one who with unerring skill  
 83 Would through the desert lead me; and while yet  
 84 I looked and looked, self-questioned what this freight  
 85 Which the new-comer carried through the waste  
 86 Could mean, the Arab told me that the stone  
 87 (To give it in the language of the dream)  
 88 Was "Euclid's Elements;" and "This," said he,  
 89 "Is something of more worth;" and at the word  
 90 Stretched forth the shell, so beautiful in shape,

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91 In colour so resplendent, with command  
 92 That I should hold it to my ear. I did so,  
 93 And heard that instant in an unknown tongue,  
 94 Which yet I understood, articulate sounds,  
 95 A loud prophetic blast of harmony;

96 An Ode, in passion uttered, which foretold  
97 Destruction to the children of the earth  
98 By deluge, now at hand. No sooner ceased  
99 The song, than the Arab with calm look declared  
100 That all would come to pass of which the voice  
101 Had given forewarning, and that he himself  
102 Was going then to bury those two books:  
103 The one that held acquaintance with the stars,  
104 And wedded soul to soul in purest bond  
105 Of reason, undisturbed by space or time;  
106 The other that was a god, yea many gods,  
107 Had voices more than all the winds, with power  
108 To exhilarate the spirit, and to soothe,  
109 Through every clime, the heart of human kind.  
110 While this was uttering, strange as it may seem,  
111 I wondered not, although I plainly saw  
112 The one to be a stone, the other a shell;  
113 Nor doubted once but that they both were books,  
114 Having a perfect faith in all that passed.  
115 Far stronger, now, grew the desire I felt

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116 To cleave unto this man; but when I prayed  
117 To share his enterprise, he hurried on  
118 Reckless of me: I followed, not unseen,  
119 For oftentimes he cast a backward look,  
120 Grasping his twofold treasure.---Lance in rest,  
121 He rode, I keeping pace with him; and now  
122 He, to my fancy, had become the knight  
123 Whose tale Cervantes tells; yet not the knight,  
124 But was an Arab of the desert too;  
125 Of these was neither, and was both at once.  
126 His countenance, meanwhile, grew more disturbed;  
127 And, looking backwards when he looked, mine eyes  
128 Saw, over half the wilderness diffused,  
129 A bed of glittering light: I asked the cause:  
130 "It is," said he, "the waters of the deep  
131 Gathering upon us;" quickening then the pace  
132 Of the unwieldy creature he bestrode,  
133 He left me: I called after him aloud;  
134 He heeded not; but, with his twofold charge  
135 Still in his grasp, before me, full in view,  
136 Went hurrying o'er the illimitable waste,  
137 With the fleet waters of a drowning world  
138 In chase of him; whereat I waked in terror,  
139 And saw the sea before me, and the book,  
140 In which I had been reading, at my side.

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141 Full often, taking from the world of sleep  
142 This Arab phantom, which I thus beheld,  
143 This semi-Quixote, I to him have given  
144 A substance, fancied him a living man,  
145 A gentle dweller in the desert, crazed  
146 By love and feeling, and internal thought  
147 Protracted among endless solitudes;  
148 Have shaped him wandering upon this quest!  
149 Nor have I pitied him; but rather felt  
150 Reverence was due to a being thus employed;  
151 And thought that, in the blind and awful lair  
152 Of such a madness, reason did lie couched.  
153 Enow there are on earth to take in charge  
154 Their wives, their children, and their virgin loves,  
155 Or whatsoever else the heart holds dear;  
156 Enow to stir for these; yea, will I say,  
157 Contemplating in soberness the approach  
158 Of an event so dire, by signs in earth  
159 Or heaven made manifest, that I could share  
160 That maniac's fond anxiety, and go  
161 Upon like errand. Oftentimes at least  
162 Me hath such strong entrancement overcome,  
163 When I have held a volume in my hand,  
164 Poor earthly casket of immortal verse,  
165 Shakespeare, or Milton, labourers divine!

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166 Great and benign, indeed, must be the power  
167 Of living nature, which could thus so long  
168 Detain me from the best of other guides  
169 And dearest helpers, left unthanked, unpraised,  
170 Even in the time of lisping infancy;  
171 And later down, in prattling childhood even,  
172 While I was travelling back among those days,  
173 How could I ever play an ingrate's part?  
174 Once more should I have made those bowers resound,  
175 By intermingling strains of thankfulness  
176 With their own thoughtless melodies; at least  
177 It might have well beseemed me to repeat  
178 Some simply fashioned tale, to tell again,  
179 In slender accents of sweet verse, some tale  
180 That did bewitch me then, and soothes me now.  
181 O Friend! O Poet! brother of my soul,  
182 Think not that I could pass along untouched  
183 By these remembrances. Yet wherefore speak?  
184 Why call upon a few weak words to say  
185 What is already written in the hearts  
186 Of all that breathe?---what in the path of all



187 Drops daily from the tongue of every child,  
188 Wherever man is found? The trickling tear  
189 Upon the cheek of listening Infancy  
190 Proclaims it, and the insuperable look

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191 That drinks as if it never could be full.  
  
192 That portion of my story I shall leave  
193 There registered: whatever else of power  
194 Or pleasure sown, or fostered thus, may be  
195 Peculiar to myself, let that remain  
196 Where still it works, though hidden from all search  
197 Among the depths of time. Yet is it just  
198 That here, in memory of all books which lay  
199 Their sure foundations in the heart of man,  
200 Whether by native prose, or numerous verse,  
201 That in the name of all inspirèd souls,  
202 From Homer the great Thunderer, from the voice  
203 That roars along the bed of Jewish song,  
204 And that more varied and elaborate,  
205 Those trumpet-tones of harmony that shake  
206 Our shores in England,---from those loftiest notes  
207 Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made  
208 For cottagers and spinners at the wheel,  
209 And sun-burnt travellers resting their tired limbs,  
210 Stretched under wayside hedge-rows, ballad tunes,  
211 Food for the hungry ears of little ones,  
212 And of old men who have survived their joys:  
213 'Tis just that in behalf of these, the works,  
214 And of the men that framed them, whether known,

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215 Or sleeping nameless in their scattered graves,  
216 That I should here assert their rights, attest  
217 Their honours, and should, once for all, pronounce  
218 Their benediction; speak of them as Powers  
219 For ever to be hallowed; only less,  
220 For what we are and what we may become,  
221 Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,  
222 Or His pure Word by miracle revealed.  
  
223 Rarely and with reluctance would I stoop  
224 To transitory themes; yet I rejoice,  
225 And, by these thoughts admonished, will pour out  
226 Thanks with uplifted heart, that I was reared  
227 Safe from an evil which these days have laid  
228 Upon the children of the land, a pest  
229 That might have dried me up, body and soul.

230 This verse is dedicate to Nature's self,  
 231 And things that teach as Nature teaches: then,  
 232 Oh! where had been the Man, the Poet where,  
 233 Where had we been, we two, beloved Friend!  
 234 If in the season of unperilous choice,  
 235 In lieu of wandering, as we did, through vales  
 236 Rich with indigenous produce, open ground  
 237 Of Fancy, happy pastures ranged at will,  
 238 We had been followed, hourly watched, and noosed,

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239 Each in his several melancholy walk  
 240 Stringed like a poor man's heifer at its feed,  
 241 Led through the lanes in forlorn servitude;  
 242 Or rather like a stallèd ox debarred  
 243 From touch of growing grass, that may not taste  
 244 A flower till it have yielded up its sweets  
 245 A prelibation to the mower's scythe.

246 Behold the parent hen amid her brood,  
 247 Though fledged and feathered, and well pleased to part  
 248 And straggle from her presence, still a brood,  
 249 And she herself from the maternal bond  
 250 Still undischarged; yet doth she little more  
 251 Than move with them in tenderness and love,  
 252 A centre to the circle which they make;  
 253 And now and then, alike from need of theirs  
 254 And call of her own natural appetites,  
 255 She scratches, ransacks up the earth for food,  
 256 Which they partake at pleasure. Early died  
 257 My honoured Mother, she who was the heart  
 258 And hinge of all our learnings and our loves:  
 259 She left us destitute, and, as we might,  
 260 Trooping together. Little suits it me  
 261 To break upon the sabbath of her rest  
 262 With any thought that looks at others' blame;

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263 Nor would I praise her but in perfect love.  
 264 Hence am I checked: but let me boldly say,  
 265 In gratitude, and for the sake of truth,  
 266 Unheard by her, that she, not falsely taught,  
 267 Fetching her goodness rather from times past,  
 268 Than shaping novelties for times to come,  
 269 Had no presumption, no such jealousy,  
 270 Nor did by habit of her thoughts mistrust  
 271 Our nature, but had virtual faith that He  
 272 Who fills the mother's breast with innocent milk,  
 273 Doth also for our nobler part provide,

274 Under His great correction and control,  
 275 As innocent instincts, and as innocent food;  
 276 Or draws for minds that are left free to trust  
 277 In the simplicities of opening life  
 278 Sweet honey out of spurned or dreaded weeds.  
 279 This was her creed, and therefore she was pure  
 280 From anxious fear of error or mishap,  
 281 And evil, overweeningly so called;  
 282 Was not puffed up by false unnatural hopes,  
 283 Nor selfish with unnecessary cares,  
 284 Nor with impatience from the season asked  
 285 More than its timely produce; rather loved  
 286 The hours for what they are, than from regard  
 287 Glanced on their promises in restless pride.

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288 Such was she---not from faculties more strong  
 289 Than others have, but from the times, perhaps,  
 290 And spot in which she lived, and through a grace  
 291 Of modest meekness, simple-mindedness,  
 292 A heart that found benignity and hope,  
 293 Being itself benign.

293 My drift I fear  
 294 Is scarcely obvious; but, that common sense  
 295 May try this modern system by its fruits,  
 296 Leave let me take to place before her sight  
 297 A specimen pourtrayed with faithful hand.  
 298 Full early trained to worship seemliness,  
 299 This model of a child is never known  
 300 To mix in quarrels; that were far beneath  
 301 Its dignity; with gifts he bubbles o'er  
 302 As generous as a fountain; selfishness  
 303 May not come near him, nor the little throng  
 304 Of flitting pleasures tempt him from his path;  
 305 The wandering beggars propagate his name,  
 306 Dumb creatures find him tender as a nun,  
 307 And natural or supernatural fear,  
 308 Unless it leap upon him in a dream,  
 309 Touches him not. To enhance the wonder, see  
 310 How arch his notices, how nice his sense  
 311 Of the ridiculous; not blind is he

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312 To the broad follies of the licensed world,  
 313 Yet innocent himself withal, though shrewd,  
 314 And can read lectures upon innocence;  
 315 A miracle of scientific lore,  
 316 Ships he can guide across the pathless sea,

317 And tell you all their cunning; he can read  
 318 The inside of the earth, and spell the stars;  
 319 He knows the policies of foreign lands;  
 320 Can string you names of districts, cities, towns,  
 321 The whole world over, tight as beads of dew  
 322 Upon a gossamer thread; he sifts, he weighs;  
 323 All things are put to question; he must live  
 324 Knowing that he grows wiser every day  
 325 Or else not live at all, and seeing too  
 326 Each little drop of wisdom as it falls  
 327 Into the dimpling cistern of his heart:  
 328 For this unnatural growth the trainer blame,  
 329 Pity the tree.---Poor human vanity,  
 330 Wert thou extinguished, little would be left  
 331 Which he could truly love; but how escape?  
 332 For, ever as a thought of purer birth  
 333 Rises to lead him toward a better clime,  
 334 Some intermeddler still is on the watch  
 335 To drive him back, and pound him, like a stray,  
 336 Within the pinfold of his own conceit.


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337 Meanwhile old grandame earth is grieved to find  
 338 The playthings, which her love designed for him,  
 339 Unthought of: in their woodland beds the flowers  
 340 Weep, and the river sides are all forlorn.  
 341 Oh! give us once again the wishing cap  
 342 Of Fortunatus, and the invisible coat  
 343 Of Jack the Giant-killer, Robin Hood,  
 344 And Sabra in the forest with St. George!  
 345 The child, whose love is here, at least, doth reap  
 346 One precious gain, that he forgets himself.

347 These mighty workmen of our later age,  
 348 Who, with a broad highway, have overbridged  
 349 The froward chaos of futurity,  
 350 Tamed to their bidding; they who have the skill  
 351 To manage books, and things, and make them act  
 352 On infant minds as surely as the sun  
 353 Deals with a flower; the keepers of our time,  
 354 The guides and wardens of our faculties,  
 355 Sages who in their prescience would control  
 356 All accidents, and to the very road  
 357 Which they have fashioned would confine us down,  
 358 Like engines; when will their presumption learn,  
 359 That in the unreasoning progress of the world  
 360 A wiser spirit is at work for us.

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361 A better eye than theirs, most prodigal  
 362 Of blessings, and most studious of our good,  
 363 Even in what seem our most unfruitful hours?

[End note 5: 1Kb] 

364 There was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs  
 365 And islands of Winander!---many a time  
 366 At evening, when the earliest stars began  
 367 To move along the edges of the hills,  
 368 Rising or setting, would he stand alone  
 369 Beneath the trees or by the glimmering lake,  
 370 And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands  
 371 Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth  
 372 Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,  
 373 Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,  
 374 That they might answer him; and they would shout  
 375 Across the watery vale, and shout again,  
 376 Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,  
 377 And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud,  
 378 Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild  
 379 Of jocund din; and, when a lengthened pause  
 380 Of silence came and baffled his best skill,  
 381 Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung  
 382 Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise  
 383 Has carried far into his heart the voice  
 384 Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene

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385 Would enter unawares into his mind,  
 386 With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,  
 387 Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received  
 388 Into the bosom of the steady lake.

389 This Boy was taken from his mates, and died  
 390 In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.  
 391 Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale  
 392 Where he was born; the grassy churchyard hangs  
 393 Upon a slope above the village school,  
 394 And through that churchyard when my way has led  
 395 On summer evenings, I believe that there  
 396 A long half hour together I have stood  
 397 Mute, looking at the grave in which he lies!  
 398 Even now appears before the mind's clear eye  
 399 That self-same village church; I see her sit  
 400 (The thronèd Lady whom erewhile we hailed)  
 401 On her green hill, forgetful of this Boy  
 402 Who slumbers at her feet,---forgetful, too,  
 403 Of all her silent neighbourhood of graves,  
 404 And listening only to the gladsome sounds  
 405 That, from the rural school ascending, play  
 406 Beneath her and about her. May she long

407 Behold a race of young ones like to those  
 408 With whom I herded!---(easily, indeed,

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409 We might have fed upon a fatter soil  
 410 Of arts and letters---but be that forgiven)---  
 411 A race of real children; not too wise,  
 412 Too learned, or too good; but wanton, fresh,  
 413 And bandied up and down by love and hate;  
 414 Not unresentful where self-justified;  
 415 Fierce, moody, patient, venturous, modest, shy;  
 416 Mad at their sports like withered leaves in winds;  
 417 Though doing wrong and suffering, and full oft  
 418 Bending beneath our life's mysterious weight  
 419 Of pain, and doubt, and fear, yet yielding not  
 420 In happiness to the happiest upon earth.  
 421 Simplicity in habit, truth in speech,  
 422 Be these the daily strengtheners of their minds;  
 423 May books and Nature be their early joy!  
 424 And knowledge, rightly honoured with that name---  
 425 Knowledge not purchased by the loss of power!

426 Well do I call to mind the very week  
 427 When I was first intrusted to the care  
 428 Of that sweet Valley; when its paths, its shores,  
 429 And brooks were like a dream of novelty  
 430 To my half-infant thoughts; that very week,  
 431 While I was roving up and down alone,  
 432 Seeking I knew not what, I chanced to cross

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433 One of those open fields, which, shaped like ears,  
 434 Make green peninsulas on Esthwaite's Lake:  
 435 Twilight was coming on, yet through the gloom  
 436 Appeared distinctly on the opposite shore  
 437 A heap of garments, as if left by one  
 438 Who might have there been bathing. Long I watched,  
 439 But no one owned them; meanwhile the calm lake  
 440 Grew dark with all the shadows on its breast,  
 441 And, now and then, a fish up-leaping snapped  
 442 The breathless stillness. The succeeding day,  
 443 Those unclaimed garments telling a plain tale  
 444 Drew to the spot an anxious crowd; some looked  
 445 In passive expectation from the shore,  
 446 While from a boat others hung o'er the deep,  
 447 Sounding with grappling irons and long poles.  
 448 At last, the dead man, 'mid that beauteous scene  
 449 Of trees and hills and water, bolt upright  
 450 Rose, with his ghastly face, a spectre shape

451 Of terror; yet no soul-debasing fear,  
452 Young as I was, a child not nine years old,  
453 Possessed me, for my inner eye had seen  
454 Such sights before, among the shining streams  
455 Of faëry land, the forest of romance.  
456 Their spirit hallowed the sad spectacle  
457 With decoration of ideal grace;

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458 A dignity, a smoothness, like the works  
459 Of Grecian art, and purest poesy.

460 A precious treasure had I long possessed,  
461 A little yellow, canvas-covered book,  
462 A slender abstract of the Arabian tales;  
463 And, from companions in a new abode,  
464 When first I learnt, that this dear prize of mine  
465 Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry---  
466 That there were four large volumes, laden all  
467 With kindred matter, 'twas to me, in truth,  
468 A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly,  
469 With one not richer than myself, I made  
470 A covenant that each should lay aside  
471 The moneys he possessed, and hoard up more,  
472 Till our joint savings had amassed enough  
473 To make this book our own. Through several months,  
474 In spite of all temptation, we preserved  
475 Religiously that vow; but firmness failed,  
476 Nor were we ever masters of our wish.

477 And when thereafter to my father's house  
478 The holidays returned me, there to find  
479 That golden store of books which I had left,  
480 What joy was mine! How often in the course

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481 Of those glad respites, though a soft west wind  
482 Ruffled the waters to the angler's wish  
483 For a whole day together, have I lain  
484 Down by thy side, O Derwent! murmuring stream,  
485 On the hot stones, and in the glaring sun,  
486 And there have read, devouring as I read,  
487 Defrauding the day's glory, desperate!  
488 Till with a sudden bound of smart reproach,  
489 Such as an idler deals with in his shame,  
490 I to the sport betook myself again.

491 A gracious spirit o'er this earth presides,  
492 And o'er the heart of man: invisibly



493 It comes, to works of unreproved delight,  
 494 And tendency benign, directing those  
 495 Who care not, know not, think not what they do.  
 496 The tales that charm away the wakeful night  
 497 In Araby, romances; legends penned  
 498 For solace by dim light of monkish lamps;  
 499 Fictions, for ladies of their love, devised  
 500 By youthful squires; adventures endless, spun  
 501 By the dismantled warrior in old age,  
 502 Out of the bowels of those very schemes  
 503 In which his youth did first extravagate;  
 504 These spread like day, and something in the shape

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505 Of these will live till man shall be no more.  
 506 Dumb yearnings, hidden appetites, are ours,  
 507 And *they must* have their food. Our childhood sits,  
 508 Our simple childhood, sits upon a throne  
 509 That hath more power than all the elements.  
 510 I guess not what this tells of Being past,  
 511 Nor what it augurs of the life to come;  
 512 But so it is, and, in that dubious hour,  
 513 That twilight when we first begin to see  
 514 This dawning earth, to recognise, expect,  
 515 And in the long probation that ensues,  
 516 The time of trial, ere we learn to live  
 517 In reconciliation with our stinted powers;  
 518 To endure this state of meagre vassalage,  
 519 Unwilling to forego, confess, submit,  
 520 Uneasy and unsettled, yoke-fellows  
 521 To custom, mettlesome, and not yet tamed  
 522 And humbled down; oh! then we feel, we feel,  
 523 We know where we have friends. Ye dreamers, then,  
 524 Forgers of daring tales! we bless you then,  
 525 Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape  
 526 Philosophy will call you: *then* we feel  
 527 With what, and how great might ye are in league,  
 528 Who make our wish, our power, our thought a deed,  
 529 An empire, a possession,---ye whom time

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530 And seasons serve; all Faculties to whom  
 531 Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,  
 532 Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights,  
 533 Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.  
  
 534 Relinquishing this lofty eminence  
 535 For ground, though humbler, not the less a tract  
 536 Of the same isthmus, which our spirits cross

537 In progress from their native continent  
 538 To earth and human life, the Song might dwell  
 539 On that delightful time of growing youth,  
 540 When craving for the marvellous gives way  
 541 To strengthening love for things that we have seen;  
 542 When sober truth and steady sympathies,  
 543 Offered to notice by less daring pens,  
 544 Take firmer hold of us, and words themselves  
 545 Move us with conscious pleasure.

545 I am sad  
 546 At thought of raptures now for ever flown;  
 547 Almost to tears I sometimes could be sad  
 548 To think of, to read over, many a page,  
 549 Poems withal of name, which at that time  
 550 Did never fail to entrance me, and are now  
 551 Dead in my eyes, dead as a theatre  
 552 Fresh emptied of spectators. Twice five years

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553 Or less I might have seen, when first my mind  
 554 With conscious pleasure opened to the charm  
 555 Of words in tuneful order, found them sweet  
 556 For their own *sakes*, a passion, and a power;  
 557 And phrases pleased me chosen for delight,  
 558 For pomp, or love. Oft, in the public roads  
 559 Yet unfrequented, while the morning light  
 560 Was yellowing the hill tops, I went abroad  
 561 With a dear friend, and for the better part  
 562 Of two delightful hours we strolled along  
 563 By the still borders of the misty lake,  
 564 Repeating favourite verses with one voice,  
 565 Or conning more, as happy as the birds  
 566 That round us chaunted. Well might we be glad,  
 567 Lifted above the ground by airy fancies,  
 568 More bright than madness or the dreams of wine;  
 569 And, though full oft the objects of our love  
 570 Were false, and in their splendour overwrought,  
 571 Yet was there surely then no vulgar power  
 572 Working within us,---nothing less, in truth,  
 573 Than that most noble attribute of man,  
 574 Though yet untutored and inordinate,  
 575 That wish for something loftier, more adorned,  
 576 Than is the common aspect, daily garb,  
 577 Of human life. What wonder, then, if sounds

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578 Of exultation echoed through the groves!  
 579 For, images, and sentiments, and words,

580 And everything encountered or pursued  
 581 In that delicious world of poesy,  
 582 Kept holiday, a never-ending show,  
 583 With music, incense, festival, and flowers!  
  
 584 Here must we pause: this only let me add,  
 585 From heart-experience, and in humblest sense  
 586 Of modesty, that he, who in his youth  
 587 A daily wanderer among woods and fields  
 588 With living Nature hath been intimate,  
 589 Not only in that raw unpractised time  
 590 Is stirred to extasy, as others are,  
 591 By glittering verse; but further, doth receive,  
 592 In measure only dealt out to himself,  
 593 Knowledge and increase of enduring joy  
 594 From the great Nature that exists in works  
 595 Of mighty Poets. Visionary power  
 596 Attends the motions of the viewless winds,  
 597 Embodied in the mystery of words:  
 598 There, darkness makes abode, and all the host  
 599 Of shadowy things work endless changes,---there,  
 600 As in a mansion like their proper home,  
 601 Even forms and substances are circumfused

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602 By that transparent veil with light divine,  
 603 And, through the turnings intricate of verse,  
 604 Present themselves as objects recognised,  
 605 In flashes, and with glory not their own.

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## BOOK VI. CAMBRIDGE AND THE ALPS.

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1 **The** leaves were fading when to Esthwaite's banks  
 2 And the simplicities of cottage life  
 3 I bade farewell; and, one among the youth  
 4 Who, summoned by that season, reunite  
 5 As scattered birds troop to the fowler's lure,  
 6 Went back to Granta's cloisters, not so prompt  
 7 Or eager, though as gay and undepressed  
 8 In mind, as when I thence had taken flight  
 9 A few short months before. I turned my face

10 Without repining from the coves and heights  
11 Clothed in the sunshine of the withering fern;  
12 Quitted, not loth, the mild magnificence  
13 Of calmer lakes and louder streams; and you,  
14 Frank-hearted maids of rocky Cumberland,  
15 You and your not unwelcome days of mirth,

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16 Relinquished, and your nights of revelry,  
17 And in my own unlovely cell sate down  
18 In lightsome mood---such privilege has youth  
19 That cannot take long leave of pleasant thoughts.

20 The bonds of indolent society  
21 Relaxing in their hold, henceforth I lived  
22 More to myself. Two winters may be passed  
23 Without a separate notice: many books  
24 Were skimmed, devoured, or studiously perused,  
25 But with no settled plan. I was detached  
26 Internally from academic cares;  
27 Yet independent study seemed a course  
28 Of hardy disobedience toward friends  
29 And kindred, proud rebellion and unkind.  
30 This spurious virtue, rather let it bear  
31 A name it now deserves, this cowardice,  
32 Gave treacherous sanction to that over-love  
33 Of freedom which encouraged me to turn  
34 From regulations even of my own  
35 As from restraints and bonds. Yet who can tell---  
36 Who knows what thus may have been gained, both then  
37 And at a later season, or preserved;  
38 What love of nature, what original strength  
39 Of contemplation, what intuitive truths,

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40 The deepest and the best, what keen research,  
41 Unbiassed, unbewildered, and unawed?

42 The Poet's soul was with me at that time;  
43 Sweet meditations, the still overflow  
44 Of present happiness, while future years  
45 Lacked not anticipations, tender dreams,  
46 No few of which have since been realised;  
47 And some remain, hopes for my future life.  
48 Four years and thirty, told this very week,  
49 Have I been now a sojourner on earth,  
50 By sorrow not unsmitten; yet for me  
51 Life's morning radiance hath not left the hills,  
52 Her dew is on the flowers. Those were the days

53 Which also first emboldened me to trust  
54 With firmness, hitherto but lightly touched  
55 By such a daring thought, that I might leave  
56 Some monument behind me which pure hearts  
57 Should reverence. The instinctive humbleness,  
58 Maintained even by the very name and thought  
59 Of printed books and authorship, began  
60 To melt away; and further, the dread awe  
61 Of mighty names was softened down and seemed  
62 Approachable, admitting fellowship  
63 Of modest sympathy. Such aspect now,

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64 Though not familiarly, my mind put on,  
65 Content to observe, to achieve, and to enjoy.

66 All winter long, whenever free to choose,  
67 Did I by night frequent the College groves  
68 And tributary walks; the last, and oft  
69 The only one, who had been lingering there  
70 Through hours of silence, till the porter's bell,  
71 A punctual follower on the stroke of nine,  
72 Rang with its blunt unceremonious voice,  
73 Inexorable summons! Lofty elms,  
74 Inviting shades of opportune recess,  
75 Bestowed composure on a neighbourhood  
76 Unpeaceful in itself. A single tree  
77 With sinuous trunk, boughs exquisitely wreathed,  
78 Grew there; an ash which Winter for himself  
79 Decked as in pride, and with outlandish grace:  
80 Up from the ground, and almost to the top,  
81 The trunk and every master branch were green  
82 With clustering ivy, and the lightsome twigs  
83 And outer spray profusely tipped with seeds  
84 That hung in yellow tassels, while the air  
85 Stirred them, not voiceless. Often have I stood  
86 Foot-bound uplooking at this lovely tree  
87 Beneath a frosty moon. The hemisphere

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88 Of magic fiction, verse of mine perchance  
89 May never tread; but scarcely Spenser's self  
90 Could have more tranquil visions in his youth,  
91 Or could more bright appearances create  
92 Of human forms with superhuman powers,  
93 Than I beheld loitering on calm clear nights  
94 Alone, beneath this fairy work of earth.

95 On the vague reading of a truant youth

96 'Twere idle to descant. My inner judgment  
97 Not seldom differed from my taste in books,  
98 As if it appertained to another mind,  
99 And yet the books which then I valued most  
100 Are dearest to me *now*; for, having scanned,  
101 Not heedlessly, the laws, and watched the forms  
102 Of Nature, in that knowledge I possessed  
103 A standard, often usefully applied,  
104 Even when unconsciously, to things removed  
105 From a familiar sympathy.---In fine,  
106 I was a better judge of thoughts than words,  
107 Misled in estimating words, not only  
108 By common inexperience of youth,  
109 But by the trade in classic niceties,  
110 The dangerous craft of culling term and phrase  
111 From languages that want the living voice

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112 To carry meaning to the natural heart;  
113 To tell us what is passion, what is truth,  
114 What reason, what simplicity and sense.

115 Yet may we not entirely overlook  
116 The pleasure gathered from the rudiments  
117 Of geometric science. Though advanced  
118 In these inquiries, with regret I speak,  
119 No farther than the threshold, there I found  
120 Both elevation and composed delight:  
121 With Indian awe and wonder, ignorance pleased  
122 With its own struggles, did I meditate  
123 On the relation those abstractions bear  
124 To Nature's laws, and by what process led,  
125 Those immaterial agents bowed their heads  
126 Duly to serve the mind of earth-born man;  
127 From star to star, from kindred sphere to sphere,  
128 From system on to system without end.

129 More frequently from the same source I drew  
130 A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense  
131 Of permanent and universal sway,  
132 And paramount belief; there, recognised  
133 A type, for finite natures, of the one  
134 Supreme Existence, the surpassing life

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135 Which---to the boundaries of space and time,  
136 Of melancholy space and doleful time,  
137 Superior, and incapable of change,  
138 Nor touched by welterings of passion---is,

139 And hath the name of, God. Transcendent peace  
 140 And silence did await upon these thoughts  
 141 That were a frequent comfort to my youth.

142 'Tis told by one whom stormy waters threw,  
 143 With fellow-sufferers by the shipwreck spared,  
 144 Upon a desert coast, that having brought  
 145 To land a single volume, saved by chance,  
 146 A treatise of Geometry, he wont,  
 147 Although of food and clothing destitute,  
 148 And beyond common wretchedness depressed,  
 149 To part from company and take this book  
 150 (Then first a self-taught pupil in its truths)  
 151 To spots remote, and draw his diagrams  
 152 With a long staff upon the sand, and thus  
 153 Did oft beguile his sorrow, and almost  
 154 Forget his feeling: so (if like effect  
 155 From the same cause produced, 'mid outward things  
 156 So different, may rightly be compared),  
 157 So was it then with me, and so will be  
 158 With Poets ever. Mighty is the charm

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159 Of those abstractions to a mind beset  
 160 With images, and haunted by herself,  
 161 And specially delightful unto me  
 162 Was that clear synthesis built up aloft  
 163 So gracefully; even then when it appeared  
 164 Not more than a mere plaything, or a toy  
 165 To sense embodied: not the thing it is  
 166 In verity, an independent world,  
 167 Created out of pure intelligence.

168 Such dispositions then were mine unearned  
 169 By aught, I fear, of genuine desert---  
 170 Mine, through heaven's grace and inborn aptitudes.  
 171 And not to leave the story of that time  
 172 Imperfect, with these habits must be joined,  
 173 Moods melancholy, fits of spleen, that loved  
 174 A pensive sky, sad days, and piping winds,  
 175 The twilight more than dawn, autumn than spring;  
 176 A treasured and luxurious gloom of choice  
 177 And inclination mainly, and the mere  
 178 Redundancy of youth's contentedness.  
 179 ---To time thus spent, add multitudes of hours  
 180 Pilfered away, by what the Bard who sang  
 181 Of the Enchanter Indolence hath called  
 182 "Good-natured lounging," and behold a map

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183 Of my collegiate life---far less intense  
 184 Than duty called for, or, without regard  
 185 To duty, *might* have sprung up of itself  
 186 By change of accidents, or even, to speak  
 187 Without unkindness, in another place.  
 188 Yet why take refuge in that plea?---the fault,  
 189 This I repeat, was mine; mine be the blame.

190 In summer, making quest for works of art,  
 191 Or scenes renowned for beauty, I explored  
 192 That streamlet whose blue current works its way  
 193 Between romantic Dovedale's spiry rocks;  
 194 Pried into Yorkshire dales, or hidden tracts  
 195 Of my own native region, and was blest  
 196 Between these sundry wanderings with a joy  
 197 Above all joys, that seemed another morn  
 198 Risen on mid noon; blest with the presence, Friend!  
 199 Of that sole Sister, her who hath been long  
 200 Dear to thee also, thy true friend and mine,  
 201 Now, after separation desolate,  
 202 Restored to me---such absence that she seemed  
 203 A gift then first bestowed. The varied banks  
 204 Of Emont, hitherto unnamed in song,  
 205 And that monastic castle, 'mid tall trees,  
 206 Low-standing by the margin of the stream,

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207 A mansion visited (as fame reports)  
 208 By Sidney, where, in sight of our Helvellyn,  
 209 Or stormy Cross-fell, snatches he might pen  
 210 Of his Arcadia, by fraternal love  
 211 Inspired;---that river and those mouldering towers  
 212 Have seen us side by side, when, having clomb  
 213 The darksome windings of a broken stair,  
 214 And crept along a ridge of fractured wall,  
 215 Not without trembling, we in safety looked  
 216 Forth, through some Gothic window's open space,  
 217 And gathered with one mind a rich reward  
 218 From the far-stretching landscape, by the light  
 219 Of morning beautified, or purple eve;  
 220 Or, not less pleased, lay on some turret's head,  
 221 Catching from tufts of grass and hare-bell flowers  
 222 Their faintest whisper to the passing breeze,  
 223 Given out while mid-day heat oppressed the plains.

224 Another maid there was, who also shed  
 225 A gladness o'er that season, then to me,  
 226 By her exulting outside look of youth  
 227 And placid under-countenance, first endeared;

228 That other spirit, Coleridge! who is now  
229 So near to us, that meek confiding heart,  
230 So revered by us both. O'er paths and fields

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231 In all that neighbourhood, through narrow lanes  
232 Of eglantine, and through the shady woods,  
233 And o'er the Border Beacon, and the waste  
234 Of naked pools, and common crags that lay  
235 Exposed on the bare fell, were scattered love,  
236 The spirit of pleasure, and youth's golden gleam.  
237 O Friend! we had not seen thee at that time,  
238 And yet a power is on me, and a strong  
239 Confusion, and I seem to plant thee there.  
240 Far art thou wandered now in search of health  
241 And milder breezes,---melancholy lot!  
242 But thou art with us, with us in the past,  
243 The present, with us in the times to come.  
244 There is no grief, no sorrow, no despair,  
245 No languor, no dejection, no dismay,  
246 No absence scarcely can there be, for those  
247 Who love as we do. Speed thee well! divide  
248 With us thy pleasure; thy returning strength,  
249 Receive it daily as a joy of ours;  
250 Share with us thy fresh spirits, whether gift  
251 Of gales Etesian or of tender thoughts.

252 I, too, have been a wanderer; but, alas!  
253 How different the fate of different men.  
254 Though mutually unknown, yea nursed and reared

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255 As if in several elements, we were framed  
256 To bend at last to the same discipline,  
257 Predestined, if two beings ever were,  
258 To seek the same delights, and have one health,  
259 One happiness. Throughout this narrative,  
260 Else sooner ended, I have borne in mind  
261 For whom it registers the birth, and marks the growth,  
262 Of gentleness, simplicity, and truth,  
263 And joyous loves, that hallow innocent days  
264 Of peace and self-command. Of rivers, fields,  
265 And groves I speak to thee, my Friend! to thee,  
266 Who, yet a liveried schoolboy, in the depths  
267 Of the huge city, on the leaded roof  
268 Of that wide edifice, thy school and home,  
269 Wert used to lie and gaze upon the clouds  
270 Moving in heaven; or, of that pleasure tired,  
271 To shut thine eyes, and by internal light

272 See trees, and meadows, and thy native stream,  
273 Far distant, thus beheld from year to year  
274 Of a long exile. Nor could I forget,  
275 In this late portion of my argument,  
276 That scarcely, as my term of pupilage  
277 Ceased, had I left those academic bowers  
278 When thou wert thither guided. From the heart  
279 Of London, and from cloisters there, thou camest,

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280 And didst sit down in temperance and peace,  
281 A rigorous student. What a stormy course  
282 Then followed. Oh! it is a pang that calls  
283 For utterance, to think what easy change  
284 Of circumstances might to thee have spared  
285 A world of pain, ripened a thousand hopes,  
286 For ever withered. Through this retrospect  
287 Of my collegiate life I still have had  
288 Thy after-sojourn in the self-same place  
289 Present before my eyes, have played with times  
290 And accidents as children do with cards,  
291 Or as a man, who, when his house is built,  
292 A frame locked up in wood and stone, doth still,  
293 As impotent fancy prompts, by his fireside,  
294 Rebuild it to his liking. I have thought  
295 Of thee, thy learning, gorgeous eloquence,  
296 And all the strength and plumage of thy youth,  
297 Thy subtle speculations, toils abstruse  
298 Among the schoolmen, and Platonic forms  
299 Of wild ideal pageantry, shaped out  
300 From things well-matched or ill, and words for things,  
301 The self-created sustenance of a mind  
302 Debarred from Nature's living images,  
303 Compelled to be a life unto herself,  
304 And unrelentingly possessed by thirst

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305 Of greatness, love, and beauty. Not alone,  
306 Ah! surely not in singleness of heart  
307 Should I have seen the light of evening fade  
308 From smooth Cam's silent waters: had we met,  
309 Even at that early time, needs must I trust  
310 In the belief, that my maturer age,  
311 My calmer habits, and more steady voice,  
312 Would with an influence benign have soothed,  
313 Or chased away, the airy wretchedness  
314 That battened on thy youth. But thou hast trod  
315 A march of glory, which doth put to shame  
316 These vain regrets; health suffers in thee, else

317 Such grief for thee would be the weakest thought  
318 That ever harboured in the breast of man.

319 A passing word erewhile did lightly touch  
320 On wanderings of my own, that now embraced  
321 With livelier hope a region wider far.

322 When the third summer freed us from restraint,  
323 A youthful friend, he too a mountaineer,  
324 Not slow to share my wishes, took his staff,  
325 And sallying forth, we journeyed side by side,  
326 Bound to the distant Alps. A hardy slight  
327 Did this unprecedented course imply

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328 Of college studies and their set rewards;  
329 Nor had, in truth, the scheme been formed by me  
330 Without uneasy forethought of the pain,  
331 The censures, and ill-omening of those  
332 To whom my worldly interests were dear.  
333 But Nature then was sovereign in my mind,  
334 And mighty forms, seizing a youthful fancy,  
335 Had given a charter to irregular hopes.  
336 In any age of uneventful calm  
337 Among the nations, surely would my heart  
338 Have been possessed by similar desire;  
339 But Europe at that time was thrilled with joy,  
340 France standing on the top of golden hours,  
341 And human nature seeming born again.

342 Lightly equipped, and but a few brief looks  
343 Cast on the white cliffs of our native shore  
344 From the receding vessel's deck, we chanced  
345 To land at Calais on the very eve  
346 Of that great federal day; and there we saw,  
347 In a mean city, and among a few,  
348 How bright a face is worn when joy of one  
349 Is joy for tens of millions. Southward thence  
350 We held our way, direct through hamlets, towns,  
351 Gaudy with reliques of that festival,

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352 Flowers left to wither on triumphal arcs,  
353 And window-garlands. On the public roads,  
354 And, once, three days successively, through paths  
355 By which our toilsome journey was abridged,  
356 Among sequestered villages we walked  
357 And found benevolence and blessedness  
358 Spread like a fragrance everywhere, when spring

359 Hath left no corner of the land untouched:  
 360 Where elms for many and many a league in files  
 361 With their thin umbrage, on the stately roads  
 362 Of that great kingdom, rustled o'er our heads,  
 363 For ever near us as we paced along:  
 364 How sweet at such a time, with such delight  
 365 On every side, in prime of youthful strength,  
 366 To feed a Poet's tender melancholy  
 367 And fond conceit of sadness, with the sound  
 368 Of undulations varying as might please  
 369 The wind that swayed them; once, and more than once,  
 370 Unhoused beneath the evening star we saw  
 371 Dances of liberty, and, in late hours  
 372 Of darkness, dances in the open air  
 373 Deftly prolonged, though grey-haired lookers on  
 374 Might waste their breath in chiding.

374 Under hills---  
 375 The vine-clad hills and slopes of Burgundy,

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376 Upon the bosom of the gentle Saone  
 377 We glided forward with the flowing stream.  
 378 Swift Rhone! thou wert the *wings* on which we cut  
 379 A winding passage with majestic ease  
 380 Between thy lofty rocks. Enchanting show  
 381 Those woods and farms and orchards did present,  
 382 And single cottages and lurking towns,  
 383 Reach after reach, succession without end  
 384 Of deep and stately vales! A lonely pair  
 385 Of strangers, till day closed, we sailed along,  
 386 Clustered together with a merry crowd  
 387 Of those emancipated, a blithe host  
 388 Of travellers, chiefly delegates returning  
 389 From the great spousals newly solemnised  
 390 At their chief city, in the sight of Heaven.  
 391 Like bees they swarmed, gaudy and gay as bees;  
 392 Some vapoured in the unruliness of joy,  
 393 And with their swords flourished as if to fight  
 394 The saucy air. In this proud company  
 395 We landed---took with them our evening meal,  
 396 Guests welcome almost as the angels were  
 397 To Abraham of old. The supper done,  
 398 With flowing cups elate and happy thoughts  
 399 We rose at signal given, and formed a ring  
 400 And, hand in hand, danced round and round the board;

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401 All hearts were open, every tongue was loud

402 With amity and glee; we bore a name  
403 Honoured in France, the name of Englishmen,  
404 And hospitably did they give us hail,  
405 As their forerunners in a glorious course;  
406 And round and round the board we danced again.  
407 With these blithe friends our voyage we renewed  
408 At early dawn. The monastery bells  
409 Made a sweet jingling in our youthful ears;  
410 The rapid river flowing without noise,  
411 And each uprising or receding spire  
412 Spake with a sense of peace, at intervals  
413 Touching the heart amid the boisterous crew  
414 By whom we were encompassed. Taking leave  
415 Of this glad throng, foot-travellers side by side,  
416 Measuring our steps in quiet, we pursued  
417 Our journey, and ere twice the sun had set  
418 Beheld the Convent of Chartreuse, and there  
419 Rested within an awful *solitude*:  
420 Yes, for even then no other than a place  
421 Of soul-affecting *solitude* appeared  
422 That far-famed region, though our eyes had seen,  
423 As toward the sacred mansion we advanced,  
424 Arms flashing, and a military glare  
425 Of riotous men commissioned to expel

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426 The blameless inmates, and belike subvert  
427 That frame of social being, which so long  
428 Had bodied forth the ghostliness of things  
429 In silence visible and perpetual calm.  
430 ---"Stay, stay your sacrilegious hands!"---The voice  
431 Was Nature's, uttered from her Alpine throne;  
432 I heard it then and seem to hear it now---  
433 "Your impious work forbear, perish what may,  
434 Let this one temple last, be this one spot  
435 Of earth devoted to eternity!"  
436 She ceased to speak, but while St. Bruno's pines  
437 Waved their dark tops, not silent as they waved,  
438 And while below, along their several beds,  
439 Murmured the sister streams of Life and Death,  
440 Thus by conflicting passions pressed, my heart  
441 Responded; "Honour to the patriot's zeal!  
442 Glory and hope to new-born Liberty!  
443 Hail to the mighty projects of the time!  
444 Discerning sword that Justice wields, do thou  
445 Go forth and prosper; and, ye purging fires,  
446 Up to the loftiest towers of Pride ascend,  
447 Fanned by the breath of angry Providence.  
448 But oh! if Past and Future be the wings  
449 On whose support harmoniously conjoined

450 Moves the great spirit of human knowledge, spare

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451 These courts of mystery, where a step advanced  
 452 Between the portals of the shadowy rocks  
 453 Leaves far behind life's treacherous vanities,  
 454 For penitential tears and trembling hopes  
 455 Exchanged---to equalise in God's pure sight  
 456 Monarch and peasant: be the house redeemed  
 457 With its unworldly votaries, for the sake  
 458 Of conquest over sense, hourly achieved  
 459 Through faith and meditative reason, resting  
 460 Upon the word of heaven-imparted truth,  
 461 Calmly triumphant; and for humbler claim  
 462 Of that imaginative impulse sent  
 463 From these majestic floods, yon shining cliffs,  
 464 The untransmuted shapes of many worlds,  
 465 Cerulean ether's pure inhabitants,  
 466 These forests unapproachable by death,  
 467 That shall endure as long as man endures,  
 468 To think, to hope, to worship, and to feel,  
 469 To struggle, to be lost within himself  
 470 In trepidation, from the blank abyss  
 471 To look with bodily eyes, and be consoled."  
 472 Not seldom since that moment have I wished  
 473 That thou, O Friend! the trouble or the calm  
 474 Hadst shared, when, from profane regards apart,  
 475 In sympathetic reverence we trod

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476 The floors of those dim cloisters, till that hour,  
 477 From their foundation, strangers to the presence  
 478 Of unrestricted and unthinking man.  
 479 Abroad, how cheeringly the sunshine lay  
 480 Upon the open lawns! Vallombre's groves  
 481 Entering, we fed the soul with darkness; thence  
 482 Issued, and with uplifted eyes beheld,  
 483 In different quarters of the bending sky,  
 484 The cross of Jesus stand erect, as if  
 485 Hands of angelic powers had fixed it there,  
 486 Memorial revered by a thousand storms;  
 487 Yet then, from the indiscriminating sweep  
 488 And rage of one State-whirlwind, insecure.

489 'Tis not my present purpose to retrace  
 490 That variegated journey step by step.  
 491 A march it was of military speed,  
 492 And Earth did change her images and forms  
 493 Before us, fast as clouds are changed in heaven.



494 Day after day, up early and down late,  
495 From hill to vale we dropped, from vale to hill  
496 Mounted---from province on to province swept,  
497 Keen hunters in a chase of fourteen weeks,  
498 Eager as birds of prey, or as a ship  
499 Upon the stretch, when winds are blowing fair:

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500 Sweet coverts did we cross of pastoral life,  
501 Enticing valleys, greeted them and left  
502 Too soon, while yet the very flash and gleam  
503 Of salutation were not passed away.  
504 Oh! sorrow for the youth who could have seen  
505 Unchastened, unsubdued, unawed, unraised  
506 To patriarchal dignity of mind,  
507 And pure simplicity of wish and will,  
508 Those sanctified abodes of peaceful man,  
509 Pleased (though to hardship born, and compassed round  
510 With danger, varying as the seasons change),  
511 Pleased with his daily task, or, if not pleased,  
512 Contented, from the moment that the dawn  
513 (Ah! surely not without attendant gleams  
514 Of soul-illumination) calls him forth  
515 To industry, by glistenings flung on rocks,  
516 Whose evening shadows lead him to repose.

517 Well might a stranger look with bounding heart  
518 Down on a green recess, the first I saw  
519 Of those deep haunts, an aboriginal vale,  
520 Quiet and lorded over and possessed  
521 By naked huts, wood-built, and sown like tents  
522 Or Indian cabins over the fresh lawns  
523 And by the river side.

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523                               That very day,  
524 From a bare ridge we also first beheld  
525 Unveiled the summit of Mont Blanc, and grieved  
526 To have a soulless image on the eye  
527 That had usurped upon a living thought  
528 That never more could be. The wondrous Vale  
529 Of Chamouny stretched far below, and soon  
530 With its dumb cataracts and streams of ice,  
531 A motionless array of mighty waves,  
532 Five rivers broad and vast, made rich amends,  
533 And reconciled us to realities;  
534 There small birds warble from the leafy trees,  
535 The eagle soars high in the element,

536 There doth the reaper bind the yellow sheaf,  
 537 The maiden spread the haycock in the sun,  
 538 While Winter like a well-tamed lion walks,  
 539 Descending from the mountain to make sport  
 540 Among the cottages by beds of flowers.

541 Whate'er in this wide circuit we beheld,  
 542 Or heard, was fitted to our unripe state  
 543 Of intellect and heart. With such a book  
 544 Before our eyes, we could not choose but read  
 545 Lessons of genuine brotherhood, the plain  
 546 And universal reason of mankind,

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547 The truths of young and old. Nor, side by side  
 548 Pacing, two social pilgrims, or alone  
 549 Each with his humour, could we fail to abound  
 550 In dreams and fictions, pensively composed:  
 551 Dejection taken up for pleasure's sake,  
 552 And gilded sympathies, the willow wreath,  
 553 And sober posies of funereal flowers,  
 554 Gathered among those solitudes sublime  
 555 From formal gardens of the lady Sorrow,  
 556 Did sweeten many a meditative hour.

557 Yet still in me with those soft luxuries  
 558 Mixed something of stern mood, an under-thirst  
 559 Of vigour seldom utterly allayed.  
 560 And from that source how different a sadness  
 561 Would issue, let one incident make known.  
 562 When from the Vallais we had turned, and clomb  
 563 Along the Simplon's steep and rugged road,  
 564 Following a band of muleteers, we reached  
 565 A halting-place, where all together took  
 566 Their noon-tide meal. Hastily rose our guide,  
 567 Leaving us at the board; awhile we lingered,  
 568 Then paced the beaten downward way that led  
 569 Right to a rough stream's edge, and there broke off;  
 570 The only track now visible was one

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571 That from the torrent's further brink held forth  
 572 Conspicuous invitation to ascend  
 573 A lofty mountain. After brief delay  
 574 Crossing the unbridged stream, that road we took,  
 575 And clomb with eagerness, till anxious fears  
 576 Intruded, for we failed to overtake  
 577 Our comrades gone before. By fortunate chance,  
 578 While every moment added doubt to doubt,

579 A peasant met us, from whose mouth we learned  
 580 That to the spot which had perplexed us first  
 581 We must descend, and there should find the road,  
 582 Which in the stony channel of the stream  
 583 Lay a few steps, and then along its banks;  
 584 And, that our future course, all plain to sight,  
 585 Was downwards, with the current of that stream.  
 586 Loth to believe what we so grieved to hear,  
 587 For still we had hopes that pointed to the clouds,  
 588 We questioned him again, and yet again;  
 589 But every word that from the peasant's lips  
 590 Came in reply, translated by our feelings,  
 591 Ended in this,---*that we had crossed the Alps.*


592 Imagination---here the Power so called  
 593 Through sad incompetence of human speech,  
 594 That awful Power rose from the mind's abyss

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595 Like an unfathered vapour that enwraps,  
 596 At once, some lonely traveller. I was lost;  
 597 Halted without an effort to break through;  
 598 But to my conscious soul I now can say---  
 599 "I recognise thy glory:" in such strength  
 600 Of usurpation, when the light of sense  
 601 Goes out, but with a flash that has revealed  
 602 The invisible world, doth greatness make abode,  
 603 There harbours; whether we be young or old,  
 604 Our destiny, our being's heart and home,  
 605 Is with infinitude, and only there;  
 606 With hope it is, hope that can never die,  
 607 Effort, and expectation, and desire,  
 608 And something evermore about to be.  
 609 Under such banners militant, the soul  
 610 Seeks for no trophies, struggles for no spoils  
 611 That may attest her prowess, blest in thoughts  
 612 That are their own perfection and reward,  
 613 Strong in herself and in beatitude  
 614 That hides her, like the mighty flood of Nile  
 615 Poured from his fount of Abyssinian clouds  
 616 To fertilise the whole Egyptian plain.

617 The melancholy slackening that ensued  
 618 Upon those tidings by the peasant given

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619 Was soon dislodged. Downwards we hurried fast,  
 620 And, with the half-shaped road which we had missed,  
 621 Entered a narrow chasm. [End note 6: 1Kb]  The brook and road

622 Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy strait,  
623 And with them did we journey several hours  
624 At a slow pace. The immeasurable height  
625 Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,  
626 The stationary blasts of waterfalls,  
627 And in the narrow rent at every turn  
628 Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,  
629 The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,  
630 The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,  
631 Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side  
632 As if a voice were in them, the sick sight  
633 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,  
634 The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,  
635 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light---  
636 Were all like workings of one mind, the features  
637 Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree;  
638 Characters of the great Apocalypse,  
639 The types and symbols of Eternity,  
640 Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

641 That night our lodging was a house that stood  
642 Alone within the valley, at a point

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643 Where, tumbling from aloft, a torrent swelled  
644 The rapid stream whose margin we had trod;  
645 A dreary mansion, large beyond all need,  
646 With high and spacious rooms, deafened and stunned  
647 By noise of waters, making innocent sleep  
648 Lie melancholy among weary bones.

649 Uprisen betimes, our journey we renewed,  
650 Led by the stream, ere noon-day magnified  
651 Into a lordly river, broad and deep,  
652 Dimpling along in silent majesty,  
653 With mountains for its neighbours, and in view  
654 Of distant mountains and their snowy tops,  
655 And thus proceeding to Locarno's Lake,  
656 Fit resting-place for such a visitant.  
657 Locarno! spreading out in width like Heaven,  
658 How dost thou cleave to the poetic heart,  
659 Bask in the sunshine of the memory;  
660 And Como! thou, a treasure whom the earth  
661 Keeps to herself, confined as in a depth  
662 Of Abyssinian privacy. I spake  
663 Of thee, thy chestnut woods, and garden plots  
664 Of Indian corn tended by dark-eyed maids;  
665 Thy lofty steeps, and pathways roofed with vines,  
666 Winding from house to house, from town to town,

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667 Sole link that binds them to each other; walks,  
668 League after league, and cloistral avenues,  
669 Where silence dwells if music be not there:  
670 While yet a youth undisciplined in verse,  
671 Through fond ambition of that hour, I strove  
672 To chant your praise; nor can approach you now  
673 Ungreeted by a more melodious Song,  
674 Where tones of Nature smoothed by learned Art  
675 May flow in lasting current. Like a breeze  
676 Or sunbeam over your domain I passed  
677 In motion without pause; but ye have left  
678 Your beauty with me, a serene accord  
679 Of forms and colours, passive, yet endowed  
680 In their submissiveness with power as sweet  
681 And gracious, almost might I dare to say,  
682 As virtue is, or goodness; sweet as love,  
683 Or the remembrance of a generous deed,  
684 Or mildest visitations of pure thought,  
685 When God, the giver of all joy, is thanked  
686 Religiously, in silent blessedness;  
687 Sweet as this last herself, for such it is.

688 With those delightful pathways we advanced,  
689 For two days' space, in presence of the Lake,  
690 That, stretching far among the Alps, assumed

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691 A character more stern. The second night,  
692 From sleep awakened, and misled by sound  
693 Of the church clock telling the hours with strokes  
694 Whose import then we had not learned, we rose  
695 By moonlight, doubting not that day was nigh,  
696 And that meanwhile, by no uncertain path,  
697 Along the winding margin of the lake,  
698 Led, as before, we should behold the scene  
699 Hushed in profound repose. We left the town  
700 Of Gravedona with this hope; but soon  
701 Were lost, bewildered among woods immense,  
702 And on a rock sate down, to wait for day.  
703 An open place it was, and overlooked,  
704 From high, the sullen water far beneath,  
705 On which a dull red image of the moon  
706 Lay bedded, changing oftentimes its form  
707 Like an uneasy snake. From hour to hour  
708 We sate and sate, wondering, as if the night  
709 Had been ensnared by witchcraft. On the rock  
710 At last we stretched our weary limbs for sleep,  
711 But *could not* sleep, tormented by the stings

712 Of insects, which, with noise like that of noon,  
 713 Filled all the woods; the cry of unknown birds;  
 714 The mountains more by blackness visible  
 715 And their own size, than any outward light;

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716 The breathless wilderness of clouds; the clock  
 717 That told, with unintelligible voice,  
 718 The widely parted hours; the noise of streams,  
 719 And sometimes rustling motions nigh at hand,  
 720 That did not leave us free from personal fear;  
 721 And, lastly, the withdrawing moon, that set  
 722 Before us, while she still was high in heaven;---  
 723 These were our food; and such a summer's night  
 724 Followed that pair of golden days that shed  
 725 On Como's Lake, and all that round it lay,  
 726 Their fairest, softest, happiest influence.

727 But here I must break off, and bid farewell  
 728 To days, each offering some new sight, or fraught  
 729 With some untried adventure, in a course  
 730 Prolonged till sprinklings of autumnal snow  
 731 Checked our unwearied steps. Let this alone  
 732 Be mentioned as a parting word, that not  
 733 In hollow exultation, dealing out  
 734 Hyperboles of praise comparative;  
 735 Not rich one moment to be poor for ever;  
 736 Not prostrate, overborne, as if the mind  
 737 Herself were nothing, a mere pensioner  
 738 On outward forms---did we in presence stand  
 739 Of that magnificent region. On the front

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740 Of this whole Song is written that my heart  
 741 Must, in such Temple, needs have offered up  
 742 A different worship. Finally, whate'er  
 743 I saw, or heard, or felt, was but a stream  
 744 That flowed into a kindred stream; a gale,  
 745 Confederate with the current of the soul,  
 746 To speed my voyage; every sound or sight,  
 747 In its degree of power, administered  
 748 To grandeur or to tenderness,---to the one  
 749 Directly, but to tender thoughts by means  
 750 Less often instantaneous in effect;  
 751 Led me to these by paths that, in the main,  
 752 Were more circuitous, but not less sure  
 753 Duly to reach the point marked out by Heaven.

754 Oh, most belovèd Friend! a glorious time,

755 A happy time that was; triumphant looks  
 756 Were then the common language of all eyes;  
 757 As if awaked from sleep, the Nations hailed  
 758 Their great expectancy: the fife of war  
 759 Was then a spirit-stirring sound indeed,  
 760 A black-bird's whistle in a budding grove.  
 761 We left the Swiss exulting in the fate  
 762 Of their near neighbours; and, when shortening fast  
 763 Our pilgrimage, nor distant far from home,


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764 We crossed the Brabant armies on the fret  
 765 For battle in the cause of Liberty.  
 766 A stripling, scarcely of the household then  
 767 Of social life, I looked upon these things  
 768 As from a distance; heard, and saw, and felt,  
 769 Was touched, but with no intimate concern;  
 770 I seemed to move along them, as a bird  
 771 Moves through the air, or as a fish pursues  
 772 Its sport, or feeds in its proper element;  
 773 I wanted not that joy, I did not need  
 774 Such help; the ever-living universe,  
 775 Turn where I might, was opening out its glories,  
 776 And the independent spirit of pure youth  
 777 Called forth, at every season, new delights  
 778 Spread round my steps like sunshine o'er green fields.

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## BOOK VII. RESIDENCE IN LONDON

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1 **Six** changeful years have vanished since I first  
 2 Poured out (saluted by that quickening breeze  
 3 Which met me issuing from the City's [End note 7: 1Kb]  walls)  
 4 A glad preamble to this Verse: I sang  
 5 Aloud, with fervour irresistible  
 6 Of short-lived transport, like a torrent bursting,  
 7 From a black thunder-cloud, down Scafell's side  
 8 To rush and disappear. But soon broke forth  
 9 (So willed the Muse) a less impetuous stream,  
 10 That flowed awhile with unabating strength,  
 11 Then stopped for years; not audible again  
 12 Before last primrose-time. Belovèd Friend!



13 The assurance which then cheered some heavy thoughts  
 14 On thy departure to a foreign land  
 15 Has failed; too slowly moves the promised work.


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16 Through the whole summer have I been at rest,  
 17 Partly from voluntary holiday,  
 18 And part through outward hindrance. But I heard,  
 19 After the hour of sunset yester-even,  
 20 Sitting within doors between light and dark,  
 21 A choir of redbreasts gathered somewhere near  
 22 My threshold,---minstrels from the distant woods  
 23 Sent in on Winter's service, to announce,  
 24 With preparation artful and benign,  
 25 That the rough lord had left the surly North  
 26 On his accustomed journey. The delight,  
 27 Due to this timely notice, unawares  
 28 Smote me, and, listening, I in whispers said,  
 29 "Ye heartsome Choristers, ye and I will be  
 30 Associates, and, unscared by blustering winds,  
 31 Will chant together." Thereafter, as the shades  
 32 Of twilight deepened, going forth, I spied  
 33 A glow-worm underneath a dusky plume  
 34 Or canopy of yet unwithered fern,  
 35 Clear-shining, like a hermit's taper seen  
 36 Through a thick forest. Silence touched me here  
 37 No less than sound had done before; the child  
 38 Of Summer, lingering, shining, by herself,  
 39 The voiceless worm on the unfrequented hills,  
 40 Seemed sent on the same errand with the choir

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41 Of Winter that had warbled at my door,  
 42 And the whole year breathed tenderness and love.

43 The last night's genial feeling overflowed  
 44 Upon this morning, and my favourite grove,  
 45 Tossing in sunshine its dark boughs aloft,  
 46 As if to make the strong wind visible,  
 47 Wakes in me agitations like its own,  
 48 A spirit friendly to the Poet's task,  
 49 Which we will now resume with lively hope,  
 50 Nor checked by aught of tamer argument  
 51 That lies before us, needful to be told.

52 Returned from that excursion, <sup>[End note 8: 1Kb]</sup>  soon I bade  
 53 Farewell for ever to the sheltered seats  
 54 Of gowned students, quitted hall and bower,  
 55 And every comfort of that privileged ground,

56 Well pleased to pitch a vagrant tent among  
57 The unfenced regions of society.

58 Yet, undetermined to what course of life  
59 I should adhere, and seeming to possess  
60 A little space of intermediate time  
61 At full command, to London first I turned,  
62 In no disturbance of excessive hope,

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63 By personal ambition unenslaved,  
64 Frugal as there was need, and, though self-willed,  
65 From dangerous passions free. Three years had flown  
66 Since I had felt in heart and soul the shock  
67 Of the huge town's first presence, and had paced  
68 Her endless streets, a transient visitant:  
69 Now, fixed amid that concourse of mankind  
70 Where Pleasure whirls about incessantly,  
71 And life and labour seem but one, I filled  
72 An idler's place; an idler well content  
73 To have a house (what matter for a home?)  
74 That owned him; living cheerfully abroad  
75 With unchecked fancy ever on the stir,  
76 And all my young affections out of doors.

77 There was a time when whatsoe'er is feigned  
78 Of airy palaces, and gardens built  
79 By Genii of romance; or hath in grave  
80 Authentic history been set forth of Rome,  
81 Alcairo, Babylon, or Persepolis;  
82 Or given upon report by pilgrim friars,  
83 Of golden cities ten months' journey deep  
84 Among Tartarian wilds---fell short, far short,  
85 Of what my fond simplicity believed  
86 And thought of London---held me by a chain

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87 Less strong of wonder and obscure delight.  
88 Whether the bolt of childhood's Fancy shot  
89 For me beyond its ordinary mark,  
90 'Twere vain to ask; but in our flock of boys  
91 Was One, a cripple from his birth, whom chance  
92 Summoned from school to London; fortunate  
93 And envied traveller! When the Boy returned,  
94 After short absence, curiously I scanned  
95 His mien and person, nor was free, in sooth,  
96 From disappointment, not to find some change  
97 In look and air, from that new region brought,  
98 As if from Fairy-land. Much I questioned him;

99 And every word he uttered, on my ears  
100 Fell flatter than a caged parrot's note,  
101 That answers unexpectedly awry,  
102 And mocks the prompter's listening. Marvellous things  
103 Had vanity (quick Spirit that appears  
104 Almost as deeply seated and as strong  
105 In a Child's heart as fear itself) conceived  
106 For my enjoyment. Would that I could now  
107 Recal what then I pictured to myself,  
108 Of mitred Prelates, Lords in ermine clad,  
109 The King, and the King's Palace, and, not last,  
110 Nor least, Heaven bless him! the renowned Lord Mayor:  
111 Dreams not unlike to those which once begat

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112 A change of purpose in young Whittington,  
113 When he, a friendless and a drooping boy,  
114 Sate on a stone, and heard the bells speak out  
115 Articulate music. Above all, one thought  
116 Baffled my understanding: how men lived  
117 Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still  
118 Strangers, not knowing each the other's name.

119 O, wond'rous power of words, by simple faith  
120 Licensed to take the meaning that we love!  
121 Vauxhall and Ranelagh! I then had heard  
122 Of your green groves, and wilderness of lamps  
123 Dimming the stars, and fireworks magical,  
124 And gorgeous ladies, under splendid domes,  
125 Floating in dance, or warbling high in air  
126 The songs of spirits! Nor had Fancy fed  
127 With less delight upon that other class  
128 Of marvels, broad-day wonders permanent:  
129 The River proudly bridged; the dizzy top  
130 And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's; the tombs  
131 Of Westminster; the Giants of Guildhall;  
132 Bedlam, and those carved maniacs at the gates,  
133 Perpetually recumbent; Statues---man,  
134 And the horse under him---in gilded pomp  
135 Adorning flowery gardens, 'mid vast squares;

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136 The Monument, and that Chamber of the Tower  
137 Where England's sovereigns sit in long array,  
138 Their steeds bestriding,---every mimic shape  
139 Cased in the gleaming mail the monarch wore,  
140 Whether for gorgeous tournament addressed,  
141 Or life or death upon the battle-field.  
142 Those bold imaginations in due time

143 Had vanished, leaving others in their stead:  
144 And now I looked upon the living scene;  
145 Familiarly perused it; oftentimes,  
146 In spite of strongest disappointment, pleased  
147 Through courteous self-submission, as a tax  
148 Paid to the object by prescriptive right.

149 Rise up, thou monstrous ant-hill on the plain  
150 Of a too busy world! Before me flow,  
151 Thou endless stream of men and moving things!  
152 Thy every-day appearance, as it strikes---  
153 With wonder heightened, or sublimed by awe---  
154 On strangers, of all ages; the quick dance  
155 Of colours, lights, and forms; the deafening din;  
156 The comers and the goers face to face,  
157 Face after face; the string of dazzling wares,  
158 Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned names,  
159 And all the tradesman's honours overhead:

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160 Here, fronts of houses, like a title-page,  
161 With letters huge inscribed from top to toe,  
162 Stationed above the door, like guardian saints;  
163 There, allegoric shapes, female or male,  
164 Or physiognomies of real men,  
165 Land-warriors, kings, or admirals of the sea,  
166 Boyle, Shakspeare, Newton, or the attractive head  
167 Of some quack-doctor, famous in his day.

168 Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,  
169 Escaped as from an enemy, we turn  
170 Abruptly into some sequestered nook,  
171 Still as a sheltered place when winds blow loud!  
172 At leisure, thence, through tracts of thin resort,  
173 And sights and sounds that come at intervals,  
174 We take our way. A raree-show is here,  
175 With children gathered round; another street  
176 Presents a company of dancing dogs,  
177 Or dromedary, with an antic pair  
178 Of monkeys on his back; a minstrel band  
179 Of Savoyards; or, single and alone,  
180 An English ballad-singer. Private courts,  
181 Gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes  
182 Thrilled by some female vendor's scream, belike  
183 The very shrillest of all London cries,

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184 May then entangle our impatient steps;  
185 Conducted through those labyrinths, unawares,

186 To privileged regions and inviolate,  
187 Where from their airy lodges studious lawyers  
188 Look out on waters, walks, and gardens green.

189 Thence back into the throng, until we reach,  
190 Following the tide that slackens by degrees,  
191 Some half-frequented scene, where wider streets  
192 Bring straggling breezes of suburban air.  
193 Here files of ballads dangle from dead walls;  
194 Advertisements, of giant-size, from high  
195 Press forward, in all colours, on the sight;  
196 These, bold in conscious merit, lower down;  
197 *That*, fronted with a most imposing word,  
198 Is, peradventure, one in masquerade.  
199 As on the broadening causeway we advance,  
200 Behold, turned upwards, a face hard and strong  
201 In lineaments, and red with over-toil.  
202 'Tis one encountered here and everywhere;  
203 A travelling cripple, by the trunk cut short,  
204 And stumping on his arms. In sailor's garb  
205 Another lies at length, beside a range  
206 Of well-formed characters, with chalk inscribed  
207 Upon the smooth flat stones: the Nurse is here,

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208 The Bachelor, that loves to sun himself,  
209 The military Idler, and the Dame,  
210 That field-ward takes her walk with decent steps.

211 Now homeward through the thickening hubbub, where  
212 See, among less distinguishable shapes,  
213 The begging scavenger, with hat in hand;  
214 The Italian, as he thrids his way with care,  
215 Steadying, far-seen, a frame of images  
216 Upon his head; with basket at his breast  
217 The Jew; the stately and slow-moving Turk,  
218 With freight of slippers piled beneath his arm!

219 Enough;---the mighty concourse I surveyed  
220 With no unthinking mind, well pleased to note  
221 Among the crowd all specimens of man,  
222 Through all the colours which the sun bestows,  
223 And every character of form and face:  
224 The Swede, the Russian; from the genial south,  
225 The Frenchman and the Spaniard; from remote  
226 America, the Hunter-Indian; Moors,  
227 Malays, Lascars, the Tartar, the Chinese,  
228 And Negro Ladies in white muslin gowns.

229 At leisure, then, I viewed, from day to day,

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230 The spectacles within doors,---birds and beasts  
 231 Of every nature, and strange plants convened  
 232 From every clime; and, next, those sights that ape  
 233 The absolute presence of reality,  
 234 Expressing, as in mirror, sea and land,  
 235 And what earth is, and what she has to shew.  
 236 I do not here allude to subtlest craft,  
 237 By means refined attaining purest ends,  
 238 But imitations, fondly made in plain  
 239 Confession of man's weakness and his loves.  
 240 Whether the Painter, whose ambitious skill  
 241 Submits to nothing less than taking in  
 242 A whole horizon's circuit, do with power,  
 243 Like that of angels or commissioned spirits,  
 244 Fix us upon some lofty pinnacle,  
 245 Or in a ship on waters, with a world  
 246 Of life, and life-like mockery beneath,  
 247 Above, behind, far stretching and before;  
 248 Or more mechanic artist represent  
 249 By scale exact, in model, wood or clay,  
 250 From blended colours also borrowing help,  
 251 Some miniature of famous spots or things,---  
 252 St. Peter's Church; or, more aspiring aim,  
 253 In microscopic vision, Rome herself;  
 254 Or, haply, some choice rural haunt,---the Falls

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255 Of Tivoli; and, high upon that steep,  
 256 The Sibyl's mouldering Temple! every tree,  
 257 Villa, or cottage, lurking among rocks  
 258 Throughout the landscape; tuft, stone scratch minute---  
 259 All that the traveller sees when he is there.

260 And to these exhibitions, mute and still,  
 261 Others of wider scope, where living men,  
 262 Music, and shifting pantomimic scenes,  
 263 Diversified the allurements. Need I fear  
 264 To mention by its name, as in degree,  
 265 Lowest of these and humblest in attempt,  
 266 Yet richly graced with honours of her own,  
 267 Half-rural Sadler's Wells? Though at that time  
 268 Intolerant, as is the way of youth  
 269 Unless itself be pleased, here more than once  
 270 Taking my seat, I saw (nor blush to add,  
 271 With ample recompense) giants and dwarfs,  
 272 Clowns, conjurors, posture-masters, harlequins,  
 273 Amid the uproar of the rabblement,

274 Perform their feats. Nor was it mean delight  
275 To watch crude Nature work in untaught minds;  
276 To note the laws and progress of belief;  
277 Though obstinate on this way, yet on that  
278 How willingly we travel, and how far!

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279 To have, for instance, brought upon the scene  
280 The champion, Jack the Giant-killer: Lo!  
281 He dons his coat of darkness; on the stage  
282 Walks, and achieves his wonders, from the eye  
283 Of living Mortal covert, "as the moon  
284 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave."  
285 Delusion bold! and how can it be wrought?  
286 The garb he wears is black as death, the word  
287 "*Invisible*" flames forth upon his chest.

288 Here, too, were "forms and pressures of the time,"  
289 Rough, bold, as Grecian comedy displayed  
290 When Art was young; dramas of living men,  
291 And recent things yet warm with life; a sea-fight,  
292 Shipwreck, or some domestic incident  
293 Divulged by Truth and magnified by Fame,  
294 Such as the daring brotherhood of late  
295 Set forth, too serious theme for that light place---  
296 I mean, O distant Friend! a story drawn  
297 From our own ground,---the Maid of Buttermere,---  
298 And how, unfaithful to a virtuous wife  
299 Deserted and deceived, the spoiler came  
300 And wooed the artless daughter of the hills,  
301 And wedded her, in cruel mockery  
302 Of love and marriage bonds. These words to thee

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303 Must needs bring back the moment when we first,  
304 Ere the broad world rang with the maiden's name,  
305 Beheld her serving at the cottage inn,  
306 Both stricken, as she entered or withdrew,  
307 With admiration of her modest mien  
308 And carriage, marked by unexampled grace.  
309 We since that time not unfamiliarly  
310 Have seen her,---her discretion have observed,  
311 Her just opinions, delicate reserve,  
312 Her patience, and humility of mind  
313 Unspoiled by commendation and the excess  
314 Of public notice---an offensive light  
315 To a meek spirit suffering inwardly.

316 From this memorial tribute to my theme



317 I was returning, when, with sundry forms  
 318 Commingled---shapes which met me in the way  
 319 That we must tread---thy image rose again,  
 320 Maiden of Buttermere! She lives in peace  
 321 Upon the spot where she was born and reared;  
 322 Without contamination doth she live  
 323 In quietness, without anxiety:  
 324 Beside the mountain chapel, sleeps in earth  
 325 Her new-born infant, fearless as a lamb  
 326 That, thither driven from some unsheltered place,

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327 Rests underneath the little rock-like pile  
 328 When storms are raging. Happy are they both---  
 329 Mother and child!---These feelings, in themselves  
 330 Trite, do yet scarcely seem so when I think  
 331 On those ingenuous moments of our youth  
 332 Ere we have learnt by use to slight the crimes  
 333 And sorrows of the world. Those simple days  
 334 Are now my theme; and, foremost of the scenes,  
 335 Which yet survive in memory, appears  
 336 One, at whose centre sate a lovely Boy,  
 337 A sportive infant, who, for six months' space,  
 338 Not more, had been of age to deal about  
 339 Articulate prattle---Child as beautiful  
 340 As ever clung around a mother's neck,  
 341 Or father fondly gazed upon with pride.  
 342 There, too, conspicuous for stature tall  
 343 And large dark eyes, beside her infant stood  
 344 The mother; but, upon her cheeks diffused,  
 345 False tints too well accorded with the glare  
 346 From play-house lustres thrown without reserve  
 347 On every object near. The Boy had been  
 348 The pride and pleasure of all lookers-on  
 349 In whatsoever place, but seemed in this  
 350 A sort of alien scattered from the clouds.  
 351 Of lusty vigour, more than infantine

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352 He was in limb, in cheek a summer rose  
 353 Just three parts blown---a cottage-child---if e'er,  
 354 By cottage-door on breezy mountain side,  
 355 Or in some sheltering vale, was seen a babe  
 356 By Nature's gifts so favoured. Upon a board  
 357 Decked with refreshments had this child been placed,  
 358 *His* little stage in the vast theatre,  
 359 And there he sate surrounded with a throng  
 360 Of chance spectators, chiefly dissolute men  
 361 And shameless women, treated and caressed;

362 Ate, drank, and with the fruit and glasses played,  
363 While oaths and laughter and indecent speech  
364 Were rife about him as the songs of birds  
365 Contending after showers. The mother now  
366 Is fading out of memory, but I see  
367 The lovely Boy as I beheld him then  
368 Among the wretched and the falsely gay,  
369 Like one of those who walked with hair unsinged  
370 Amid the fiery furnace. Charms and spells  
371 Muttered on black and spiteful instigation  
372 Have stopped, as some believe, the kindest growths.  
373 Ah, with how different spirit might a prayer  
374 Have been preferred, that this fair creature, checked  
375 By special privilege of Nature's love,  
376 Should in his childhood be detained for ever!

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377 But with its universal freight the tide  
378 Hath rolled along, and this bright innocent,  
379 Mary! may now have lived till he could look  
380 With envy on thy nameless babe that sleeps,  
381 Beside the mountain chapel, undisturbed.

382 Four rapid years had scarcely then been told  
383 Since, travelling southward from our pastoral hills,  
384 I heard, and for the first time in my life,  
385 The voice of woman utter blasphemy---  
386 Saw woman as she is, to open shame  
387 Abandoned, and the pride of public vice;  
388 I shuddered, for a barrier seemed at once  
389 Thrown in, that from humanity divorced  
390 Humanity, splitting the race of man  
391 In twain, yet leaving the same outward form.  
392 Distress of mind ensued upon the sight  
393 And ardent meditation. Later years  
394 Brought to such spectacle a milder sadness,  
395 Feelings of pure commiseration, grief  
396 For the individual and the overthrow  
397 Of her soul's beauty; farther I was then  
398 But seldom led, or wished to go; in truth  
399 The sorrow of the passion stopped me there.

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400 But let me now, less moved, in order take  
401 Our argument. Enough is said to show  
402 How casual incidents of real life,  
403 Observed where pastime only had been sought,  
404 Outweighed, or put to flight, the set events

405 And measured passions of the stage, albeit  
406 By Siddons trod in the fulness of her power.  
407 Yet was the theatre my dear delight;  
408 The very gilding, lamps and painted scrolls,  
409 And all the mean upholstery of the place,  
410 Wanted not animation, when the tide  
411 Of pleasure ebbed but to return as fast  
412 With the ever-shifting figures of the scene,  
413 Solemn or gay: whether some beauteous dame  
414 Advanced in radiance through a deep recess  
415 Of thick entangled forest, like the moon  
416 Opening the clouds; or sovereign king, announced  
417 With flourishing trumpet, came in full-blown state  
418 Of the world's greatness, winding round with train  
419 Of courtiers, banners, and a length of guards;  
420 Or captive led in abject weeds, and jingling  
421 His slender manacles; or romping girl  
422 Bounced, leapt, and pawed the air; or mumbling sire,  
423 A scare-crow pattern of old age dressed up  
424 In all the tatters of infirmity

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425 All loosely put together, hobbled in,  
426 Stumping upon a cane with which he smites,  
427 From time to time, the solid boards, and makes them  
428 Prate somewhat loudly of the whereabouts  
429 Of one so overloaded with his years.  
430 But what of this! the laugh, the grin, grimace,  
431 The antics striving to outstrip each other,  
432 Were all received, the least of them not lost,  
433 With an unmeasured welcome. Through the night,  
434 Between the show, and many-headed mass  
435 Of the spectators, and each several nook  
436 Filled with its fray or brawl, how eagerly  
437 And with what flashes, as it were, the mind  
438 Turned this way---that way! sportive and alert  
439 And watchful, as a kitten when at play,  
440 While winds are eddying round her, among straws  
441 And rustling leaves. Enchanting age and sweet!  
442 Romantic almost, looked at through a space,  
443 How small, of intervening years! For then,  
444 Though surely no mean progress had been made  
445 In meditations holy and sublime,  
446 Yet something of a girlish child-like gloss  
447 Of novelty survived for scenes like these;  
448 Enjoyment haply handed down from times  
449 When at a country-playhouse, some rude barn

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450 Tricked out for that proud use, if I perchance  
 451 Caught, on a summer evening through a chink  
 452 In the old wall, an unexpected glimpse  
 453 Of daylight, the bare thought of where I was  
 454 Gladdened me more than if I had been led  
 455 Into a dazzling cavern of romance,  
 456 Crowded with Genii busy among works  
 457 Not to be looked at by the common sun.

458 The matter that detains us now may seem,  
 459 To many, neither dignified enough  
 460 Nor arduous, yet will not be scorned by them,  
 461 Who, looking inward, have observed the ties  
 462 That bind the perishable hours of life  
 463 Each to the other, and the curious props  
 464 By which the world of memory and thought  
 465 Exists and is sustained. More lofty themes,  
 466 Such as at least do wear a prouder face,  
 467 Solicit our regard; but when I think  
 468 Of these, I feel the imaginative power  
 469 Languish within me; even then it slept,  
 470 When, pressed by tragic sufferings, the heart  
 471 Was more than full; amid my sobs and tears  
 472 It slept, even in the pregnant season of youth.  
 473 For though I was most passionately moved

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474 And yielded to all changes of the scene  
 475 With an obsequious promptness, yet the storm  
 476 Passed not beyond the suburbs of the mind;  
 477 Save when realities of act and mien,  
 478 The incarnation of the spirits that move  
 479 In harmony amid the Poet's world,  
 480 Rose to ideal grandeur, or, called forth  
 481 By power of contrast, made me recognise,  
 482 As at a glance, the things which I had shaped,  
 483 And yet not shaped, had seen and scarcely seen,  
 484 When, having closed the mighty Shakspeare's page,  
 485 I mused, and thought, and felt, in solitude.

486 Pass we from entertainments, that are such  
 487 Professedly, to others titled higher,  
 488 Yet, in the estimate of youth at least,  
 489 More near akin to those than names imply,---  
 490 I mean the brawls of lawyers in their courts  
 491 Before the ermined judge, or that great stage  
 492 Where senators, tongue-favoured men, perform,  
 493 Admired and envied. Oh! the beating heart,  
 494 When one among the prime of these rose up,---  
 495 One, of whose name from childhood we had heard

496 Familiarly, a household term, like those,  
497 The Bedfords, Glosters, Salsburys, of old

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498 Whom the fifth Harry talks of. Silence! hush!  
499 This is no trifler, no short-flighted wit,  
500 No stammerer of a minute, painfully  
501 Delivered. No! the Orator hath yoked  
502 The Hours, like young Aurora, to his car:  
503 Thrice welcome Presence! how can patience e'er  
504 Grow weary of attending on a track  
505 That kindles with such glory! All are charmed,  
506 Astonished; like a hero in romance,  
507 He winds away his never-ending horn;  
508 Words follow words, sense seems to follow sense:  
509 What memory and what logic! till the strain  
510 Transcendent, superhuman as it seemed,  
511 Grows tedious even in a young man's ear.

512 Genius of Burke! forgive the pen seduced  
513 By specious wonders, and too slow to tell  
514 Of what the ingenuous, what bewildered men,  
515 Beginning to mistrust their boastful guides,  
516 And wise men, willing to grow wiser, caught,  
517 Rapt auditors! from thy most eloquent tongue---  
518 Now mute, for ever mute in the cold grave.  
519 I see him,---old, but vigorous in age,---  
520 Stand like an oak whose stag-horn branches start  
521 Out of its leafy brow, the more to awe

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522 The younger brethren of the grove. But some---  
523 While he forewarns, denounces, launches forth,  
524 Against all systems built on abstract rights,  
525 Keen ridicule; the majesty proclaims  
526 Of Institutes and Laws, hallowed by time;  
527 Declares the vital power of social ties  
528 Endeared by Custom; and with high disdain,  
529 Exploding upstart Theory, insists  
530 Upon the allegiance to which men are born---  
531 Some---say at once a froward multitude---  
532 Murmur (for truth is hated, where not loved)  
533 As the winds fret within the Æolian cave,  
534 Galled by their monarch's chain. The times were big  
535 With ominous change, which, night by night, provoked  
536 Keen struggles, and black clouds of passion raised;  
537 But memorable moments intervened,  
538 When Wisdom, like the Goddess from Jove's brain,  
539 Broke forth in armour of resplendent words,

540 Startling the Synod. Could a youth, and one  
 541 In ancient story versed, whose breast had heaved  
 542 Under the weight of classic eloquence,  
 543 Sit, see, and hear, unthankful, uninspired?

544 Nor did the Pulpit's oratory fail  
 545 To achieve its higher triumph. Not unfelt

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546 Were its admonishments, nor lightly heard  
 547 The awful truths delivered thence by tongues  
 548 Endowed with various power to search the soul;  
 549 Yet ostentation, domineering, oft  
 550 Poured forth harangues, how sadly out of place!--  
 551 There have I seen a comely bachelor,  
 552 Fresh from a toilette of two hours, ascend  
 553 His rostrum, with seraphic glance look up,  
 554 And, in a tone elaborately low  
 555 Beginning, lead his voice through many a maze  
 556 A minuet course; and, winding up his mouth,  
 557 From time to time, into an orifice  
 558 Most delicate, a lurking eyelet, small,  
 559 And only not invisible, again  
 560 Open it out, diffusing thence a smile  
 561 Of rapt irradiation, exquisite.  
 562 Meanwhile the Evangelists, Isaiah, Job,  
 563 Moses, and he who penned, the other day,  
 564 The Death of Abel, Shakspeare, and the Bard  
 565 Whose genius spangled o'er a gloomy theme  
 566 With fancies thick as his inspiring stars,  
 567 And Ossian (doubt not, 'tis the naked truth)  
 568 Summoned from streamy Morven---each and all  
 569 Would, in their turns, lend ornaments and flowers  
 570 To entwine the crook of eloquence that helped

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571 This pretty Shepherd, pride of all the plains,  
 572 To rule and guide his captivated flock.

573 I glance but at a few conspicuous marks,  
 574 Leaving a thousand others, that, in hall,  
 575 Court, theatre, conventicle, or shop,  
 576 In public room or private, park or street,  
 577 Each fondly reared on his own pedestal,  
 578 Looked out for admiration. Folly, vice,  
 579 Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,  
 580 And all the strife of singularity,  
 581 Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense---  
 582 Of these, and of the living shapes they wear,

583 There is no end. Such candidates for regard,  
584 Although well pleased to be where they were found,  
585 I did not hunt after, nor greatly prize,  
586 Nor made unto myself a secret boast  
587 Of reading them with quick and curious eye;  
588 But, as a common produce, things that are  
589 To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them  
590 Such willing note, as, on some errand bound  
591 That asks not speed, a Traveller might bestow  
592 On sea-shells that bestrew the sandy beach,  
593 Or daisies swarming through the fields of June.

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594 But foolishness and madness in parade,  
595 Though most at home in this their dear domain,  
596 Are scattered everywhere, no rarities,  
597 Even to the rudest novice of the Schools.  
598 Me, rather, it employed, to note, and keep  
599 In memory, those individual sights  
600 Of courage, or integrity, or truth,  
601 Or tenderness, which there, set off by foil,  
602 Appeared more touching. One will I select;  
603 A Father---for he bore that sacred name---  
604 Him saw I, sitting in an open square,  
605 Upon a corner-stone of that low wall,  
606 Wherein were fixed the iron pales that fenced  
607 A spacious grass-plot; there, in silence, sate  
608 This One Man, with a sickly babe outstretched  
609 Upon his knee, whom he had thither brought  
610 For sunshine, and to breathe the fresher air.  
611 Of those who passed, and me who looked at him,  
612 He took no heed; but in his brawny arms  
613 (The Artificer was to the elbow bare,  
614 And from his work this moment had been stolen)  
615 He held the child, and, bending over it,  
616 As if he were afraid both of the sun  
617 And of the air, which he had come to seek,  
618 Eyed the poor babe with love unutterable.

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619 As the black storm upon the mountain top  
620 Sets off the sunbeam in the valley, so  
621 That huge fermenting mass of human-kind  
622 Serves as a solemn back-ground, or relief,  
623 To single forms and objects, whence they draw,  
624 For feeling and contemplative regard,  
625 More than inherent liveliness and power.



626 How oft, amid those overflowing streets,  
 627 Have I gone forward with the crowd, and said  
 628 Unto myself, "The face of every one  
 629 That passes by me is a mystery!"  
 630 Thus have I looked, nor ceased to look, oppressed  
 631 By thoughts of what and whither, when and how,  
 632 Until the shapes before my eyes became  
 633 A second-sight procession, such as glides  
 634 Over still mountains, or appears in dreams;  
 635 And once, far-travelled in such mood, beyond  
 636 The reach of common indication, lost  
 637 Amid the moving pageant, I was smitten  
 638 Abruptly, with the view (a sight not rare)  
 639 Of a blind Beggar, who, with upright face,  
 640 Stood, propped against a wall, upon his chest  
 641 Wearing a written paper, to explain  
 642 His story, whence he came, and who he was.  
 643 Caught by the spectacle my mind turned round

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644 As with the might of waters; an apt type  
 645 This label seemed of the utmost we can know,  
 646 Both of ourselves and of the universe;  
 647 And, on the shape of that unmoving man,  
 648 His steadfast face and sightless eyes, I gazed,  
 649 As if admonished from another world.

650 Though reared upon the base of outward things,  
 651 Structures like these the excited spirit mainly  
 652 Builds for herself; scenes different there are,  
 653 Full-formed, that take, with small internal help,  
 654 Possession of the faculties,---the peace  
 655 That comes with night; the deep solemnity  
 656 Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,  
 657 When the great tide of human life stands still;  
 658 The business of the day to come, unborn,  
 659 Of that gone by, locked up, as in the grave;  
 660 The blended calmness of the heavens and earth,  
 661 Moonlight and stars, and empty streets, and sounds  
 662 Unfrequent as in deserts; at late hours  
 663 Of winter evenings, when unwholesome rains  
 664 Are falling hard, with people yet astir,  
 665 The feeble salutation from the voice  
 666 Of some unhappy woman, now and then  
 667 Heard as we pass, when no one looks about,

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668 Nothing is listened to. But these, I fear,  
 669 Are falsely catalogued; things that are, are not,

670 As the mind answers to them, or the heart  
 671 Is prompt, or slow, to feel. What say you, then,  
 672 To times, when half the city shall break out  
 673 Full of one passion, vengeance, rage, or fear?  
 674 To executions, to a street on fire,  
 675 Mobs, riots, or rejoicings? From these sights  
 676 Take one,---that ancient festival, the Fair,  
 677 Holden where martyrs suffered in past time,  
 678 And named of St. Bartholomew; there, see  
 679 A work completed to our hands, that lays,  
 680 If any spectacle on earth can do,  
 681 The whole creative powers of man asleep!---  
 682 For once, the Muse's help will we implore,  
 683 And she shall lodge us, wafted on her wings,  
 684 Above the press and danger of the crowd,  
 685 Upon some showman's platform. What a shock  
 686 For eyes and ears! what anarchy and din,  
 687 Barbarian and infernal,---a phantasma,  
 688 Monstrous in colour, motion, shape, sight, sound!  
 689 Below, the open space, through every nook  
 690 Of the wide area, twinkles, is alive  
 691 With heads; the midway region, and above,  
 692 Is thronged with staring pictures and huge scrolls,

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693 Dumb proclamations of the Prodigies;  
 694 With chattering monkeys dangling from their poles,  
 695 And children whirling in their roundabouts;  
 696 With those that stretch the neck and strain the eyes,  
 697 And crack the voice in rivalry, the crowd  
 698 Inviting; with buffoons against buffoons  
 699 Grimacing, writhing, screaming,---him who grinds  
 700 The hurdy-gurdy, at the fiddle weaves,  
 701 Rattles the salt-box, thumps the kettle-drum,  
 702 And him who at the trumpet puffs his cheeks,  
 703 The silver-collared Negro with his timbrel,  
 704 Equestrians, tumblers, women, girls, and boys,  
 705 Blue-breeched, pink-vested, with high-towering plumes.---  
 706 All moveables of wonder, from all parts,  
 707 Are here---Albinos, painted Indians, Dwarfs,  
 708 The Horse of knowledge, and the learned Pig,  
 709 The Stone-eater, the man that swallows fire,  
 710 Giants, Ventriloquists, the Invisible Girl,  
 711 The Bust that speaks and moves its goggling eyes,  
 712 The Wax-work, Clock-work, all the marvellous craft  
 713 Of modern Merlins, Wild Beasts, Puppet-shows,  
 714 All out-o'-the-way, far-fetched, perverted things,  
 715 All freaks of nature, all Promethean thoughts  
 716 Of man, his dullness, madness, and their feats  
 717 All jumbled up together, to compose

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718 A Parliament of Monsters. Tents and Booths  
 719 Meanwhile, as if the whole were one vast mill,  
 720 Are vomiting, receiving on all sides,  
 721 Men, Women, three-years' Children, Babes in arms.  
  
 722 Oh, blank confusion! true epitome  
 723 Of what the mighty City is herself,  
 724 To thousands upon thousands of her sons,  
 725 Living amid the same perpetual whirl  
 726 Of trivial objects, melted and reduced  
 727 To one identity, by differences  
 728 That have no law, no meaning, and no end---  
 729 Oppression, under which even highest minds  
 730 Must labour, whence the strongest are not free.  
 731 But though the picture weary out the eye,  
 732 By nature an unmanageable sight,  
 733 It is not wholly so to him who looks  
 734 In steadiness, who hath among least things  
 735 An under-sense of greatest; sees the parts  
 736 As parts, but with a feeling of the whole.  
 737 This, of all acquisitions first awaits  
 738 On sundry and most widely different modes  
 739 Of education, nor with least delight  
 740 On that through which I passed. Attention springs,  
 741 And comprehensiveness and memory flow,

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742 From early converse with the works of God  
 743 Among all regions; chiefly where appear  
 744 Most obviously simplicity and power.  
 745 Think, how the everlasting streams and woods,  
 746 Stretched and still stretching far and wide, exalt  
 747 The roving Indian, on his desert sands:  
 748 What grandeur not unfelt, what pregnant show  
 749 Of beauty, meets the sun-burnt Arab's eye:  
 750 And, as the sea propels, from zone to zone,  
 751 Its currents; magnifies its shoals of life  
 752 Beyond all compass; spreads, and sends aloft  
 753 Armies of clouds,---even so, its powers and aspects  
 754 Shape for mankind, by principles as fixed,  
 755 The views and aspirations of the soul  
 756 To majesty. Like virtue have the forms  
 757 Perennial of the ancient hills; nor less  
 758 The changeful language of their countenances  
 759 Quickens the slumbering mind, and aids the thoughts,  
 760 However multitudinous, to move  
 761 With order and relation. This, if still,

762 As hitherto, in freedom I may speak,  
 763 Not violating any just restraint,  
 764 As may be hoped, of real modesty,---  
 765 This did I feel, in London's vast domain.  
 766 The Spirit of Nature was upon me there;

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767 The soul of Beauty and enduring Life  
 768 Vouchsafed her inspiration, and diffused,  
 769 Through meagre lines and colours, and the press  
 770 Of self-destroying, transitory things,  
 771 Composure, and ennobling Harmony.

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### BOOK VIII. RETROSPECT.---LOVE OF NATURE LEADING TO LOVE OF MAN.

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1 **What** sounds are those, Helvellyn, that are heard  
 2 Up to thy summit, through the depth of air  
 3 Ascending, as if distance had the power  
 4 To make the sounds more audible? What crowd  
 5 Covers, or sprinkles o'er, yon village green?  
 6 Crowd seems it, solitary hill! to thee,  
 7 Though but a little family of men,  
 8 Shepherds and tillers of the ground---betimes  
 9 Assembled with their children and their wives,  
 10 And here and there a stranger interspersed.  
 11 They hold a rustic fair---a festival,  
 12 Such as, on this side now, and now on that,  
 13 Repeated through his tributary vales,  
 14 Helvellyn, in the silence of his rest,  
 15 Sees annually, if clouds towards either ocean

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16 Blown from their favourite resting-place, or mists  
 17 Dissolved, have left him an unshrouded head.  
 18 Delightful day it is for all who dwell  
 19 In this secluded glen, and eagerly  
 20 They give it welcome. Long ere heat of noon,  
 21 From byre or field the kine were brought; the sheep  
 22 Are penned in cotes; the chaffering is begun.  
 23 The heifer lows, uneasy at the voice

24 Of a new master; bleat the flocks aloud.  
 25 Booths are there none; a stall or two is here;  
 26 A lame man or a blind, the one to beg,  
 27 The other to make music; hither, too,  
 28 From far, with basket, slung upon her arm,  
 29 Of hawker's wares---books, pictures, combs, and pins---  
 30 Some aged woman finds her way again,  
 31 Year after year, a punctual visitant!  
 32 There also stands a speech-maker by rote,  
 33 Pulling the strings of his boxed raree-show;  
 34 And in the lapse of many years may come  
 35 Prouder itinerant, mountebank, or he  
 36 Whose wonders in a covered wain lie hid.  
 37 But one there is, the loveliest of them all,  
 38 Some sweet lass of the valley, looking out  
 39 For gains, and who that sees her would not buy?  
 40 Fruits of her father's orchard, are her wares,

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41 And with the ruddy produce, she walks round  
 42 Among the crowd, half pleased with half ashamed  
 43 Of her new office, blushing restlessly.  
 44 The children now are rich, for the old to-day  
 45 Are generous as the young; and, if content  
 46 With looking on, some ancient wedded pair  
 47 Sit in the shade together, while they gaze,  
 48 "A cheerful smile unbends the wrinkled brow,  
 49 The days departed start again to life,  
 50 And all the scenes of childhood reappear,  
 51 Faint, but more tranquil, like the changing sun  
 52 To him who slept at noon and wakes at eve." [End note 9: 1Kb]   
 53 Thus gaiety and cheerfulness prevail,  
 54 Spreading from young to old, from old to young,  
 55 And no one seems to want his share.---Immense  
 56 Is the recess, the circumambient world  
 57 Magnificent, by which they are embraced:  
 58 They move about upon the soft green turf:  
 59 How little they, they and their doings, seem,  
 60 And all that they can further or obstruct!  
 61 Through utter weakness pitiably dear,  
 62 As tender infants are: and yet how great!  
 63 For all things serve them: them the morning light  
 64 Loves, as it glistens on the silent rocks;  
 65 And them the silent rocks, which now from high

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66 Look down upon them; the reposing clouds;  
 67 The wild brooks prattling from invisible haunts;  
 68 And old Helvellyn, conscious of the stir

69 Which animates this day their calm abode.

70 With deep devotion, Nature, did I feel,  
 71 In that enormous City's turbulent world  
 72 Of men and things, what benefit I owed  
 73 To thee, and those domains of rural peace,  
 74 Where to the sense of beauty first my heart  
 75 Was opened; tract more exquisitely fair  
 76 Than that famed paradise of ten thousand trees,  
 77 Or Gehol's matchless gardens, for delight  
 78 Of the Tartarian dynasty composed  
 79 (Beyond that mighty wall, not fabulous,  
 80 China's stupendous mound) by patient toil  
 81 Of myriads and boon nature's lavish help;  
 82 There, in a clime from widest empire chosen,  
 83 Fulfilling (could enchantment have done more?)  
 84 A sumptuous dream of flowery lawns, with domes  
 85 Of pleasure sprinkled over, shady dells  
 86 For eastern monasteries, sunny mounts  
 87 With temples crested, bridges, gondolas,  
 88 Rocks, dens, and groves of foliage taught to melt  
 89 Into each other their obsequious hues,

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90 Vanished and vanishing in subtle chase,  
 91 Too fine to be pursued; or standing forth  
 92 In no discordant opposition, strong  
 93 And gorgeous as the colours side by side  
 94 Bedded among rich plumes of tropic birds;  
 95 And mountains over all, embracing all;  
 96 And all the landscape, endlessly enriched  
 97 With waters running, falling, or asleep.

98 But lovelier far than this, the paradise  
 99 Where I was reared; in Nature's primitive gifts  
 100 Favoured no less, and more to every sense  
 101 Delicious, seeing that the sun and sky,  
 102 The elements, and seasons as they change,  
 103 Do find a worthy fellow-labourer there---  
 104 Man free, man working for himself, with choice  
 105 Of time, and place, and object; by his wants,  
 106 His comforts, native occupations, cares,  
 107 Cheerfully led to individual ends  
 108 Or social, and still followed by a train  
 109 Unwooded, unthought-of even---simplicity,  
 110 And beauty, and inevitable grace.

111 Yea, when a glimpse of those imperial bowers  
 112 Would to a child be transport over-great,

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113 When but a half-hour's roam through such a place  
114 Would leave behind a dance of images,  
115 That shall break in upon his sleep for weeks;  
116 Even then the common haunts of the green earth,  
117 And ordinary interests of man,  
118 Which they embosom, all without regard  
119 As both may seem, are fastening on the heart  
120 Insensibly, each with the other's help.  
121 For me, when my affections first were led  
122 From kindred, friends, and playmates, to partake  
123 Love for the human creature's absolute self,  
124 That noticeable kindness of heart  
125 Sprang out of fountains, there abounding most  
126 Where sovereign Nature dictated the tasks  
127 And occupations which her beauty adorned,  
128 And Shepherds were the men that pleased me first;  
129 Not such as Saturn ruled 'mid Latian wilds,  
130 With arts and laws so tempered, that their lives  
131 Left, even to us toiling in this late day,  
132 A bright tradition of the golden age;  
133 Not such as, 'mid Arcadian fastnesses  
134 Sequestered, handed down among themselves  
135 Felicity, in Grecian song renowned;  
136 Nor such as, when an adverse fate had driven,  
137 From house and home, the courtly band whose fortunes

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138 Entered, with Shakspeare's genius, the wild woods  
139 Of Arden, amid sunshine or in shade,  
140 Culled the best fruits of Time's uncounted hours,  
141 Ere Phoebe sighed for the false Ganymede;  
142 Or there where Perdita and Florizel  
143 Together danced, Queen of the feast, and King;  
144 Nor such as Spenser fabled. True it is,  
145 That I had heard (what he perhaps had seen)  
146 Of maids at sunrise bringing in from far  
147 Their May-bush, and along the street in flocks  
148 Parading with a song of taunting rhymes,  
149 Aimed at the laggards slumbering within doors;  
150 Had also heard, from those who yet remembered,  
151 Tales of the May-pole dance, and wreaths that decked  
152 Porch, door-way, or kirk-pillar; and of youths,  
153 Each with his maid, before the sun was up,  
154 By annual custom, issuing forth in troops,  
155 To drink the waters of some sainted well,  
156 And hang it round with garlands. Love survives;  
157 But, for such purpose, flowers no longer grow:  
158 The times, too sage, perhaps too proud, have dropped



159 These lighter graces; and the rural ways  
 160 And manners which my childhood looked upon  
 161 Were the unluxuriant produce of a life  
 162 Intent on little but substantial needs,

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163 Yet rich in beauty, beauty that was felt.  
 164 But images of danger and distress,  
 165 Man suffering among awful Powers and Forms;  
 166 Of this I heard, and saw enough to make  
 167 Imagination restless; nor was free  
 168 Myself from frequent perils; nor were tales  
 169 Wanting,---the tragedies of former times,  
 170 Hazards and strange escapes, of which the rocks  
 171 Immutable and everflowing streams,  
 172 Where'er I roamed, were speaking monuments.

173 Smooth life had flock and shepherd in old time,  
 174 Long springs and tepid winters, on the banks  
 175 Of delicate Galesus; and no less  
 176 Those scattered along Adria's myrtle shores:  
 177 Smooth life had herdsman, and his snow-white herd  
 178 To triumphs and to sacrificial rites  
 179 Devoted, on the inviolable stream  
 180 Of rich Clitumnus; and the goat-herd lived  
 181 As calmly, underneath the pleasant brows  
 182 Of cool Lucretilis, where the pipe was heard  
 183 Of Pan, Invisible God, thrilling the rocks  
 184 With tutelary music, from all harm  
 185 The fold protecting. I myself, mature  
 186 In manhood then, have seen a pastoral tract

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187 Like one of these, where Fancy might run wild,  
 188 Though under skies less generous, less serene:  
 189 There, for her own delight had Nature framed  
 190 A pleasure-ground, diffused a fair expanse  
 191 Of level pasture, islanded with groves  
 192 And banked with woody risings; but the Plain  
 193 Endless, here opening widely out, and there  
 194 Shut up in lesser lakes or beds of lawn  
 195 And intricate recesses, creek or bay  
 196 Sheltered within a shelter, where at large  
 197 The shepherd strays, a rolling hut his home.  
 198 Thither he comes with spring-time, there abides  
 199 All summer, and at sunrise ye may hear  
 200 His flageolet to liquid notes of love  
 201 Attuned, or sprightly fife resounding far.  
 202 Nook is there none, nor tract of that vast space

203 Where passage opens, but the same shall have  
204 In turn its visitant, telling there his hours  
205 In unlaborious pleasure, with no task  
206 More toilsome than to carve a beechen bowl  
207 For spring or fountain, which the traveller finds,  
208 When through the region he pursues at will  
209 His devious course. A glimpse of such sweet life  
210 I saw when, from the melancholy walls  
211 Of Goslar, once imperial, I renewed

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212 My daily walk along that wide champaign,  
213 That, reaching to her gates, spreads east and west,  
214 And northwards, from beneath the mountainous verge  
215 Of the Hercynian forest. Yet, hail to you  
216 Moors, mountains, headlands, and ye hollow vales,  
217 Ye long deep channels for the Atlantic's voice,  
218 Powers of my native region! Ye that seize  
219 The heart with firmer grasp! Your snows and streams  
220 Ungovernable, and your terrifying winds,  
221 That howl so dismally for him who treads  
222 Companionless your awful solitudes!  
223 There, 'tis the shepherd's task the winter long  
224 To wait upon the storms: of their approach  
225 Sagacious, into sheltering coves he drives  
226 His flock, and thither from the homestead bears  
227 A toilsome burden up the craggy ways,  
228 And deals it out, their regular nourishment  
229 Strewn on the frozen snow. And when the spring  
230 Looks out, and all the pastures dance with lambs,  
231 And when the flock, with warmer weather, climbs  
232 Higher and higher, him his office leads  
233 To watch their goings, whatsoever track  
234 The wanderers choose. For this he quits his home  
235 At day-spring, and no sooner doth the sun  
236 Begin to strike him with a fire-like heat,

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237 Than he lies down upon some shining rock,  
238 And breakfasts with his dog. When they have stolen,  
239 As is their wont, a pittance from strict time,  
240 For rest not needed or exchange of love,  
241 Then from his couch he starts; and now his feet  
242 Crush out a livelier fragrance from the flowers  
243 Of lowly thyme, by Nature's skill enwrought  
244 In the wild turf: the lingering dews of morn  
245 Smoke round him, as from hill to hill he hies,  
246 His staff protending like a hunter's spear,  
247 Or by its aid leaping from crag to crag,

248 And o'er the brawling beds of unbridged streams.  
249 Philosophy, methinks, at Fancy's call,  
250 Might deign to follow him through what he does  
251 Or sees in his day's march; himself he feels,  
252 In those vast regions where his service lies,  
253 A freeman, wedded to his life of hope  
254 And hazard, and hard labour interchanged  
255 With that majestic indolence so dear  
256 To native man. A rambling school-boy, thus  
257 I felt his presence in his own domain,  
258 As of a lord and master, or a power,  
259 Or genius, under Nature, under God,  
260 Presiding; and severest solitude  
261 Had more commanding looks when he was there.

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262 When up the lonely brooks on rainy days  
263 Angling I went, or trod the trackless hills  
264 By mists bewildered, suddenly mine eyes  
265 Have glanced upon him distant a few steps,  
266 In size a giant, stalking through thick fog,  
267 His sheep like Greenland bears; or, as he stepped  
268 Beyond the boundary line of some hill-shadow,  
269 His form hath flashed upon me, glorified  
270 By the deep radiance of the setting sun:  
271 Or him have I descried in distant sky,  
272 A solitary object and sublime,  
273 Above all height! like an aerial cross  
274 Stationed alone upon a spiry rock  
275 Of the Chartreuse, for worship. Thus was man  
276 Ennobled outwardly before my sight,  
277 And thus my heart was early introduced  
278 To an unconscious love and reverence  
279 Of human nature; hence the human form  
280 To me became an index of delight,  
281 Of grace and honour, power and worthiness.  
282 Meanwhile this creature---spiritual almost  
283 As those of books, but more exalted far;  
284 Far more of an imaginative form  
285 Than the gay Corin of the groves, who lives  
286 For his own fancies, or to dance by the hour,

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287 In coronal, with Phyllis in the midst---  
288 Was, for the purposes of kind, a man  
289 With the most common; husband, father; learned,  
290 Could teach, admonish; suffered with the rest  
291 From vice and folly, wretchedness and fear;  
292 Of this I little saw, cared less for it,

293 But something must have felt.

293 Call ye these appearances---  
294 Which I beheld of shepherds in my youth,  
295 This sanctity of Nature given to man---  
296 A shadow, a delusion, ye who pore  
297 On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things;  
298 Whose truth is not a motion or a shape  
299 Instinct with vital functions, but a block  
300 Or waxen image which yourselves have made,  
301 And ye adore! But blessed be the God  
302 Of Nature and of Man that this was so;  
303 That men before my inexperienced eyes  
304 Did first present themselves thus purified,  
305 Removed, and to a distance that was fit:  
306 And so we all of us in some degree  
307 Are led to knowledge, wheresoever led,  
308 And howsoever; were it otherwise,  
309 And we found evil fast as we find good  
310 In our first years, or think that it is found,

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311 How could the innocent heart bear up and live!  
312 But doubly fortunate my lot; not here  
313 Alone, that something of a better life  
314 Perhaps was round me than it is the privilege  
315 Of most to move in, but that first I looked  
316 At Man through objects that were great or fair;  
317 First communed with him by their help. And thus  
318 Was founded a sure safeguard and defence  
319 Against the weight of meanness, selfish cares,  
320 Coarse manners, vulgar passions, that beat in  
321 On all sides from the ordinary world  
322 In which we traffic. Starting from this point  
323 I had my face turned toward the truth, began  
324 With an advantage furnished by that kind  
325 Of prepossession, without which the soul  
326 Receives no knowledge that can bring forth good,  
327 No genuine insight ever comes to her.  
328 From the restraint of over-watchful eyes  
329 Preserved, I moved about, year after year,  
330 Happy, and now most thankful that my walk  
331 Was guarded from too early intercourse  
332 With the deformities of crowded life,  
333 And those ensuing laughters and contempts,  
334 Self-pleasing, which, if we would wish to think  
335 With a due reverence on earth's rightful lord,

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336 Here placed to be the inheritor of heaven,  
337 Will not permit us; but pursue the mind,  
338 That to devotion willingly would rise,  
339 Into the temple and the temple's heart.

340 Yet deem not, Friend! that human kind with me  
341 Thus early took a place pre-eminent;  
342 Nature herself was, at this unripe time,  
343 But secondary to my own pursuits  
344 And animal activities, and all  
345 Their trivial pleasures; and when these had drooped  
346 And gradually expired, and Nature, prized  
347 For her own sake, became my joy, even then---  
348 And upwards through late youth, until not less  
349 Than two-and-twenty summers had been told---  
350 Was Man in my affections and regards  
351 Subordinate to her, her visible forms  
352 And viewless agencies: a passion, she,  
353 A rapture often, and immediate love  
354 Ever at hand; he, only a delight  
355 Occasional, an accidental grace,  
356 His hour being not yet come. Far less had then  
357 The inferior creatures, beast or bird, attuned  
358 My spirit to that gentleness of love  
359 (Though they had long been carefully observed),

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360 Won from me those minute obeisances  
361 Of tenderness, which I may number now  
362 With my first blessings. Nevertheless, on these  
363 The light of beauty did not fall in vain,  
364 Or grandeur circumfuse them to no end.

365 But when that first poetic faculty  
366 Of plain Imagination and severe,  
367 No longer a mute influence of the soul,  
368 Ventured, at some rash Muse's earnest call,  
369 To try her strength among harmonious words;  
370 And to book-notions and the rules of art  
371 Did knowingly conform itself; there came  
372 Among the simple shapes of human life  
373 A wilfulness of fancy and conceit;  
374 And Nature and her objects beautified  
375 These fictions, as in some sort, in their turn,  
376 They burnished her. From touch of this new power  
377 Nothing was safe: the elder-tree that grew  
378 Beside the well-known charnel-house had then  
379 A dismal look: the yew-tree had its ghost,  
380 That took his station there for ornament:  
381 The dignities of plain occurrence then

382 Were tasteless, and truth's golden mean, a point  
 383 Where no sufficient pleasure could be found.

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384 Then, if a widow, staggering with the blow  
 385 Of her distress, was known to have turned her steps  
 386 To the cold grave in which her husband slept,  
 387 One night, or haply more than one, through pain  
 388 Or half-insensate impotence of mind,  
 389 The fact was caught at greedily, and there  
 390 She must be visitant the whole year through,  
 391 Wetting the turf with never-ending tears.

392 Through quaint obliquities I might pursue  
 393 These cravings; when the fox-glove, one by one,  
 394 Upwards through every stage of the tall stem,  
 395 Had shed beside the public way its bells,  
 396 And stood of all dismantled, save the last  
 397 Left at the tapering ladder's top, that seemed  
 398 To bend as doth a slender blade of grass  
 399 Tipped with a rain-drop, Fancy loved to seat,  
 400 Beneath the plant despoiled, but crested still  
 401 With this last relic, soon itself to fall,  
 402 Some vagrant mother, whose arch little ones,  
 403 All unconcerned by her dejected plight,  
 404 Laughed as with rival eagerness their hands  
 405 Gathered the purple cups that round them lay,  
 406 Strewing the turf's green slope.

406 A diamond light

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407 (Whene'er the summer sun, declining, smote  
 408 A smooth rock wet with constant springs) was seen  
 409 Sparkling from out a copse-clad bank that rose  
 410 Fronting our cottage. Oft beside the hearth  
 411 Seated, with open door, often and long  
 412 Upon this restless lustre have I gazed,  
 413 That made my fancy restless as itself.  
 414 'Twas now for me a burnished silver shield  
 415 Suspended over a knight's tomb, who lay  
 416 Inglorious, buried in the dusky wood:  
 417 An entrance now into some magic cave  
 418 Or palace built by fairies of the rock;  
 419 Nor could I have been bribed to disenchant  
 420 The spectacle, by visiting the spot.  
 421 Thus wilful Fancy, in no hurtful mood,  
 422 Engrafted far-fetched shapes on feelings bred  
 423 By pure Imagination: busy Power

424 She was, and with her ready pupil turned  
 425 Instinctively to human passions, then  
 426 Least understood. Yet, 'mid the fervent swarm  
 427 Of these vagaries, with an eye so rich  
 428 As mine was through the bounty of a grand  
 429 And lovely region, I had forms distinct  
 430 To steady me: each airy thought revolved  
 431 Round a substantial centre, which at once

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432 Incited it to motion, and controlled.  
 433 I did not pine like one in cities bred,  
 434 As was thy melancholy lot, dear Friend!  
 435 Great Spirit as thou art, in endless dreams  
 436 Of sickliness, disjoining, joining, things  
 437 Without the light of knowledge. Where the harm,  
 438 If, when the woodman languished with disease  
 439 Induced by sleeping nightly on the ground  
 440 Within his sod-built cabin, Indian-wise,  
 441 I called the pangs of disappointed love,  
 442 And all the sad etcetera of the wrong,  
 443 To help him to his grave. Meanwhile the man,  
 444 If not already from the woods retired  
 445 To die at home, was haply as I knew,  
 446 Withering by slow degrees, 'mid gentle airs,  
 447 Birds, running streams, and hills so beautiful  
 448 On golden evenings, while the charcoal pile  
 449 Breathed up its smoke, an image of his ghost  
 450 Or spirit that full soon must take her flight.  
 451 Nor shall we not be tending towards that point  
 452 Of sound humanity to which our Tale  
 453 Leads, though by sinuous ways, if here I shew  
 454 How Fancy, in a season when she wove  
 455 Those slender cords, to guide the unconscious Boy  
 456 For the Man's sake, could feed at Nature's call

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457 Some pensive musings which might well beseem  
 458 Maturer years.

458                                   A grove there is whose boughs  
 459 Stretch from the western marge of Thurston-mere,  
 460 With length of shade so thick, that whoso glides  
 461 Along the line of low-roofed water, moves  
 462 As in a cloister. Once---while, in that shade  
 463 Loitering, I watched the golden beams of light  
 464 Flung from the setting sun, as they reposed  
 465 In silent beauty on the naked ridge  
 466 Of a high eastern hill---thus flowed my thoughts



467 In a pure stream of words fresh from the heart: [End note 10: 1Kb]   
 468 Dear native Regions, wheresoe'er shall close  
 469 My mortal course, there will I think on you;  
 470 Dying, will cast on you a backward look;  
 471 Even as this setting sun (albeit the Vale  
 472 Is no where touched by one memorial gleam)  
 473 Doth with the fond remains of his last power  
 474 Still linger, and a farewell lustre sheds  
 475 On the dear mountain-tops where first he rose.

476 Enough of humble arguments; recal,  
 477 My Song! those high emotions which thy voice  
 478 Has heretofore made known; that bursting forth  
 479 Of sympathy, inspiring and inspired,

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480 When everywhere a vital pulse was felt,  
 481 And all the several frames of things, like stars,  
 482 Through every magnitude distinguishable,  
 483 Shone mutually indebted, or half lost  
 484 Each in the other's blaze, a galaxy  
 485 Of life and glory. In the midst stood Man,  
 486 Outwardly, inwardly contemplated,  
 487 As, of all visible natures, crown, though born  
 488 Of dust, and kindred to the worm; a Being,  
 489 Both in perception and discernment, first  
 490 In every capability of rapture,  
 491 Through the divine effect of power and love;  
 492 As, more than anything we know, instinct  
 493 With godhead, and, by reason and by will,  
 494 Acknowledging dependency sublime.

495 Ere long, the lonely mountains left, I moved,  
 496 Begirt, from day to day, with temporal shapes  
 497 Of vice and folly thrust upon my view,  
 498 Objects of sport, and ridicule, and scorn,  
 499 Manners and characters discriminate,  
 500 And little bustling passions that eclipse,  
 501 As well they might, the impersonated thought,  
 502 The idea, or abstraction of the kind.

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503 An idler among academic bowers,  
 504 Such was my new condition, as at large  
 505 Has been set forth; yet here the vulgar light  
 506 Of present, actual, superficial life,  
 507 Gleaming through colouring of other times,  
 508 Old usages and local privilege,

509 Was welcome, softened, if not solemnised.  
 510 This notwithstanding, being brought more near  
 511 To vice and guilt, forerunning wretchedness,  
 512 I trembled,---thought, at times, of human life  
 513 With an indefinite terror and dismay,  
 514 Such as the storms and angry elements  
 515 Had bred in me; but gloomier far, a dim  
 516 Analogy to uproar and misrule,  
 517 Disquiet, danger, and obscurity.

518 It might be told (but wherefore speak of things  
 519 Common to all?) that, seeing, I was led  
 520 Gravely to ponder---judging between good  
 521 And evil, not as for the mind's delight  
 522 But for her guidance---one who was to *act*,  
 523 As sometimes to the best of feeble means  
 524 I did, by human sympathy impelled:  
 525 And, through dislike and most offensive pain,  
 526 Was to the truth conducted; of this faith

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527 Never forsaken, that, by acting well,  
 528 And understanding, I should learn to love  
 529 The end of life, and every thing we know.

530 Grave Teacher, stern Preceptress! for at times  
 531 Thou canst put on an aspect most severe;  
 532 London, to thee I willingly return.  
 533 Erewhile my verse played idly with the flowers  
 534 Enwrought upon thy mantle; satisfied  
 535 With that amusement, and a simple look  
 536 Of child-like inquisition now and then  
 537 Cast upwards on thy countenance, to detect  
 538 Some inner meanings which might harbour there.  
 539 But how could I in mood so light indulge,  
 540 Keeping such fresh remembrance of the day,  
 541 When, having thridded the long labyrinth  
 542 Of the suburban villages, I first  
 543 Entered thy vast dominion? On the roof  
 544 Of an itinerant vehicle I sate,  
 545 With vulgar men about me, trivial forms  
 546 Of houses, pavement, streets, of men and things,---  
 547 Mean shapes on every side: but, at the instant,  
 548 When to myself it fairly might be said,  
 549 The threshold now is overpast, (how strange  
 550 That aught external to the living mind

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551 Should have such mighty sway! yet so it was),

552 A weight of ages did at once descend  
553 Upon my heart; no thought embodied, no  
554 Distinct remembrances, but weight and power,---  
555 Power growing under weight: alas! I feel  
556 That I am trifling: 'twas a moment's pause,---  
557 All that took place within me came and went  
558 As in a moment; yet with Time it dwells,  
559 And grateful memory, as a thing divine.

560 The curious traveller, who, from open day,  
561 Hath passed with torches into some huge cave,  
562 The Grotto of Antiparos, or the Den  
563 In old time haunted by that Danish Witch,  
564 Yordas; he looks around and sees the vault  
565 Widening on all sides; sees, or thinks he sees,  
566 Erelong, the massy roof above his head,  
567 That instantly unsettles and recedes,---  
568 Substance and shadow, light and darkness, all  
569 Commingled, making up a canopy  
570 Of shapes and forms and tendencies to shape  
571 That shift and vanish, change and interchange  
572 Like spectres,---ferment silent and sublime!  
573 That after a short space works less and less,  
574 Till, every effort, every motion gone,

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575 The scene before him stands in perfect view  
576 Exposed, and lifeless as a written book!---  
577 But let him pause awhile, and look again,  
578 And a new quickening shall succeed, at first  
579 Beginning timidly, then creeping fast,  
580 Till the whole cave, so late a senseless mass,  
581 Busies the eye with images and forms  
582 Boldly assembled,---here is shadowed forth  
583 From the projections, wrinkles, cavities,  
584 A variegated landscape,---there the shape  
585 Of some gigantic warrior clad in mail,  
586 The ghostly semblance of a hooded monk,  
587 Veiled nun, or pilgrim resting on his staff:  
588 Strange congregation! yet not slow to meet  
589 Eyes that perceive through minds that can inspire.

590 Even in such sort had I at first been moved,  
591 Nor otherwise continued to be moved,  
592 As I explored the vast metropolis,  
593 Fount of my country's destiny and the world's;  
594 That great emporium, chronicle at once  
595 And burial-place of passions, and their home  
596 Imperial, their chief living residence.

597 With strong sensations teeming as it did

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598 Of past and present, such a place must needs  
599 Have pleased me, seeking knowledge at that time  
600 Far less than craving power; yet knowledge came,  
601 Sought or unsought, and influxes of power  
602 Came, of themselves, or at her call derived  
603 In fits of kindest apprehensiveness,  
604 From all sides, when whate'er was in itself  
605 Capacious found, or seemed to find, in me  
606 A correspondent amplitude of mind;  
607 Such is the strength and glory of our youth!  
608 The human nature unto which I felt  
609 That I belonged, and revered with love,  
610 Was not a punctual presence, but a spirit  
611 Diffused through time and space, with aid derived  
612 Of evidence from monuments, erect,  
613 Prostrate, or leaning towards their common rest  
614 In earth, the widely scattered wreck sublime  
615 Of vanished nations, or more clearly drawn  
616 From books and what they picture and record.


617 'Tis true, the history of our native land,  
618 With those of Greece compared and popular Rome,  
619 And in our high-wrought modern narratives  
620 Stript of their harmonising soul, the life  
621 Of manners and familiar incidents,

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622 Had never much delighted me. And less  
623 Than other intellects had mine been used  
624 To lean upon extrinsic circumstance  
625 Of record or tradition; but a sense  
626 Of what in the Great City had been done  
627 And suffered, and was doing, suffering, still,  
628 Weighed with me, could support the test of thought;  
629 And, in despite of all that had gone by,  
630 Or was departing never to return,  
631 There I conversed with majesty and power  
632 Like independent natures. Hence the place  
633 Was thronged with impregnations like the Wilds  
634 In which my early feelings had been nursed---  
635 Bare hills and valleys, full of caverns, rocks,  
636 And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,  
637 Echoes and waterfalls, and pointed crags  
638 That into music touch the passing wind.  
639 Here then my young imagination found  
640 No uncongenial element; could here

641 Among new objects serve or give command,  
 642 Even as the heart's occasions might require,  
 643 To forward reason's else too scrupulous march.  
 644 The effect was, still more elevated views  
 645 Of human nature. Neither vice nor guilt,  
 646 Debasement undergone by body or mind,

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647 Nor all the misery forced upon my sight,  
 648 Misery not lightly passed, but sometimes scanned  
 649 Most feelingly, could overthrow my trust  
 650 In what we *may* become; induce belief  
 651 That I was ignorant, had been falsely taught,  
 652 A solitary, who with vain conceits  
 653 Had been inspired, and walked about in dreams.  
 654 From those sad scenes when meditation turned,  
 655 Lo! every thing that was indeed divine  
 656 Retained its purity inviolate,  
 657 Nay brighter shone, by this portentous gloom  
 658 Set off; such opposition as aroused  
 659 The mind of Adam, yet in Paradise  
 660 Though fallen from bliss, when in the East he saw [End note 11: 1Kb]   
 661 Darkness ere day's mid course, and morning light  
 662 More orient in the western cloud, that drew  
 663 O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,  
 664 Descending slow with something heavenly fraught.

665 Add also, that among the multitudes  
 666 Of that huge city, oftentimes was seen  
 667 Affectingly set forth, more than elsewhere  
 668 Is possible, the unity of man,  
 669 One spirit over ignorance and vice  
 670 Predominant, in good and evil hearts;

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671 One sense for moral judgments, as one eye  
 672 For the sun's light. The soul when smitten thus  
 673 By a sublime *idea*, whencesoe'er  
 674 Vouchsafed for union or communion, feeds  
 675 On the pure bliss, and takes her rest with God.

676 Thus from a very early age, O Friend!  
 677 My thoughts by slow gradations had been drawn  
 678 To human-kind, and to the good and ill  
 679 Of human life: Nature had led me on;  
 680 And oft amid the "busy hum" I seemed  
 681 To travel independent of her help,  
 682 As if I had forgotten her; but no,  
 683 The world of human-kind outweighed not hers

684 In my habitual thoughts; the scale of love,  
 685 Though filling daily, still was light, compared  
 686 With that in which *her* mighty objects lay.

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### BOOK IX. RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.

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1 **Even** as a river,---partly (it might seem)  
 2 Yielding to old remembrances, and swayed  
 3 In part by fear to shape a way direct,  
 4 That would engulph him soon in the ravenous sea---  
 5 Turns, and will measure back his course, far back,  
 6 Seeking the very regions which he crossed  
 7 In his first outset; so have we, my Friend!  
 8 Turned and returned with intricate delay.  
 9 Or as a traveller, who has gained the brow  
 10 Of some aerial Down, while there he halts  
 11 For breathing-time, is tempted to review  
 12 The region left behind him; and, if aught  
 13 Deserving notice have escaped regard,  
 14 Or been regarded with too careless eye,  
 15 Strives, from that height, with one and yet one more

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16 Last look, to make the best amends he may:  
 17 So have we lingered. Now we start afresh  
 18 With courage, and new hope risen on our toil.  
 19 Fair greetings to this shapeless eagerness,  
 20 Whene'er it comes! needful in work so long,  
 21 Thrice needful to the argument which now  
 22 Awaits us! Oh, how much unlike the past!

23 Free as a colt at pasture on the hill,  
 24 I ranged at large, through London's wide domain,  
 25 Month after month. Obscurely did I live,  
 26 Not seeking frequent intercourse with men,  
 27 By literature, or elegance, or rank,  
 28 Distinguished. Scarcely was a year thus spent  
 29 Ere I forsook the crowded solitude,  
 30 With less regret for its luxurious pomp,  
 31 And all the nicely-guarded shows of art,  
 32 Than for the humble book-stalls in the streets,

33 Exposed to eye and hand where'er I turned.  
34 France lured me forth; the realm that I had crossed  
35 So lately, journeying toward the snow-clad Alps.  
36 But now, relinquishing the scrip and staff,  
37 And all enjoyment which the summer sun  
38 Sheds round the steps of those who meet the day

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39 With motion constant as his own, I went  
40 Prepared to sojourn in a pleasant town,  
41 Washed by the current of the stately Loire.  
  
42 Through Paris lay my readiest course, and there  
43 Sojourning a few days, I visited,  
44 In haste, each spot of old or recent fame,  
45 The latter chiefly; from the field of Mars  
46 Down to the suburbs of St. Antony,  
47 And from Mont Martyr southward to the Dome  
48 Of Geneviève. In both her clamorous Halls,  
49 The National Synod and the Jacobins,  
50 I saw the Revolutionary Power  
51 Toss like a ship at anchor, rocked by storms;  
52 The Arcades I traversed, in the Palace huge  
53 Of Orleans; coasted round and round the line  
54 Of Tavern, Brothel, Gaming-house, and Shop,  
55 Great rendezvous of worst and best, the walk  
56 Of all who had a purpose, or had not;  
57 I stared and listened, with a stranger's ears,  
58 To Hawkers and Haranguers, hubbub wild!  
59 And hissing Factionists with ardent eyes,  
60 In knots, or pairs, or single. Not a look  
61 Hope takes, or Doubt or Fear is forced to wear,  
62 But seemed there present; and I scanned them all,

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63 Watched every gesture uncontrollable,  
64 Of anger, and vexation, and despite,  
65 All side by side, and struggling face to face,  
66 With gaiety and dissolute idleness.  
  
67 Where silent zephyrs sported with the dust  
68 Of the Bastille, I sate in the open sun,  
69 And from the rubbish gathered up a stone,  
70 And pocketed the relic, in the guise  
71 Of an enthusiast; yet, in honest truth,  
72 I looked for something that I could not find,  
73 Affecting more emotion than I felt;  
74 For 'tis most certain, that these various sights,



75 However potent their first shock, with me  
76 Appeared to recompense the traveller's pains  
77 Less than the painted Magdalene of Le Brun,  
78 A beauty exquisitely wrought, with hair  
79 Dishevelled, gleaming eyes, and rueful cheek  
80 Pale and bedropped with everflowing tears.

81 But hence to my more permanent abode  
82 I hasten; there, by novelties in speech,  
83 Domestic manners, customs, gestures, looks,  
84 And all the attire of ordinary life,  
85 Attention was engrossed; and, thus amused,

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86 I stood, 'mid those concussions, unconcerned,  
87 Tranquil almost, and careless as a flower  
88 Glassed in a green-house, or a parlour shrub  
89 That spreads its leaves in unmolested peace,  
90 While every bush and tree, the country through,  
91 Is shaking to the roots: indifference this  
92 Which may seem strange: but I was unprepared  
93 With needful knowledge, had abruptly passed  
94 Into a theatre, whose stage was filled  
95 And busy with an action far advanced.  
96 Like others, I had skimmed, and sometimes read  
97 With care, the master pamphlets of the day;  
98 Nor wanted such half-insight as grew wild  
99 Upon that meagre soil, helped out by talk  
100 And public news; but having never seen  
101 A chronicle that might suffice to show  
102 Whence the main organs of the public power  
103 Had sprung, their transmigrations, when and how  
104 Accomplished, giving thus unto events  
105 A form and body; all things were to me  
106 Loose and disjointed, and the affections left  
107 Without a vital interest. At that time,  
108 Moreover, the first storm was overblown,  
109 And the strong hand of outward violence  
110 Locked up in quiet. For myself, I fear

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111 Now in connection with so great a theme  
112 To speak (as I must be compelled to do)  
113 Of one so unimportant; night by night  
114 Did I frequent the formal haunts of men,  
115 Whom, in the city, privilege of birth  
116 Sequestered from the rest, societies  
117 Polished in arts, and in punctilio versed;  
118 Whence, and from deeper causes, all discourse

119 Of good and evil of the time was shunned  
120 With scrupulous care; but these restrictions soon  
121 Proved tedious, and I gradually withdrew  
122 Into a noisier world, and thus ere long  
123 Became a patriot; and my heart was all  
124 Given to the people, and my love was theirs.

125 A band of military Officers,  
126 Then stationed in the city, were the chief  
127 Of my associates: some of these wore swords  
128 That had been seasoned in the wars, and all  
129 Were men well-born; the chivalry of France.  
130 In age and temper differing, they had yet  
131 One spirit ruling in each heart; alike  
132 (Save only one, hereafter to be named)  
133 Were bent upon undoing what was done:  
134 This was their rest and only hope; therewith

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135 No fear had they of bad becoming worse,  
136 For worst to them was come; nor would have stirred,  
137 Or deemed it worth a moment's thought to stir,  
138 In any thing, save only as the act  
139 Looked thitherward. One, reckoning by years,  
140 Was in the prime of manhood, and erewhile  
141 He had sate lord in many tender hearts;  
142 Though heedless of such honours now, and changed:  
143 His temper was quite mastered by the times,  
144 And they had blighted him, had eaten away  
145 The beauty of his person, doing wrong  
146 Alike to body and to mind: his port,  
147 Which once had been erect and open, now  
148 Was stooping and contracted, and a face,  
149 Endowed by Nature with her fairest gifts  
150 Of symmetry and light and bloom, expressed,  
151 As much as any that was ever seen,  
152 A ravage out of season, made by thoughts  
153 Unhealthy and vexatious. With the hour,  
154 That from the press of Paris duly brought  
155 Its freight of public news, the fever came,  
156 A punctual visitant, to shake this man,  
157 Disarmed his voice and fanned his yellow cheek  
158 Into a thousand colours; while he read,  
159 Or mused, his sword was haunted by his touch

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160 Continually, like an uneasy place  
161 In his own body. 'Twas in truth an hour  
162 Of universal ferment; mildest men

163 Were agitated; and commotions, strife  
 164 Of passion and opinion, filled the walls  
 165 Of peaceful houses with unquiet sounds.  
 166 The soil of common life, was, at that time,  
 167 Too hot to tread upon. Oft said I then,  
 168 And not then only, "What a mockery this  
 169 Of history, the past and that to come!  
 170 Now do I feel how all men are deceived,  
 171 Reading of nations and their works, in faith,  
 172 Faith given to vanity and emptiness;  
 173 Oh! laughter for the page that would reflect  
 174 To future times the face of what now is!"  
 175 The land all swarmed with passion, like a plain  
 176 Devoured by locusts,---Carra, Gorsas,---add  
 177 A hundred other names, forgotten now,  
 178 Nor to be heard of more; yet, they were powers,  
 179 Like earthquakes, shocks repeated day by day,  
 180 And felt through every nook of town and field.

181 Such was the state of things. Meanwhile the chief  
 182 Of my associates stood prepared for flight  
 183 To augment the band of emigrants in arms

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184 Upon the borders of the Rhine, and leagued  
 185 With foreign foes mustered for instant war.  
 186 This was their undisguised intent, and they  
 187 Were waiting with the whole of their desires  
 188 The moment to depart.

188 An Englishman,  
 189 Born in a land whose very name appeared  
 190 To license some unruliness of mind;  
 191 A stranger, with youth's further privilege,  
 192 And the indulgence that a half-learnt speech  
 193 Wins from the courteous; I, who had been else  
 194 Shunned and not tolerated, freely lived  
 195 With these defenders of the Crown, and talked,  
 196 And heard their notions; nor did they disdain  
 197 The wish to bring me over to their cause.

198 But though untaught by thinking or by books  
 199 To reason well of polity or law,  
 200 And nice distinctions, then on every tongue,  
 201 Of natural rights and civil; and to acts  
 202 Of nations and their passing interests,  
 203 (If with unworldly ends and aims compared)  
 204 Almost indifferent, even the historian's tale  
 205 Prizing but little otherwise than I prized  
 206 Tales of the poets, as it made the heart

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207 Beat high, and filled the fancy with fair forms,  
208 Old heroes and their sufferings and their deeds;  
209 Yet in the regal sceptre, and the pomp  
210 Of orders and degrees, I nothing found  
211 Then, or had ever, even in crudest youth,  
212 That dazzled me, but rather what I mourned  
213 And ill could brook, beholding that the best  
214 Ruled not, and feeling that they ought to rule.

215 For, born in a poor district, and which yet  
216 Retaineth more of ancient homeliness,  
217 Than any other nook of English ground,  
218 It was my fortune scarcely to have seen,  
219 Through the whole tenor of my school-day time,  
220 The face of one, who, whether boy or man,  
221 Was vested with attention or respect  
222 Through claims of wealth or blood; nor was it least  
223 Of many benefits, in later years  
224 Derived from academic institutes  
225 And rules, that they held something up to view  
226 Of a Republic, where all stood thus far  
227 Upon equal ground; that we were brothers all  
228 In honour, as in one community,  
229 Scholars and gentlemen; where, furthermore,  
230 Distinction open lay to all that came,

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231 And wealth and titles were in less esteem  
232 Than talents, worth, and prosperous industry.  
233 Add unto this, subservience from the first  
234 To presences of God's mysterious power  
235 Made manifest in Nature's sovereignty,  
236 And fellowship with venerable books,  
237 To sanction the proud workings of the soul,  
238 And mountain liberty. It could not be  
239 But that one tutored thus should look with awe  
240 Upon the faculties of man, receive  
241 Gladly the highest promises, and hail,  
242 As best, the government of equal rights  
243 And individual worth. And hence, O Friend!  
244 If at the first great outbreak I rejoiced  
245 Less than might well befit my youth, the cause  
246 In part lay here, that unto me the events  
247 Seemed nothing out of nature's certain course,  
248 A gift that was come rather late than soon.  
249 No wonder, then, if advocates like these,  
250 Inflamed by passion, blind with prejudice,

251 And stung with injury, at this riper day,  
 252 Were impotent to make my hopes put on  
 253 The shape of theirs, my understanding bend  
 254 In honour to their honour: zeal, which yet  
 255 Had slumbered, now in opposition burst

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256 Forth like a Polar summer: every word  
 257 They uttered was a dart, by counter-winds  
 258 Blown back upon themselves; their reason seemed  
 259 Confusion-stricken by a higher power  
 260 Than human understanding, their discourse  
 261 Maimed, spiritless; and, in their weakness strong,  
 262 I triumphed.

262 Meantime, day by day, the roads  
 263 Were crowded with the bravest youth of France,  
 264 And all the promptest of her spirits, linked  
 265 In gallant soldiership, and posting on  
 266 To meet the war upon her frontier bounds.  
 267 Yet at this very moment do tears start  
 268 Into mine eyes: I do not say I weep---  
 269 I wept not then,---but tears have dimmed my sight,  
 270 In memory of the farewells of that time,  
 271 Domestic severings, female fortitude  
 272 At dearest separation, patriot love  
 273 And self-devotion, and terrestrial hope,  
 274 Encouraged with a martyr's confidence;  
 275 Even files of strangers merely seen but once,  
 276 And for a moment, men from far with sound  
 277 Of music, martial tunes, and banners spread,  
 278 Entering the city, here and there a face,  
 279 Or person singled out among the rest,

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280 Yet still a stranger and beloved as such;  
 281 Even by these passing spectacles my heart  
 282 Was oftentimes uplifted, and they seemed  
 283 Arguments sent from Heaven to prove the cause  
 284 Good, pure, which no one could stand up against,  
 285 Who was not lost, abandoned, selfish, proud,  
 286 Mean, miserable, wilfully depraved,  
 287 Hater perverse of equity and truth.

288 Among that band of Officers was one,  
 289 Already hinted at, of other mould---  
 290 A patriot, thence rejected by the rest,  
 291 And with an oriental loathing spurned,  
 292 As of a different caste. A meeker man

293 Than this lived never, nor a more benign,  
294 Meek though enthusiastic. Injuries  
295 Made *him* more gracious, and his nature then  
296 Did breathe its sweetness out most sensibly,  
297 As aromatic flowers on Alpine turf,  
298 When foot hath crushed them. He through the events  
299 Of that great change wandered in perfect faith,  
300 As through a book, an old romance, or tale  
301 Of Fairy, or some dream of actions wrought  
302 Behind the summer clouds. By birth he ranked  
303 With the most noble, but unto the poor

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304 Among mankind he was in service bound,  
305 As by some tie invisible, oaths professed  
306 To a religious order. Man he loved  
307 As man; and, to the mean and the obscure,  
308 And all the homely in their homely works,  
309 Transferred a courtesy which had no air  
310 Of condescension; but did rather seem  
311 A passion and a gallantry, like that  
312 Which he, a soldier, in his idler day  
313 Had paid to woman: somewhat vain he was,  
314 Or seemed so, yet it was not vanity,  
315 But fondness, and a kind of radiant joy  
316 Diffused around him, while he was intent  
317 On works of love or freedom, or revolved  
318 Complacently the progress of a cause,  
319 Whereof he was a part: yet this was meek  
320 And placid, and took nothing from the man  
321 That was delightful. Oft in solitude  
322 With him did I discourse about the end  
323 Of civil government, and its wisest forms;  
324 Of ancient loyalty, and chartered rights,  
325 Custom and habit, novelty and change;  
326 Of self-respect, and virtue in the few  
327 For patrimonial honour set apart,  
328 And ignorance in the labouring multitude.

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329 For he, to all intolerance indisposed,  
330 Balanced these contemplations in his mind;  
331 And I, who at that time was scarcely dipped  
332 Into the turmoil, bore a sounder judgment  
333 Than later days allowed; carried about me,  
334 With less alloy to its integrity,  
335 The experience of past ages, as, through help  
336 Of books and common life, it makes sure way  
337 To youthful minds, by objects over near

338 Not pressed upon, nor dazzled or misled  
339 By struggling with the crowd for present ends.

340 But though not deaf, nor obstinate to find  
341 Error without excuse upon the side  
342 Of them who strove against us, more delight  
343 We took, and let this freely be confessed,  
344 In painting to ourselves the miseries  
345 Of royal courts, and that voluptuous life  
346 Unfeeling, where the man who is of soul  
347 The meanest thrives the most; where dignity,  
348 True personal dignity, abideth not;  
349 A light, a cruel, and vain world cut off  
350 From the natural inlets of just sentiment,  
351 From lowly sympathy and chastening truth;  
352 Where good and evil interchange their names,

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353 And thirst for bloody spoils abroad is paired  
354 With vice at home. We added dearest themes---  
355 Man and his noble nature, as it is  
356 The gift which God has placed within his power,  
357 His blind desires and steady faculties  
358 Capable of clear truth, the one to break  
359 Bondage, the other to build liberty  
360 On firm foundations, making social life,  
361 Through knowledge spreading and imperishable,  
362 As just in regulation, and as pure  
363 As individual in the wise and good.

364 We summoned up the honourable deeds  
365 Of ancient Story, thought of each bright spot,  
366 That would be found in all recorded time,  
367 Of truth preserved and error passed away;  
368 Of single spirits that catch the flame from Heaven,  
369 And how the multitudes of men will feed  
370 And fan each other; thought of sects, how keen  
371 They are to put the appropriate nature on,  
372 Triumphant over every obstacle  
373 Of custom, language, country, love, or hate,  
374 And what they do and suffer for their creed;  
375 How far they travel, and how long endure;  
376 How quickly mighty Nations have been formed,

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377 From least beginnings; how, together locked  
378 By new opinions, scattered tribes have made  
379 One body, spreading wide as clouds in heaven.  
380 To aspirations then of our own minds



381 Did we appeal; and, finally, beheld  
 382 A living confirmation of the whole  
 383 Before us, in a people from the depth  
 384 Of shameful imbecility uprisen,  
 385 Fresh as the morning star. Elate we looked  
 386 Upon their virtues; saw, in rudest men,  
 387 Self-sacrifice the firmest; generous love,  
 388 And continence of mind, and sense of right,  
 389 Uppermost in the midst of fiercest strife.

390 Oh, sweet it is, in academic groves,  
 391 Or such retirement, Friend! as we have known  
 392 In the green dales beside our Rotha's stream,  
 393 Greta, or Derwent, or some nameless rill,  
 394 To ruminate, with interchange of talk,  
 395 On rational liberty, and hope in man,  
 396 Justice and peace. But far more sweet such toil---  
 397 Toil, say I, for it leads to thoughts abstruse---  
 398 If nature then be standing on the brink  
 399 Of some great trial, and we hear the voice  
 400 Of one devoted,---one whom circumstance

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401 Hath called upon to embody his deep sense  
 402 In action, give it outwardly a shape,  
 403 And that of benediction, to the world.  
 404 Then doubt is not, and truth is more than truth,---  
 405 A hope it is, and a desire; a creed  
 406 Of zeal, by an authority Divine  
 407 Sanctioned, of danger, difficulty, or death.  
 408 Such conversation, under Attic shades,  
 409 Did Dion hold with Plato; ripened thus  
 410 For a Deliverer's glorious task,---and such  
 411 He, on that ministry already bound,  
 412 Held with Eudemus and Timonides,  
 413 Surrounded by adventurers in arms,  
 414 When those two vessels with their daring freight,  
 415 For the Sicilian Tyrant's overthrow,  
 416 Sailed from Zacynthus,---philosophic war,  
 417 Led by Philosophers. With harder fate,  
 418 Though like ambition, such was he, O Friend!  
 419 Of whom I speak. So Beaupuis (let the name  
 420 Stand near the worthiest of Antiquity)  
 421 Fashioned his life; and many a long discourse,  
 422 With like persuasion honoured, we maintained:  
 423 He, on his part, accoutred for the worst.  
 424 He perished fighting, in supreme command,  
 425 Upon the borders of the unhappy Loire,

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426 For liberty, against deluded men,  
427 His fellow country-men; and yet most blessed  
428 In this, that he the fate of later times  
429 Lived not to see, nor what we now behold,  
430 Who have as ardent hearts as he had then.

431 Along that very Loire, with festal mirth  
432 Resounding at all hours, and innocent yet  
433 Of civil slaughter, was our frequent walk;  
434 Or in wide forests of continuous shade,  
435 Lofty and over-arched, with open space  
436 Beneath the trees, clear footing many a mile---  
437 A solemn region. Oft amid those haunts,  
438 From earnest dialogues I slipped in thought,  
439 And let remembrance steal to other times,  
440 When, o'er those interwoven roots, moss-clad,  
441 And smooth as marble or a waveless sea,  
442 Some Hermit, from his cell forth-strayed, might pace  
443 In sylvan meditation undisturbed;  
444 As on the pavement of a Gothic church  
445 Walks a lone Monk, when service hath expired,  
446 In peace and silence. But if e'er was heard,---  
447 Heard, though unseen,---a devious traveller,  
448 Retiring or approaching from afar  
449 With speed and echoes loud of trampling hoofs

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450 From the hard floor reverberated, then  
451 It was Angelica thundering through the woods  
452 Upon her palfrey, or that gentle maid  
453 Erminia, fugitive as fair as she.  
454 Sometimes methought I saw a pair of knights  
455 Joust underneath the trees, that as in storm  
456 Rocked high above their heads; anon, the din  
457 Of boisterous merriment, and music's roar,  
458 In sudden proclamation, burst from haunt  
459 Of Satyrs in some viewless glade, with dance  
460 Rejoicing o'er a female in the midst,  
461 A mortal beauty, their unhappy thrall.  
462 The width of those huge forests, unto me  
463 A novel scene, did often in this way  
464 Master my fancy while I wandered on  
465 With that revered companion. And sometimes---  
466 When to a convent in a meadow green,  
467 By a brook-side, we came, a roofless pile,  
468 And not by reverential touch of Time  
469 Dismantled, but by violence abrupt---  
470 In spite of those heart-bracing colloquies,  
471 In spite of real fervour, and of that

472 Less genuine and wrought up within myself---  
473 I could not but bewail a wrong so harsh,  
474 And for the Matin-bell to sound no more

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475 Grieved, and the twilight taper, and the cross  
476 High on the topmost pinnacle, a sign  
477 (How welcome to the weary traveller's eyes!)  
478 Of hospitality and peaceful rest.  
479 And when the partner of those varied walks  
480 Pointed upon occasion to the site  
481 Of Romorentin, home of ancient kings,  
482 To the imperial edifice of Blois,  
483 Or to that rural castle, name now slipped  
484 From my remembrance, where a lady lodged,  
485 By the first Francis wooed, and bound to him  
486 In chains of mutual passion, from the tower,  
487 As a tradition of the country tells,  
488 Practised to commune with her royal knight  
489 By cressets and love-beacons, intercourse  
490 'Twixt her high-seated residence and his  
491 Far off at Chambord on the plain beneath;  
492 Even here, though less than with the peaceful house  
493 Religious, 'mid those frequent monuments  
494 Of Kings, their vices and their better deeds,  
495 Imagination, potent to inflame  
496 At times with virtuous wrath and noble scorn,  
497 Did also often mitigate the force  
498 Of civic prejudice, the bigotry,  
499 So call it, of a youthful patriot's mind;

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500 And on these spots with many gleams I looked  
501 Of chivalrous delight. Yet not the less,  
502 Hatred of absolute rule, where will of one  
503 Is law for all, and of that barren pride  
504 In them who, by immunities unjust,  
505 Between the sovereign and the people stand,  
506 His helper and not theirs, laid stronger hold  
507 Daily upon me, mixed with pity too  
508 And love; for where hope is, there love will be  
509 For the abject multitude. And when we chanced  
510 One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,  
511 Who crept along fitting her languid gait  
512 Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord  
513 Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane  
514 Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands  
515 Was busy knitting in a heartless mood  
516 Of solitude, and at the sight my friend

517 In agitation said, "'Tis against *that*  
 518 That we are fighting," I with him believed  
 519 That a benignant spirit was abroad  
 520 Which might not be withstood, that poverty  
 521 Abject as this would in a little time  
 522 Be found no more, that we should see the earth  
 523 Unthwarted in her wish to recompense  
 524 The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,

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525 All institutes for ever blotted out  
 526 That legalised exclusion, empty pomp  
 527 Abolished, sensual state and cruel power,  
 528 Whether by edict of the one or few;  
 529 And finally, as sum and crown of all,  
 530 Should see the people having a strong hand  
 531 In framing their own laws; whence better days  
 532 To all mankind. But, these things set apart,  
 533 Was not this single confidence enough  
 534 To animate the mind that ever turned  
 535 A thought to human welfare? That henceforth  
 536 Captivity by mandate without law  
 537 Should cease; and open accusation lead  
 538 To sentence in the hearing of the world,  
 539 And open punishment, if not the air  
 540 Be free to breathe in, and the heart of man  
 541 Dread nothing. From this height I shall not stoop  
 542 To humbler matter that detained us oft  
 543 In thought or conversation, public acts,  
 544 And public persons, and emotions wrought  
 545 Within the breast, as ever-varying winds  
 546 Of record or report swept over us;  
 547 But I might here, instead, repeat a tale, [End note 12: 1Kb]   
 548 Told by my Patriot friend, of sad events,  
 549 That prove to what low depth had struck the roots,

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550 How widely spread the boughs, of that old tree  
 551 Which, as a deadly mischief, and a foul  
 552 And black dishonour, France was weary of.

553 Oh, happy time of youthful lovers, (thus  
 554 The story might begin). Oh, balmy time,  
 555 In which a love-knot, on a lady's brow,  
 556 Is fairer than the fairest star in Heaven!  
 557 So might---and with that prelude *did* begin  
 558 The record; and, in faithful verse, was given  
 559 The doleful sequel.

559                                   But our little bark  
 560    On a strong river boldly hath been launched;  
 561    And from the driving current should we turn  
 562    To loiter wilfully within a creek,  
 563    Howe'er attractive, Fellow voyager!  
 564    Would'st thou not chide? Yet deem not my pains lost:  
 565    For Vaudracour and Julia (so were named  
 566    The ill-fated pair) in that plain tale will draw  
 567    Tears from the hearts of others, when their own  
 568    Shall beat no more. Thou, also, there mayst read,  
 569    At leisure, how the enamoured youth was driven,  
 570    By public power abased, to fatal crime,  
 571    Nature's rebellion against monstrous law;  
 572    How, between heart and heart, oppression thrust

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573    Her mandates, severing whom true love had joined,  
 574    Harassing both; until he sank and pressed  
 575    The couch his fate had made for him; supine,  
 576    Save when the stings of viperous remorse,  
 577    Trying their strength, enforced him to start up,  
 578    Aghast and prayerless. Into a deep wood  
 579    He fled, to shun the haunts of human kind;  
 580    There dwelt, weakened in spirit more and more;  
 581    Nor could the voice of Freedom, which through France  
 582    Full speedily resounded, public hope,  
 583    Or personal memory of his own worst wrongs,  
 584    Rouse him; but, hidden in those gloomy shades,  
 585    His days he wasted,---an imbecile mind.

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### BOOK X. RESIDENCE IN FRANCE.---(Continued.)

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1       **I**t was a beautiful and silent day  
 2       That overspread the countenance of earth,  
 3       Then fading with unusual quietness,---  
 4       A day as beautiful as e'er was given  
 5       To soothe regret, though deepening what it soothed,  
 6       When by the gliding Loire I paused, and cast  
 7       Upon his rich domains, vineyard and tilth,  
 8       Green meadow-ground, and many-coloured woods,  
 9       Again, and yet again, a farewell look;

10 Then from the quiet of that scene passed on,  
 11 Bound to the fierce Metropolis. From his throne  
 12 The King had fallen, and that invading host---  
 13 Presumptuous cloud, on whose black front was written  
 14 The tender mercies of the dismal wind  
 15 That bore it---on the plains of Liberty

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16 Had burst innocuous. Say in bolder words,  
 17 They---who had come elate as eastern hunters  
 18 Banded beneath the Great Mogul, when he  
 19 Erewhile went forth from Agra or Lahore,  
 20 Rajahs and Omrahs in his train, intent  
 21 To drive their prey enclosed within a ring  
 22 Wide as a province, but, the signal given,  
 23 Before the point of the life-threatening spear  
 24 Narrowing itself by moments---they, rash men,  
 25 Had seen the anticipated quarry turned  
 26 Into avengers, from whose wrath they fled  
 27 In terror. Disappointment and dismay  
 28 Remained for all whose fancies had run wild  
 29 With evil expectations; confidence  
 30 And perfect triumph for the better cause.

31 The State, as if to stamp the final seal  
 32 On her security, and to the world  
 33 Show what she was, a high and fearless soul,  
 34 Exulting in defiance, or heart-stung  
 35 By sharp resentment, or belike to taunt  
 36 With spiteful gratitude the baffled League,  
 37 That had stirred up her slackening faculties  
 38 To a new transition, when the King was crushed,  
 39 Spared not the empty throne, and in proud haste

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40 Assumed the body and venerable name  
 41 Of a Republic. Lamentable crimes,  
 42 'Tis true, had gone before this hour, dire work  
 43 Of massacre, in which the senseless sword  
 44 Was prayed to as a judge; but these were past,  
 45 Earth free from them for ever, as was thought,---  
 46 Ephemeral monsters, to be seen but once!  
 47 Things that could only show themselves and die.

48 Cheered with this hope, to Paris I returned,  
 49 And ranged, with ardour heretofore unfelt,  
 50 The spacious city, and in progress passed  
 51 The prison where the unhappy Monarch lay,  
 52 Associate with his children and his wife

53 In bondage; and the palace, lately stormed  
54 With roar of cannon by a furious host.  
55 I crossed the square (an empty area then!)  
56 Of the Carrousel, where so late had lain  
57 The dead, upon the dying heaped, and gazed  
58 On this and other spots, as doth a man  
59 Upon a volume whose contents he knows  
60 Are memorable, but from him locked up,  
61 Being written in a tongue he cannot read,  
62 So that he questions the mute leaves with pain,  
63 And half upbraids their silence. But that night

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64 I felt most deeply in what world I was,  
65 What ground I trod on, and what air I breathed.  
66 High was my room and lonely, near the roof  
67 Of a large mansion or hotel, a lodge  
68 That would have pleased me in more quiet times;  
69 Nor was it wholly without pleasure then.  
70 With unextinguished taper I kept watch,  
71 Reading at intervals; the fear gone by  
72 Pressed on me almost like a fear to come.  
73 I thought of those September massacres,  
74 Divided from me by one little month,  
75 Saw them and touched: the rest was conjured up  
76 From tragic fictions or true history,  
77 Remembrances and dim admonishments.  
78 The horse is taught his manage, and no star  
79 Of wildest course but treads back his own steps;  
80 For the spent hurricane the air provides  
81 As fierce a successor; the tide retreats  
82 But to return out of its hiding-place  
83 In the great deep; all things have second birth;  
84 The earthquake is not satisfied at once;  
85 And in this way I wrought upon myself,  
86 Until I seemed to hear a voice that cried,  
87 To the whole city, "Sleep no more." The trance  
88 Fled with the voice to which it had given birth;

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89 But vainly comments of a calmer mind  
90 Promised soft peace and sweet forgetfulness.  
91 The place, all hushed and silent as it was,  
92 Appeared unfit for the repose of night,  
93 Defenceless as a wood where tigers roam.

94 With early morning towards the Palace-walk  
95 Of Orleans eagerly I turned; as yet  
96 The streets were still; not so those long Arcades;



97 There, 'mid a peal of ill-matched sounds and cries,  
 98 That greeted me on entering, I could hear  
 99 Shrill voices from the hawkers in the throng,  
 100 Bawling, "Denunciation of the Crimes  
 101 Of Maximilian Robespierre;" the hand,  
 102 Prompt as the voice, held forth a printed speech,  
 103 The same that had been recently pronounced,  
 104 When Robespierre, not ignorant for what mark  
 105 Some words of indirect reproof had been  
 106 Intended, rose in hardihood, and dared  
 107 The man who had an ill surmise of him  
 108 To bring his charge in openness; whereat,  
 109 When a dead pause ensued, and no one stirred,  
 110 In silence of all present, from his seat  
 111 Louvet walked single through the avenue,  
 112 And took his station in the Tribune, saying,

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113 "I, Robespierre, accuse thee!" Well is known  
 114 The inglorious issue of that charge, and how  
 115 He, who had launched the startling thunderbolt,  
 116 The one bold man, whose voice the attack had sounded,  
 117 Was left without a follower to discharge  
 118 His perilous duty, and retire lamenting  
 119 That Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men  
 120 Who to themselves are false.

120 But these are things  
 121 Of which I speak, only as they were storm  
 122 Or sunshine to my individual mind,  
 123 No further. Let me then relate that now---  
 124 In some sort seeing with my proper eyes  
 125 That Liberty, and Life, and Death would soon  
 126 To the remotest corners of the land  
 127 Lie in the arbitrement of those who ruled  
 128 The capital City; what was struggled for,  
 129 And by what combatants victory must be won;  
 130 The indecision on their part whose aim  
 131 Seemed best, and the straightforward path of those  
 132 Who in attack or in defence were strong  
 133 Through their impiety---my inmost soul  
 134 Was agitated; yea, I could almost  
 135 Have prayed that throughout earth upon all men,  
 136 By patient exercise of reason made

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137 Worthy of liberty, all spirits filled  
 138 With zeal expanding in Truth's holy light,  
 139 The gift of tongues might fall, and power arrive

140 From the four quarters of the winds to do  
141 For France, what without help she could not do,  
142 A work of honour; think not that to this  
143 I added, work of safety: from all doubt  
144 Or trepidation for the end of things  
145 Far was I, far as angels are from guilt.

146 Yet did I grieve, nor only grieved, but thought  
147 Of opposition and of remedies:  
148 An insignificant stranger and obscure,  
149 And one, moreover, little graced with power  
150 Of eloquence even in my native speech,  
151 And all unfit for tumult or intrigue,  
152 Yet would I at this time with willing heart  
153 Have undertaken for a cause so great  
154 Service however dangerous. I revolved,  
155 How much the destiny of Man had still  
156 Hung upon single persons; that there was,  
157 Transcendent to all local patrimony,  
158 One nature, as there is one sun in heaven;  
159 That objects, even as they are great, thereby  
160 Do come within the reach of humblest eyes;

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161 That Man is only weak through his mistrust  
162 And want of hope where evidence divine  
163 Proclaims to him that hope should be most sure;  
164 Nor did the inexperience of my youth  
165 Preclude conviction, that a spirit strong  
166 In hope, and trained to noble aspirations,  
167 A spirit throughly faithful to itself,  
168 Is for Society's unreasoning herd  
169 A domineering instinct, serves at once  
170 For way and guide, a fluent receptacle  
171 That gathers up each petty straggling rill  
172 And vein of water, glad to be rolled on  
173 In safe obedience; that a mind, whose rest  
174 Is where it ought to be, in self-restraint,  
175 In circumspection and simplicity,  
176 Falls rarely in entire discomfiture  
177 Below its aim, or meets with, from without,  
178 A treachery that foils it or defeats;  
179 And, lastly, if the means on human will,  
180 Frail human will, dependent should betray  
181 Him who too boldly trusted them, I felt  
182 That 'mid the loud distractions of the world  
183 A sovereign voice subsists within the soul,  
184 Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong,  
185 Of life and death, in majesty severe

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186 Enjoining, as may best promote the aims  
187 Of truth and justice, either sacrifice,  
188 From whatsoever region of our cares  
189 Or our infirm affections Nature pleads,  
190 Earnest and blind, against the stern decree.

191 On the other side, I called to mind those truths  
192 That are the common-places of the schools---  
193 (A theme for boys, too hackneyed for their sires,)  
194 Yet, with a revelation's liveliness,  
195 In all their comprehensive bearings known  
196 And visible to philosophers of old,  
197 Men who, to business of the world untrained,  
198 Lived in the shade; and to Harmodius known  
199 And his compeer Aristogiton, known  
200 To Brutus---that tyrannic power is weak,  
201 Hath neither gratitude, nor faith, nor love,  
202 Nor the support of good or evil men  
203 To trust in; that the godhead which is ours  
204 Can never utterly be charmed or stilled;  
205 That nothing hath a natural right to last  
206 But equity and reason; that all else  
207 Meets foes irreconcilable, and at best  
208 Lives only by variety of disease.

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209 Well might my wishes be intense, my thoughts  
210 Strong and perturbed, not doubting at that time  
211 But that the virtue of one paramount mind  
212 Would have abashed those impious crests---have quelled  
213 Outrage and bloody power, and, in despite  
214 Of what the People long had been and were  
215 Through ignorance and false teaching, sadder proof  
216 Of immaturity, and in the teeth  
217 Of desperate opposition from without---  
218 Have cleared a passage for just government,  
219 And left a solid birthright to the State,  
220 Redeemed, according to example given  
221 By ancient lawgivers.

221 In this frame of mind,  
222 Dragged by a chain of harsh necessity,  
223 So seemed it,---now I thankfully acknowledge,  
224 Forced by the gracious providence of Heaven,---  
225 To England I returned, else (though assured  
226 That I both was and must be of small weight,  
227 No better than a landsman on the deck

228 Of a ship struggling with a hideous storm)  
229 Doubtless, I should have then made common cause  
230 With some who perished; haply perished too,  
231 A poor mistaken and bewildered offering,---  
232 Should to the breast of Nature have gone back,

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233 With all my resolutions, all my hopes,  
234 A Poet only to myself, to men  
235 Useless, and even, beloved Friend! a soul  
236 To thee unknown!

236                               Twice had the trees let fall  
237 Their leaves, as often Winter had put on  
238 His hoary crown, since I had seen the surge  
239 Beat against Albion's shore, since ear of mine  
240 Had caught the accents of my native speech  
241 Upon our native country's sacred ground.  
242 A patriot of the world, how could I glide  
243 Into communion with her sylvan shades,  
244 Erewhile my tuneful haunt? It pleased me more  
245 To abide in the great City, where I found  
246 The general air still busy with the stir  
247 Of that first memorable onset made  
248 By a strong levy of humanity  
249 Upon the traffickers in Negro blood;  
250 Effort which, though defeated, had recalled  
251 To notice old forgotten principles,  
252 And through the nation spread a novel heat  
253 Of virtuous feeling. For myself, I own  
254 That this particular strife had wanted power  
255 To rivet my affections; nor did now  
256 Its unsuccessful issue much excite

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257 My sorrow; for I brought with me the faith  
258 That, if France prospered, good men would not long  
259 Pay fruitless worship to humanity,  
260 And this most rotten branch of human shame,  
261 Object, so seemed it, of superfluous pains,  
262 Would fall together with its parent tree.  
263 What, then, were my emotions, when in arms  
264 Britain put forth her free-born strength in league,  
265 Oh, pity and shame! with those confederate Powers!  
266 Not in my single self alone I found,  
267 But in the minds of all ingenuous youth,  
268 Change and subversion from that hour. No shock  
269 Given to my moral nature had I known  
270 Down to that very moment; neither lapse

271 Nor turn of sentiment that might be named  
 272 A revolution, save at this one time;  
 273 All else was progress on the self-same path  
 274 On which, with a diversity of pace,  
 275 I had been travelling: this a stride at once  
 276 Into another region. As a light  
 277 And pliant harebell, swinging in the breeze  
 278 On some grey rock---its birth-place---so had I  
 279 Wantoned, fast rooted on the ancient tower  
 280 Of my beloved country, wishing not  
 281 A happier fortune than to wither there:

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282 Now was I from that pleasant station torn  
 283 And tossed about in whirlwind. I rejoiced,  
 284 Yea, afterwards---truth most painful to record!---  
 285 Exulted, in the triumph of my soul,  
 286 When Englishmen by thousands were o'erthrown,  
 287 Left without glory on the field, or driven,  
 288 Brave hearts! to shameful flight. It was a grief,---  
 289 Grief call it not, 'twas anything but that,---  
 290 A conflict of sensations without name,  
 291 Of which *he* only, who may love the sight  
 292 Of a village steeple, as I do, can judge,  
 293 When, in the congregation bending all  
 294 To their great Father, prayers were offered up,  
 295 Or praises for our country's victories;  
 296 And, 'mid the simple worshippers, perchance  
 297 I only, like an uninvited guest  
 298 Whom no one owned, sate silent, shall I add,  
 299 Fed on the day of vengeance yet to come.

300 Oh! much have they to account for, who could tear,  
 301 By violence, at one decisive rent,  
 302 From the best youth in England their dear pride,  
 303 Their joy, in England; this, too, at a time  
 304 In which worst losses easily might wean  
 305 The best of names, when patriotic love

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306 Did of itself in modesty give way,  
 307 Like the Precursor when the Deity  
 308 Is come Whose harbinger he was; a time  
 309 In which apostasy from ancient faith  
 310 Seemed but conversion to a higher creed;  
 311 Withal a season dangerous and wild,  
 312 A time when sage Experience would have snatched  
 313 Flowers out of any hedge-row to compose  
 314 A chaplet in contempt of his grey locks.

315 When the proud fleet that bears the red-cross flag  
316 In that unworthy service was prepared  
317 To mingle, I beheld the vessels lie,  
318 A brood of gallant creatures, on the deep;  
319 I saw them in their rest, a sojourner  
320 Through a whole month of calm and glassy days  
321 In that delightful island which protects  
322 Their place of convocation---there I heard,  
323 Each evening, pacing by the still sea-shore,  
324 A monitory sound that never failed,---  
325 The sunset cannon. While the orb went down  
326 In the tranquillity of nature, came  
327 That voice, ill requiem! seldom heard by me  
328 Without a spirit overcast by dark  
329 Imaginations, sense of woes to come,

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330 Sorrow for human kind, and pain of heart.

331 In France, the men, who, for their desperate ends,  
332 Had plucked up mercy by the roots, were glad  
333 Of this new enemy. Tyrants, strong before  
334 In wicked pleas, were strong as demons now;  
335 And thus, on every side beset with foes,  
336 The goaded land waxed mad; the crimes of few  
337 Spread into madness of the many; blasts  
338 From hell came sanctified like airs from heaven.  
339 The sternness of the just, the faith of those  
340 Who doubted not that Providence had times  
341 Of vengeful retribution, theirs who throned  
342 The human Understanding paramount  
343 And made of that their God, the hopes of men  
344 Who were content to barter short-lived pangs  
345 For a paradise of ages, the blind rage  
346 Of insolent tempers, the light vanity  
347 Of intermeddlers, steady purposes  
348 Of the suspicious, slips of the indiscreet,  
349 And all the accidents of life were pressed  
350 Into one service, busy with one work.  
351 The Senate stood aghast, her prudence quenched,  
352 Her wisdom stifled, and her justice scared,  
353 Her frenzy only active to extol

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354 Past outrages, and shape the way for new,  
355 Which no one dared to oppose or mitigate.

356 Domestic carnage now filled the whole year

357 With feast-days; old men from the chimney-nook,  
 358 The maiden from the bosom of her love,  
 359 The mother from the cradle of her babe,  
 360 The warrior from the field---all perished, all---  
 361 Friends, enemies, of all parties, ages, ranks,  
 362 Head after head, and never heads enough  
 363 For those that bade them fall. They found their joy,  
 364 They made it proudly, eager as a child,  
 365 (If like desires of innocent little ones  
 366 May with such heinous appetites be compared),  
 367 Pleased in some open field to exercise  
 368 A toy that mimics with revolving wings  
 369 The motion of a wind-mill; though the air  
 370 Do of itself blow fresh, and make the vanes  
 371 Spin in his eyesight, *that* contents him not,  
 372 But, with the plaything at arm's length, he sets  
 373 His front against the blast, and runs amain,  
 374 That it may whirl the faster.

374                                   Amid the depth  
 375 Of those enormities, even thinking minds  
 376 Forgot, at seasons, whence they had their being;

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377 Forgot that such a sound was ever heard  
 378 As Liberty upon earth: yet all beneath  
 379 Her innocent authority was wrought,  
 380 Nor could have been, without her blessed name.  
 381 The illustrious wife of Roland, in the hour  
 382 Of her composure, felt that agony,  
 383 And gave it vent in her last words. O Friend!  
 384 It was a lamentable time for man,  
 385 Whether a hope had e'er been his or not;  
 386 A woful time for them whose hopes survived  
 387 The shock; most woful for those few who still  
 388 Were flattered, and had trust in human kind:  
 389 They had the deepest feeling of the grief.  
 390 Meanwhile the Invaders fared as they deserved:  
 391 The Herculean Commonwealth had put forth her arms,  
 392 And throttled with an infant godhead's might  
 393 The snakes about her cradle; that was well,  
 394 And as it should be; yet no cure for them  
 395 Whose souls were sick with pain of what would be  
 396 Hereafter brought in charge against mankind.  
 397 Most melancholy at that time, O Friend!  
 398 Were my day-thoughts,---my nights were miserable;  
 399 Through months, through years, long after the last beat  
 400 Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep  
 401 To me came rarely charged with natural gifts,



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402 Such ghastly visions had I of despair  
403 And tyranny, and implements of death;  
404 And innocent victims sinking under fear,  
405 And momentary hope, and worn-out prayer,  
406 Each in his separate cell, or penned in crowds  
407 For sacrifice, and struggling with fond mirth  
408 And levity in dungeons, where the dust  
409 Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the scene  
410 Changed, and the unbroken dream entangled me  
411 In long orations, which I strove to plead  
412 Before unjust tribunals,---with a voice  
413 Labouring, a brain confounded, and a sense,  
414 Death-like, of treacherous desertion, felt  
415 In the last place of refuge---my own soul.

416 When I began in youth's delightful prime  
417 To yield myself to Nature, when that strong  
418 And holy passion overcame me first,  
419 Nor day nor night, evening or morn, was free  
420 From its oppression. But, O Power Supreme!  
421 Without Whose call this world would cease to breathe,  
422 Who from the fountain of Thy grace dost fill  
423 The veins that branch through every frame of life,  
424 Making man what he is, creature divine,  
425 In single or in social eminence,

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426 Above the rest raised infinite ascents  
427 When reason that enables him to be  
428 Is not sequestered---what a change is here!  
429 How different ritual for this after-worship,  
430 What countenance to promote this second love!  
431 The first was service paid to things which lie  
432 Guarded within the bosom of Thy will.  
433 Therefore to serve was high beatitude;  
434 Tumult was therefore gladness, and the fear  
435 Ennobling, venerable; sleep secure,  
436 And waking thoughts more rich than happiest dreams.

437 But as the ancient Prophets, borne aloft  
438 In vision, yet constrained by natural laws  
439 With them to take a troubled human heart,  
440 Wanted not consolations, nor a creed  
441 Of reconciliation, then when they denounced,  
442 On towns and cities, wallowing in the abyss  
443 Of their offences, punishment to come;  
444 Or saw, like other men, with bodily eyes,  
445 Before them, in some desolated place,

446 The wrath consummate and the threat fulfilled;  
447 So, with devout humility be it said,  
448 So, did a portion of that spirit fall  
449 On me uplifted from the vantage-ground

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450 Of pity and sorrow to a state of being  
451 That through the time's exceeding fierceness saw  
452 Glimpses of retribution, terrible,  
453 And in the order of sublime behests:  
454 But, even if that were not, amid the awe  
455 Of unintelligible chastisement,  
456 Not only acquiescences of faith  
457 Survived, but daring sympathies with power,  
458 Motions not treacherous or profane, else why  
459 Within the folds of no ungentle breast  
460 Their dread vibration to this hour prolonged?  
461 Wild blasts of music thus could find their way  
462 Into the midst of turbulent events;  
463 So that worst tempests might be listened to.  
464 Then was the truth received into my heart,  
465 That, under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,  
466 If from the affliction somewhere do not grow  
467 Honour which could not else have been, a faith,  
468 An elevation and a sanctity,  
469 If new strength be not given nor old restored,  
470 The blame is ours, not Nature's. When a taunt  
471 Was taken up by scoffers in their pride,  
472 Saying, "Behold the harvest that we reap  
473 From popular government and equality,"  
474 I clearly saw that neither these nor aught

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475 Of wild belief engrafted on their names  
476 By false philosophy had caused the woe,  
477 But a terrific reservoir of guilt  
478 And ignorance filled up from age to age,  
479 That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,  
480 But burst and spread in deluge through the land.

481 And as the desert hath green spots, the sea  
482 Small islands scattered amid stormy waves,  
483 So *that* disastrous period did not want  
484 Bright sprinklings of all human excellence,  
485 To which the silver wands of saints in Heaven  
486 Might point with rapturous joy. Yet not the less,  
487 For those examples in no age surpassed  
488 Of fortitude and energy and love,  
489 And human nature faithful to herself

490 Under worst trials, was I driven to think  
 491 Of the glad times when first I traversed France  
 492 A youthful pilgrim; above all reviewed  
 493 That eventide, when under windows bright  
 494 With happy faces and with garlands hung,  
 495 And through a rainbow-arch that spanned the street,  
 496 Triumphal pomp for liberty confirmed,  
 497 I paced, a dear companion at my side,  
 498 The town of Arras, whence with promise high

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499 Issued, on delegation to sustain  
 500 Humanity and right, *that* Robespierre,  
 501 He who thereafter, and in how short time!  
 502 Wielded the sceptre of the Atheist crew.  
 503 When the calamity spread far and wide---  
 504 And this same city, that did then appear  
 505 To outrun the rest in exultation, groaned  
 506 Under the vengeance of her cruel son,  
 507 As Lear reproached the winds---I could almost  
 508 Have quarrelled with that blameless spectacle  
 509 For lingering yet an image in my mind  
 510 To mock me under such a strange reverse.

511 O Friend! few happier moments have been mine  
 512 Than that which told the downfall of this Tribe  
 513 So dreaded, so abhorred. The day deserves  
 514 A separate record. Over the smooth sands  
 515 Of Leven's ample estuary lay  
 516 My journey, and beneath a genial sun,  
 517 With distant prospect among gleams of sky  
 518 And clouds, and intermingling mountain tops,  
 519 In one inseparable glory clad,  
 520 Creatures of one ethereal substance met  
 521 In consistory, like a diadem  
 522 Or crown of burning seraphs as they sit

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523 In the empyrean. Underneath that pomp  
 524 Celestial, lay unseen the pastoral vales  
 525 Among whose happy fields I had grown up  
 526 From childhood. On the fulgent spectacle,  
 527 That neither passed away nor changed, I gazed  
 528 Enrapt; but brightest things are wont to draw  
 529 Sad opposites out of the inner heart,  
 530 As even their pensive influence drew from mine.  
 531 How could it otherwise? for not in vain  
 532 That very morning had I turned aside  
 533 To seek the ground where, 'mid a throng of graves,

534 An honoured teacher of my youth was laid,  
535 And on the stone were graven by his desire  
536 Lines from the churchyard elegy of Gray.  
537 This faithful guide, speaking from his death-bed,  
538 Added no farewell to his parting counsel,  
539 But said to me, "My head will soon lie low;"  
540 And when I saw the turf that covered him,  
541 After the lapse of full eight years, those words,  
542 With sound of voice and countenance of the Man,  
543 Came back upon me, so that some few tears  
544 Fell from me in my own despite. But now  
545 I thought, still traversing that widespread plain,  
546 With tender pleasure of the verses graven  
547 Upon his tombstone, whispering to myself:

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548 He loved the Poets, and, if now alive,  
549 Would have loved me, as one not destitute  
550 Of promise, nor belying the kind hope  
551 That he had formed, when I, at his command,  
552 Began to spin, with toil, my earliest songs.

553 As I advanced, all that I saw or felt  
554 Was gentleness and peace. Upon a small  
555 And rocky island near, a fragment stood  
556 (Itself like a sea rock) the low remains  
557 (With shells encrusted, dark with briny weeds)  
558 Of a dilapidated structure, once  
559 A Romish chapel, where the vested priest  
560 Said matins at the hour that suited those  
561 Who crossed the sands with ebb of morning tide.  
562 Not far from that still ruin all the plain  
563 Lay spotted with a variegated crowd  
564 Of vehicles and travellers, horse and foot,  
565 Wading beneath the conduct of their guide  
566 In loose procession through the shallow stream  
567 Of inland waters; the great sea meanwhile  
568 Heaved at safe distance, far retired. I paused,  
569 Longing for skill to paint a scene so bright  
570 And cheerful, but the foremost of the band  
571 As he approached, no salutation given

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572 In the familiar language of the day,  
573 Cried, "Robespierre is dead!"---nor was a doubt,  
574 After strict question, left within my mind  
575 That he and his supporters all were fallen.

576 Great was my transport, deep my gratitude

577 To everlasting Justice, by this fiat  
 578 Made manifest. "Come now, ye golden times,"  
 579 Said I forth-pouring on those open sands  
 580 A hymn of triumph: "as the morning comes  
 581 From out the bosom of the night, come ye:  
 582 Thus far our trust is verified; behold!  
 583 They who with clumsy desperation brought  
 584 A river of Blood, and preached that nothing else  
 585 Could cleanse the Augean stable, by the might  
 586 Of their own helper have been swept away;  
 587 Their madness stands declared and visible;  
 588 Elsewhere will safety now be sought, and earth  
 589 March firmly towards righteousness and peace."---  
 590 Then schemes I framed more calmly, when and how  
 591 The madding factions might be tranquillised,  
 592 And how through hardships manifold and long  
 593 The glorious renovation would proceed.  
 594 Thus interrupted by uneasy bursts  
 595 Of exultation, I pursued my way

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596 Along that very shore which I had skimmed  
 597 In former days, when---spurring from the Vale  
 598 Of Nightshade, and St. Mary's mouldering fane,  
 599 And the stone abbot, after circuit made  
 600 In wantonness of heart, a joyous band  
 601 Of school-boys hastening to their distant home  
 602 Along the margin of the moonlight sea---  
 603 We beat with thundering hoofs the level sand.

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### BOOK XI. FRANCE.---(Concluded.)

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1 **From** that time forth, Authority in France  
 2 Put on a milder face; Terror had ceased,  
 3 Yet every thing was wanting that might give  
 4 Courage to them who looked for good by light  
 5 Of rational Experience, for the shoots  
 6 And hopeful blossoms of a second spring:  
 7 Yet, in me, confidence was unimpaired;  
 8 The Senate's language, and the public acts  
 9 And measures of the Government, though both

10 Weak, and of heartless omen, had not power  
 11 To daunt me; in the People was my trust:  
 12 And, in the virtues which mine eyes had seen,  
 13 I knew that wound external could not take  
 14 Life from the young Republic; that new foes  
 15 Would only follow, in the path of shame,

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16 Their brethren, and her triumphs be in the end  
 17 Great, universal, irresistible.  
 18 This intuition led me to confound  
 19 One victory with another, higher far,---  
 20 Triumphs of unambitious peace at home,  
 21 And noiseless fortitude. Beholding still  
 22 Resistance strong as heretofore, I thought  
 23 That what was in degree the same was likewise  
 24 The same in quality,---that, as the worse  
 25 Of the two spirits then at strife remained  
 26 Untired, the better, surely, would preserve  
 27 The heart that first had roused him. Youth maintains,  
 28 In all conditions of society,  
 29 Communion more direct and intimate  
 30 With Nature,---hence, oftentimes, with reason too---  
 31 Than age or manhood, even. To Nature, then,  
 32 Power had reverted: habit, custom, law,  
 33 Had left an interregnum's open space  
 34 For *her* to move about in, uncontrolled.  
 35 Hence could I see how Babel-like their task,  
 36 Who, by the recent deluge stupified,  
 37 With their whole souls went culling from the day  
 38 Its petty promises, to build a tower  
 39 For their own safety; laughed with my compeers  
 40 At gravest heads, by enmity to France

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41 Distempered, till they found, in every blast  
 42 Forced from the street-disturbing newsman's horn,  
 43 For her great cause record or prophecy  
 44 Of utter ruin. How might we believe  
 45 That wisdom could, in any shape, come near  
 46 Men clinging to delusions so insane?  
 47 And thus, experience proving that no few  
 48 Of our opinions had been just, we took  
 49 Like credit to ourselves where less was due,  
 50 And thought that other notions were as sound,  
 51 Yea, could not but be right, because we saw  
 52 That foolish men opposed them.

52 To a strain

53 More animated I might here give way,  
54 And tell, since juvenile errors are my theme,  
55 What in those days, through Britain, was performed  
56 To turn *all* judgments out of their right course;  
57 But this is passion over-near ourselves,  
58 Reality too close and too intense,  
59 And intermixed with something, in my mind,  
60 Of scorn and condemnation personal,  
61 That would profane the sanctity of verse.  
62 Our Shepherds, this say merely, at that time  
63 Acted, or seemed at least to act, like men  
64 Thirsting to make the guardian crook of law

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65 A tool of murder; they who ruled the State,  
66 Though with such awful proof before their eyes  
67 That he, who would sow death, reaps death, or worse,  
68 And can reap nothing better, child-like longed  
69 To imitate, not wise enough to avoid;  
70 Or left (by mere timidity betrayed)  
71 The plain straight road, for one no better chosen  
72 Than if their wish had been to undermine  
73 Justice, and make an end of Liberty.


74 But from these bitter truths I must return  
75 To my own history. It hath been told  
76 That I was led to take an eager part  
77 In arguments of civil polity,  
78 Abruptly, and indeed before my time:  
79 I had approached, like other youths, the shield  
80 Of human nature from the golden side,  
81 And would have fought, even to the death, to attest  
82 The quality of the metal which I saw.  
83 What there is best in individual man,  
84 Of wise in passion, and sublime in power,  
85 Benevolent in small societies,  
86 And great in large ones, I had oft revolved,  
87 Felt deeply, but not thoroughly understood  
88 By reason: nay, far from it; they were yet,

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89 As cause was given me afterwards to learn,  
90 Not proof against the injuries of the day;  
91 Lodged only at the sanctuary's door,  
92 Not safe within its bosom. Thus prepared,  
93 And with such general insight into evil,  
94 And of the bounds which sever it from good,  
95 As books and common intercourse with life  
96 Must needs have given---to the inexperienced mind,



97 When the world travels in a beaten road,  
 98 Guide faithful as is needed---I began  
 99 To meditate with ardour on the rule  
 100 And management of nations; what it is  
 101 And ought to be; and strove to learn how far  
 102 Their power or weakness, wealth or poverty,  
 103 Their happiness or misery, depends  
 104 Upon their laws, and fashion of the State.

[End note 13: 1Kb] 

105 O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!  
 106 For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood  
 107 Upon our side, us who were strong in love!  
 108 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
 109 But to be young was very Heaven! O times,  
 110 In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways  
 111 Of custom, law, and statute, took at once  
 112 The attraction of a country in romance!

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113 When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights  
 114 When most intent on making of herself  
 115 A prime enchantress---to assist the work,  
 116 Which then was going forward in her name!  
 117 Not favoured spots alone, but the whole Earth,  
 118 The beauty wore of promise---that which sets  
 119 (As at some moments might not be unfelt  
 120 Among the bowers of Paradise itself)  
 121 The budding rose above the rose full blown.  
 122 What temper at the prospect did not wake  
 123 To happiness unthought of? The inert  
 124 Were roused, and lively natures rapt away!  
 125 They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,  
 126 The play-fellows of fancy, who had made  
 127 All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength  
 128 Their ministers,---who in lordly wise had stirred  
 129 Among the grandest objects of the sense,  
 130 And dealt with whatsoever they found there  
 131 As if they had within some lurking right  
 132 To wield it;---they, too, who of gentle mood  
 133 Had watched all gentle motions, and to these  
 134 Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild,  
 135 And in the region of their peaceful selves;---  
 136 Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty  
 137 Did both find helpers to their hearts' desire,

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138 And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,---  
 139 Were called upon to exercise their skill,  
 140 Not in Utopia,---subterranean fields,---

141 Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where!  
142 But in the very world, which is the world  
143 Of all of us,---the place where, in the end,  
144 We find our happiness, or not at all!

145 Why should I not confess that Earth was then  
146 To me, what an inheritance, new-fallen,  
147 Seems, when the first time visited, to one  
148 Who thither comes to find in it his home?  
149 He walks about and looks upon the spot  
150 With cordial transport, moulds it and remoulds,  
151 And is half pleased with things that are amiss,  
152 'Twill be such joy to see them disappear.

153 An active partisan, I thus convoked  
154 From every object pleasant circumstance  
155 To suit my ends; I moved among mankind  
156 With genial feelings still predominant;  
157 When erring, erring on the better part,  
158 And in the kinder spirit; placable,  
159 Indulgent, as not uninformed that men  
160 See as they have been taught---Antiquity

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161 Gives rights to error; and aware, no less,  
162 That throwing off oppression must be work  
163 As well of License as of Liberty;  
164 And above all---for this was more than all---  
165 Not caring if the wind did now and then  
166 Blow keen upon an eminence that gave  
167 Prospect so large into futurity;  
168 In brief, a child of Nature, as at first,  
169 Diffusing only those affections wider  
170 That from the cradle had grown up with me,  
171 And losing, in no other way than light  
172 Is lost in light, the weak in the more strong.

173 In the main outline, such it might be said  
174 Was my condition, till with open war  
175 Britain opposed the liberties of France.  
176 This threw me first out of the pale of love;  
177 Soured and corrupted, upwards to the source,  
178 My sentiments; was not, as hitherto,  
179 A swallowing up of lesser things in great,  
180 But change of them into their contraries;  
181 And thus a way was opened for mistakes  
182 And false conclusions, in degree as gross,  
183 In kind more dangerous. What had been a pride,  
184 Was now a shame; my likings and my loves

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185 Ran in new channels, leaving old ones dry;  
186 And hence a blow that, in maturer age,  
187 Would but have touched the judgment, struck more deep  
188 Into sensations near the heart: meantime,  
189 As from the first, wild theories were afloat,  
190 To whose pretensions, sedulously urged,  
191 I had but lent a careless ear, assured  
192 That time was ready to set all things right,  
193 And that the multitude, so long oppressed,  
194 Would be oppressed no more.

194                                But when events  
195 Brought less encouragement, and unto these  
196 The immediate proof of principles no more  
197 Could be entrusted, while the events themselves,  
198 Worn out in greatness, stripped of novelty,  
199 Less occupied the mind, and sentiments  
200 Could through my understanding's natural growth  
201 No longer keep their ground, by faith maintained  
202 Of inward consciousness, and hope that laid  
203 Her hand upon her object---evidence  
204 Safer, of universal application, such  
205 As could not be impeached, was sought elsewhere.

206 But now, become oppressors in their turn,  
207 Frenchmen had changed a war of self-defence

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208 For one of conquest, losing sight of all  
209 Which they had struggled for: now mounted up,  
210 Openly in the eye of earth and heaven,  
211 The scale of liberty. I read her doom,  
212 With anger vexed, with disappointment sore,  
213 But not dismayed, nor taking to the shame  
214 Of a false prophet. While resentment rose  
215 Striving to hide, what nought could heal, the wounds  
216 Of mortified presumption, I adhered  
217 More firmly to old tenets, and, to prove  
218 Their temper, strained them more; and thus, in heat  
219 Of contest, did opinions every day  
220 Grow into consequence, till round my mind  
221 They clung, as if they were its life, nay more,  
222 The very being of the immortal soul.

223 This was the time, when, all things tending fast  
224 To depravation, speculative schemes---  
225 That promised to abstract the hopes of Man  
226 Out of his feelings, to be fixed thenceforth

227 For ever in a purer element---  
 228 Found ready welcome. Tempting region *that*  
 229 For Zeal to enter and refresh herself,  
 230 Where passions had the privilege to work,  
 231 And never hear the sound of their own names.

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232 But, speaking more in charity, the dream  
 233 Flattered the young, pleased with extremes, nor least  
 234 With that which makes our Reason's naked self  
 235 The object of its fervour. What delight!  
 236 How glorious! in self-knowledge and self-rule,  
 237 To look through all the frailties of the world,  
 238 And, with a resolute mastery shaking off  
 239 Infirmities of nature, time, and place,  
 240 Build social upon personal Liberty,  
 241 Which, to the blind restraints of general laws  
 242 Superior, magisterially adopts  
 243 One guide, the light of circumstances, flashed  
 244 Upon an independent intellect.  
 245 Thus expectation rose again; thus hope,  
 246 From her first ground expelled, grew proud once more.  
 247 Oft, as my thoughts were turned to human kind,  
 248 I scorned indifference; but, inflamed with thirst  
 249 Of a secure intelligence, and sick  
 250 Of other longing, I pursued what seemed  
 251 A more exalted nature; wished that Man  
 252 Should start out of his earthy, worm-like state,  
 253 And spread abroad the wings of Liberty,  
 254 Lord of himself, in undisturbed delight---  
 255 A noble aspiration! *yet* I feel  
 256 (Sustained by worthier as by wiser thoughts)

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257 The aspiration, nor shall ever cease  
 258 To feel it;---but return we to our course.

259 Enough, 'tis true---could such a plea excuse  
 260 Those aberrations---had the clamorous friends  
 261 Of ancient Institutions said and done  
 262 To bring disgrace upon their very names;  
 263 Disgrace, of which, custom and written law,  
 264 And sundry moral sentiments as props  
 265 Or emanations of those institutes,  
 266 Too justly bore a part. A veil had been  
 267 Uplifted; why deceive ourselves? in sooth,  
 268 'Twas even so; and sorrow for the man  
 269 Who either had not eyes wherewith to see,  
 270 Or, seeing, had forgotten! A strong shock

271 Was given to old opinions; all men's minds  
 272 Had felt its power, and mine was both let loose,  
 273 Let loose and goaded. After what hath been  
 274 Already said of patriotic love,  
 275 Suffice it here to add, that, somewhat stern  
 276 In temperament, withal a happy man,  
 277 And therefore bold to look on painful things,  
 278 Free likewise of the world, and thence more bold,  
 279 I summoned my best skill, and toiled, intent  
 280 To anatomise the frame of social life,

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281 Yea, the whole body of society  
 282 Searched to its heart. Share with me, Friend! the wish  
 283 That some dramatic tale, endued with shapes  
 284 Livelier, and flinging out less guarded words  
 285 Than suit the work we fashion, might set forth  
 286 What then I learned, or think I learned, of truth,  
 287 And the errors into which I fell, betrayed  
 288 By present objects, and by reasonings false  
 289 From their beginnings, inasmuch as drawn  
 290 Out of a heart that had been turned aside  
 291 From Nature's way by outward accidents,  
 292 And which was thus confounded, more and more  
 293 Misguided, and misguiding. So I fared,  
 294 Dragging all precepts, judgments, maxims, creeds,  
 295 Like culprits to the bar; calling the mind,  
 296 Suspiciously, to establish in plain day  
 297 Her titles and her honours; now believing,  
 298 Now disbelieving; endlessly perplexed  
 299 With impulse, motive, right and wrong, the ground  
 300 Of obligation, what the rule and whence  
 301 The sanction; till, demanding formal *proof*,  
 302 And seeking it in every thing, I lost  
 303 All feeling of conviction, and, in fine,  
 304 Sick, wearied out with contrarities,  
 305 Yielded up moral questions in despair.

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306 This was the crisis of that strong disease,  
 307 This the soul's last and lowest ebb; I drooped,  
 308 Deeming our blessed reason of least use  
 309 Where wanted most: "The lordly attributes  
 310 Of will and choice," I bitterly exclaimed,  
 311 "What are they but a mockery of a Being  
 312 Who hath in no concerns of his a test  
 313 Of good and evil; knows not what to fear  
 314 Or hope for, what to covet or to shun;

315 And who, if those could be discerned, would yet  
316 Be little profited, would see, and ask  
317 Where is the obligation to enforce?  
318 And, to acknowledged law rebellious, still,  
319 As selfish passion urged, would act amiss;  
320 The dupe of folly, or the slave of crime."

321 Depressed, bewildered thus, I did not walk  
322 With scoffers, seeking light and gay revenge  
323 From indiscriminate laughter, nor sate down  
324 In reconciliation with an utter waste  
325 Of intellect; such sloth I could not brook,  
326 (Too well I loved, in that my spring of life,  
327 Pains-taking thoughts, and truth, their dear reward)  
328 But turned to abstract science, and there sought  
329 Work for the reasoning faculty enthroned

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330 Where the disturbances of space and time---  
331 Whether in matters various, properties  
332 Inherent, or from human will and power  
333 Derived---find no admission. Then it was---  
334 Thanks to the bounteous Giver of all good!---  
335 That the beloved Sister in whose sight  
336 Those days were passed, now speaking in a voice  
337 Of sudden admonition---like a brook  
338 That did but *cross* a lonely road, and now  
339 Is seen, heard, felt, and caught at every turn,  
340 Companion never lost through many a league---  
341 Maintained for me a saving intercourse  
342 With my true self; for, though bedimmed and changed  
343 Much, as it seemed, I was no further changed  
344 Than as a clouded and a waning moon:  
345 She whispered still that brightness would return,  
346 She, in the midst of all, preserved me still  
347 A Poet, made me seek beneath that name,  
348 And that alone, my office upon earth;  
349 And, lastly, as hereafter will be shown,  
350 If willing audience fail not, Nature's self,  
351 By all varieties of human love  
352 Assisted, led me back through opening day  
353 To those sweet counsels between head and heart  
354 Whence grew that genuine knowledge, fraught with peace,

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355 Which, through the later sinkings of this cause,  
356 Hath still upheld me, and upholds me now  
357 In the catastrophe (for so they dream,  
358 And nothing less), when, finally to close

359 And seal up all the gains of France, a Pope  
 360 Is summoned in, to crown an Emperor---  
 361 This last opprobrium, when we see a people,  
 362 That once looked up in faith, as if to Heaven  
 363 For manna, take a lesson from the dog  
 364 Returning to his vomit; when the sun  
 365 That rose in splendour, was alive, and moved  
 366 In exultation with a living pomp  
 367 Of clouds---his glory's natural retinue---  
 368 Hath dropped all functions by the gods bestowed,  
 369 And, turned into a gewgaw, a machine,  
 370 Sets like an Opera phantom.

370 Thus, O Friend!  
 371 Through times of honour and through times of shame  
 372 Descending, have I faithfully retraced  
 373 The perturbations of a youthful mind  
 374 Under a long-lived storm of great events---  
 375 A story destined for thy ear, who now,  
 376 Among the fallen of nations, dost abide  
 377 Where Etna, over hill and valley, casts  
 378 His shadow stretching towards Syracuse,

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379 The city of Timoleon! Righteous Heaven!  
 380 How are the mighty prostrated! They first,  
 381 They first of all that breathe should have awaked  
 382 When the great voice was heard from out the tombs  
 383 Of ancient heroes. If I suffered grief  
 384 For ill-requited France, by many deemed  
 385 A trifler only in her proudest day;  
 386 Have been distressed to think of what she once  
 387 Promised, now is; a far more sober cause  
 388 Thine eyes must see of sorrow in a land,  
 389 To the reanimating influence lost  
 390 Of memory, to virtue lost and hope,  
 391 Though with the wreck of loftier years bestrewn.

392 But indignation works where hope is not,  
 393 And thou, O Friend! wilt be refreshed. There is  
 394 One great society alone on earth:  
 395 The noble Living and the noble Dead.


396 Thine be such converse strong and sanative,  
 397 A ladder for thy spirit to reascend  
 398 To health and joy and pure contentedness;  
 399 To me the grief confined, that thou art gone  
 400 From this last spot of earth, where Freedom now  
 401 Stands single in her only sanctuary;



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402 A lonely wanderer art gone, by pain  
 403 Compelled and sickness, at this latter day,  
 404 This sorrowful reverse for all mankind.  
 405 I feel for thee, must utter what I feel:  
 406 The sympathies erewhile in part discharged,  
 407 Gather afresh, and will have vent again:  
 408 My own delights do scarcely seem to me  
 409 My own delights; the lordly Alps themselves,  
 410 Those rosy peaks, from which the Morning looks  
 411 Abroad on many nations, are no more  
 412 For me that image of pure gladsomeness  
 413 Which they were wont to be. Through kindred scenes,  
 414 For purpose, at a time, how different!  
 415 Thou tak'st thy way, carrying the heart and soul  
 416 That Nature gives to Poets, now by thought  
 417 Matured, and in the summer of their strength.  
 418 Oh! wrap him in your shades, ye giant woods,  
 419 On Etna's side; and thou, O flowery field  
 420 Of Enna! is there not some nook of thine,  
 421 From the first play-time of the infant world  
 422 Kept sacred to restorative delight,  
 423 When from afar invoked by anxious love?  
  
 424 Child of the mountains, among shepherds reared,  
 425 Ere yet familiar with the classic page,

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426 I learnt to dream of Sicily; and lo,  
 427 The gloom, that, but a moment past, was deepened  
 428 At thy command, at her command gives way;  
 429 A pleasant promise, wafted from her shores,  
 430 Comes o'er my heart: in fancy I behold  
 431 Her seas yet smiling, her once happy vales;  
 432 Nor can my tongue give utterance to a name  
 433 Of note belonging to that honoured isle,  
 434 Philosopher or Bard, Empedocles,  
 435 Or Archimedes, pure abstracted soul!  
 436 That doth not yield a solace to my grief:  
 437 And, O Theocritus, [End note 14: 1Kb]  so far have some  
 438 Prevailed among the powers of heaven and earth,  
 439 By their endowments, good or great, that they  
 440 Have had, as thou reportest, miracles  
 441 Wrought for them in old time: yea, not unmoved,  
 442 When thinking on my own beloved friend,  
 443 I hear thee tell how bees with honey fed  
 444 Divine Comates, by his impious lord  
 445 Within a chest imprisoned; how they came  
 446 Laden from blooming grove or flowery field,

447 And fed him there, alive, month after month,  
 448 Because the goatherd, blessed man! had lips  
 449 Wet with the Muses' nectar.

449 Thus I soothe

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450 The pensive moments by this calm fire-side,  
 451 And find a thousand bounteous images  
 452 To cheer the thoughts of those I love, and mine.  
 453 Our prayers have been accepted; thou wilt stand  
 454 On Etna's summit, above earth and sea,  
 455 Triumphant, winning from the invaded heavens  
 456 Thoughts without bound, magnificent designs,  
 457 Worthy of poets who attuned their harps  
 458 In wood or echoing cave, for discipline  
 459 Of heroes; or, in reverence to the gods,  
 460 'Mid temples, served by sapient priests, and choirs  
 461 Of virgins crowned with roses. Not in vain  
 462 Those temples, where they in their ruins yet  
 463 Survive for inspiration, shall attract  
 464 Thy solitary steps: and on the brink  
 465 Thou wilt recline of pastoral Arethuse;  
 466 Or, if that fountain be in truth no more,  
 467 Then, near some other spring, which, by the name  
 468 Thou gratelest, willingly deceived,  
 469 I see thee linger a glad votary,  
 470 And not a captive pining for his home.

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## BOOK XII. IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED.

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1 **Long** time have human ignorance and guilt  
 2 Detained us, on what spectacles of woe  
 3 Compelled to look, and inwardly oppressed  
 4 With sorrow, disappointment, vexing thoughts,  
 5 Confusion of the judgment, zeal decayed,  
 6 And, lastly, utter loss of hope itself  
 7 And things to hope for! Not with these began  
 8 Our song, and not with these our song must end.---  
 9 Ye motions of delight, that haunt the sides  
 10 Of the green hills; ye breezes and soft airs,

11 Whose subtle intercourse with breathing flowers,  
12 Feelingly watched, might teach Man's haughty race  
13 How without injury to take, to give  
14 Without offence; ye who, as if to show  
15 The wondrous influence of power gently used,

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16 Bend the complying heads of lordly pines,  
17 And, with a touch, shift the stupendous clouds  
18 Through the whole compass of the sky; ye brooks,  
19 Muttering along the stones, a busy noise  
20 By day, a quiet sound in silent night;  
21 Ye waves, that out of the great deep steal forth  
22 In a calm hour to kiss the pebbly shore,  
23 Not mute, and then retire, fearing no storm;  
24 And you, ye groves, whose ministry it is  
25 To interpose the covert of your shades,  
26 Even as a sleep, between the heart of man  
27 And outward troubles, between man himself,  
28 Not seldom, and his own uneasy heart:  
29 Oh! that I had a music and a voice  
30 Harmonious as your own, that I might tell  
31 What ye have done for me. The morning shines,  
32 Nor heedeth Man's perverseness; Spring returns,---  
33 I saw the Spring return, and could rejoice,  
34 In common with the children of her love,  
35 Piping on boughs, or sporting on fresh fields,  
36 Or boldly seeking pleasure nearer heaven  
37 On wings that navigate cerulean skies.  
38 So neither were complacency, nor peace,  
39 Nor tender yearnings, wanting for my good  
40 Through these distracted times; in Nature still

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41 Glorifying, I found a counterpoise in her,  
42 Which, when the spirit of evil reached its height,  
43 Maintained for me a secret happiness.

44 This narrative, my Friend! hath chiefly told  
45 Of intellectual power, fostering love,  
46 Dispensing truth, and, over men and things,  
47 Where reason yet might hesitate, diffusing  
48 Prophetic sympathies of genial faith:  
49 So was I favoured---such my happy lot---  
50 Until that natural graciousness of mind  
51 Gave way to overpressure from the times  
52 And their disastrous issues. What availed,  
53 When spells forbade the voyager to land,  
54 That fragrant notice of a pleasant shore

55 Wafted, at intervals, from many a bower  
 56 Of blissful gratitude and fearless love?  
 57 Dare I avow that wish was mine to see,  
 58 And hope that future times *would* surely see,  
 59 The man to come, parted, as by a gulph,  
 60 From him who had been; that I could no more  
 61 Trust the elevation which had made me one  
 62 With the great family that still survives  
 63 To illuminate the abyss of ages past,  
 64 Sage, warrior, patriot, hero; for it seemed

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65 That their best virtues were not free from taint  
 66 Of something false and weak, that could not stand  
 67 The open eye of Reason. Then I said,  
 68 "Go to the Poets, they will speak to thee  
 69 More perfectly of purer creatures;---yet  
 70 If reason be nobility in man,  
 71 Can aught be more ignoble than the man  
 72 Whom they delight in, blinded as he is  
 73 By prejudice, the miserable slave  
 74 Of low ambition or distempered love?"

75 In such strange passion, if I may once more  
 76 Review the past, I warred against myself---  
 77 A bigot to a new idolatry---  
 78 Like a cowed monk who hath forsworn the world,  
 79 Zealously laboured to cut off my heart  
 80 From all the sources of her former strength;  
 81 And as, by simple waving of a wand,  
 82 The wizard instantaneously dissolves  
 83 Palace or grove, even so could I unsoul  
 84 As readily by syllogistic words  
 85 Those mysteries of being which have made,  
 86 And shall continue evermore to make,  
 87 Of the whole human race one brotherhood.

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88 What wonder, then, if, to a mind so far  
 89 Perverted, even the visible Universe  
 90 Fell under the dominion of a taste  
 91 Less spiritual, with microscopic view  
 92 Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral world?

93 O Soul of Nature! excellent and fair!  
 94 That didst rejoice with me, with whom I, too,  
 95 Rejoiced through early youth, before the winds  
 96 And roaring waters, and in lights and shades

97 That marched and countermarched about the hills  
 98 In glorious apparition, Powers on whom  
 99 I daily waited, now all eye and now  
 100 All ear; but never long without the heart  
 101 Employed, and man's unfolding intellect:  
 102 O Soul of Nature! that, by laws divine  
 103 Sustained and governed, still dost overflow  
 104 With an impassioned life, what feeble ones  
 105 Walk on this earth! how feeble have I been  
 106 When thou wert in thy strength! Nor this through stroke  
 107 Of human suffering, such as justifies  
 108 Remissness and inaptitude of mind,  
 109 But through presumption; even in pleasure pleased  
 110 Unworthily, disliking here, and there  
 111 Liking; by rules of mimic art transferred

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112 To things above all art; but more,---for this,  
 113 Although a strong infection of the age,  
 114 Was never much my habit---giving way  
 115 To a comparison of scene with scene,  
 116 Bent overmuch on superficial things,  
 117 Pampering myself with meagre novelties  
 118 Of colour and proportion; to the moods  
 119 Of time and season, to the moral power,  
 120 The affections and the spirit of the place,  
 121 Insensible. Nor only did the love  
 122 Of sitting thus in judgment interrupt  
 123 My deeper feelings, but another cause,  
 124 More subtle and less easily explained,  
 125 That almost seems inherent in the creature,  
 126 A twofold frame of body and of mind.  
 127 I speak in recollection of a time  
 128 When the bodily eye, in every stage of life  
 129 The most despotic of our senses, gained  
 130 Such strength in *me* as often held my mind  
 131 In absolute dominion. Gladly here,  
 132 Entering upon abstruser argument,  
 133 Could I endeavour to unfold the means  
 134 Which Nature studiously employs to thwart  
 135 This tyranny, summons all the senses each  
 136 To counteract the other, and themselves,

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137 And makes them all, and the objects with which all  
 138 Are conversant, subservient in their turn  
 139 To the great ends of Liberty and Power.  
 140 But leave we this: enough that my delights  
 141 (Such as they were) were sought insatiably.

142 Vivid the transport, vivid though not profound;  
143 I roamed from hill to hill, from rock to rock,  
144 Still craving combinations of new forms,  
145 New pleasure, wider empire for the sight,  
146 Proud of her own endowments, and rejoiced  
147 To lay the inner faculties asleep.  
148 Amid the turns and counterturns, the strife  
149 And various trials of our complex being,  
150 As we grow up, such thralldom of that sense  
151 Seems hard to shun. And yet I knew a maid,  
152 A young enthusiast, who escaped these bonds;  
153 Her eye was not the mistress of her heart;  
154 Far less did rules prescribed by passive taste,  
155 Or barren intermeddling subtleties,  
156 Perplex her mind; but, wise as women are  
157 When genial circumstance hath favoured them,  
158 She welcomed what was given, and craved no more;  
159 Whate'er the scene presented to her view,  
160 That was the best, to that she was attuned  
161 By her benign simplicity of life,

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162 And through a perfect happiness of soul,  
163 Whose variegated feelings were in this  
164 Sisters, that they were each some new delight.  
165 Birds in the bower, and lambs in the green field,  
166 Could they have known her, would have loved; methought  
167 Her very presence such a sweetness breathed,  
168 That flowers, and trees, and even the silent hills,  
169 And every thing she looked on, should have had  
170 An intimation how she bore herself  
171 Towards them and to all creatures. God delights  
172 In such a being; for her common thoughts  
173 Are piety, her life is gratitude.

174 Even like this maid, before I was called forth  
175 From the retirement of my native hills,  
176 I loved whate'er I saw: nor lightly loved,  
177 But most intensely; never dreamt of aught  
178 More grand, more fair, more exquisitely framed  
179 Than those few nooks to which my happy feet  
180 Were limited. I had not at that time  
181 Lived long enough, nor in the least survived  
182 The first diviner influence of this world,  
183 As it appears to unaccustomed eyes.  
184 Worshipping then among the depth of things.  
185 As piety ordained; could I submit

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186 To measured admiration, or to aught  
 187 That should preclude humility and love?  
 188 I felt, observed, and pondered; did not judge,  
 189 Yea, never thought of judging; with the gift  
 190 Of all this glory filled and satisfied.  
 191 And afterwards, when through the gorgeous Alps  
 192 Roaming, I carried with me the same heart:  
 193 In truth, the degradation---howsoe'er  
 194 Induced, effect, in whatsoe'er degree,  
 195 Of custom that prepares a partial scale  
 196 In which the little oft outweighs the great;  
 197 Or any other cause that hath been named;  
 198 Or lastly, aggravated by the times  
 199 And their impassioned sounds, which well might make  
 200 The milder minstrelsies of rural scenes  
 201 Inaudible---was transient; I had known  
 202 Too forcibly, too early in my life,  
 203 Visitings of imaginative power  
 204 For this to last: I shook the habit off  
 205 Entirely and for ever, and again  
 206 In Nature's presence stood, as now I stand,  
 207 A sensitive being, a *creative* soul.

208 There are in our existence spots of time,  
 209 That with distinct pre-eminence retain

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210 A renovating virtue, whence, depressed  
 211 By false opinion and contentious thought,  
 212 Or aught of heavier or more deadly weight,  
 213 In trivial occupations, and the round  
 214 Of ordinary intercourse, our minds  
 215 Are nourished and invisibly repaired;  
 216 A virtue, by which pleasure is enhanced,  
 217 That penetrates, enables us to mount,  
 218 When high, more high, and lifts us up when fallen.  
 219 This efficacious spirit chiefly lurks  
 220 Among those passages of life that give  
 221 Profoundest knowledge to what point, and how,  
 222 The mind is lord and master---outward sense  
 223 The obedient servant of her will. Such moments  
 224 Are scattered everywhere, taking their date  
 225 From our first childhood. I remember well,  
 226 That once, while yet my inexperienced hand  
 227 Could scarcely hold a bridle, with proud hopes  
 228 I mounted, and we journeyed towards the hills:  
 229 An ancient servant of my father's house  
 230 Was with me, my encourager and guide:  
 231 We had not travelled long, ere some mischance  
 232 Disjoined me from my comrade; and, through fear



233 Dismounting, down the rough and stony moor  
234 I led my horse, and, stumbling on, at length

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235 Came to a bottom, where in former times  
236 A murderer had been hung in iron chains.  
237 The gibbet-mast had mouldered down, the bones  
238 And iron case were gone; but on the turf,  
239 Hard by, soon after that fell deed was wrought,  
240 Some unknown hand had carved the murderer's name.  
241 The monumental letters were inscribed  
242 In times long past; but still, from year to year,  
243 By superstition of the neighbourhood,  
244 The grass is cleared away, and to this hour  
245 The characters are fresh and visible:  
246 A casual glance had shown them, and I fled,  
247 Faltering and faint, and ignorant of the road:  
248 Then, reascending the bare common, saw  
249 A naked pool that lay beneath the hills,  
250 The beacon on the summit, and, more near,  
251 A girl, who bore a pitcher on her head,  
252 And seemed with difficult steps to force her way  
253 Against the blowing wind. It was, in truth,  
254 An ordinary sight; but I should need  
255 Colours and words that are unknown to man,  
256 To paint the visionary dreariness  
257 Which, while I looked all round for my lost guide,  
258 Invested moorland waste, and naked pool,  
259 The beacon crowning the lone eminence,

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260 The female and her garments vexed and tossed  
261 By the strong wind. When, in the blessed hours  
262 Of early love, the loved one at my side,  
263 I roamed, in daily presence of this scene,  
264 Upon the naked pool and dreary crags,  
265 And on the melancholy beacon, fell  
266 A spirit of pleasure and youth's golden gleam;  
267 And think ye not with radiance more sublime  
268 For these remembrances, and for the power  
269 They had left behind? So feeling comes in aid  
270 Of feeling, and diversity of strength  
271 Attends us, if but once we have been strong.  
272 Oh! mystery of man, from what a depth  
273 Proceed thy honours. I am lost, but see  
274 In simple childhood something of the base  
275 On which thy greatness stands; but this I feel,  
276 That from thyself it comes, that thou must give,  
277 Else never canst receive. The days gone by

278 Return upon me almost from the dawn  
279 Of life: the hiding-places of man's power  
280 Open; I would approach them, but they close.  
281 I see by glimpses now; when age comes on,  
282 May scarcely see at all; and I would give,  
283 While yet we may, as far as words can give,

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284 Substance and life to what I feel, enshrining,  
285 Such is my hope, the spirit of the Past  
286 For future restoration.---Yet another  
287 Of these memorials:---

287                                    One Christmas-time,  
288 On the glad eve of its dear holidays,  
289 Feverish, and tired, and restless, I went forth  
290 Into the fields, impatient for the sight  
291 Of those led palfreys that should bear us home;  
292 My brothers and myself. There rose a crag,  
293 That, from the meeting-point of two highways  
294 Ascending, overlooked them both, far stretched;  
295 Thither, uncertain on which road to fix  
296 My expectation, thither I repaired,  
297 Scout-like, and gained the summit; 'twas a day  
298 Tempestuous, dark, and wild, and on the grass  
299 I sate half-sheltered by a naked wall;  
300 Upon my right hand couched a single sheep,  
301 Upon my left a blasted hawthorn stood;  
302 With those companions at my side, I watched,  
303 Straining my eyes intensely, as the mist  
304 Gave intermitting prospect of the copse  
305 And plain beneath. Ere we to school returned,---  
306 That dreary time,---ere we had been ten days

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307 Sojourners in my father's house, he died,  
308 And I and my three brothers, orphans then,  
309 Followed his body to the grave. The event,  
310 With all the sorrow that it brought, appeared  
311 A chastisement; and when I called to mind  
312 That day so lately past, when from the crag  
313 I looked in such anxiety of hope;  
314 With trite reflections of morality,  
315 Yet in the deepest passion, I bowed low  
316 To God, Who thus corrected my desires;  
317 And, afterwards, the wind and sleety rain,  
318 And all the business of the elements,  
319 The single sheep, and the one blasted tree,  
320 And the bleak music from that old stone wall,

321 The noise of wood and water, and the mist  
 322 That on the line of each of those two roads  
 323 Advanced in such indisputable shapes;  
 324 All these were kindred spectacles and sounds  
 325 To which I oft repaired, and thence would drink,  
 326 As at a fountain; and on winter nights,  
 327 Down to this very time, when storm and rain  
 328 Beat on my roof, or, haply, at noon-day,  
 329 While in a grove I walk, whose lofty trees,  
 330 Laden with summer's thickest foliage, rock

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331 In a strong wind, some working of the spirit,  
 332 Some inward agitations thence are brought,  
 333 Whate'er their office, whether to beguile  
 334 Thoughts over busy in the course they took,  
 335 Or animate an hour of vacant ease.

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**BOOK XIII. IMAGINATION AND TASTE, HOW IMPAIRED AND RESTORED.---**  
**(Concluded.)**

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1 **From** Nature doth emotion come, and moods  
 2 Of calmness equally are Nature's gift:  
 3 This is her glory; these two attributes  
 4 Are sister horns that constitute her strength.  
 5 Hence Genius, born to thrive by interchange  
 6 Of peace and excitation, finds in her  
 7 His best and purest friend; from her receives  
 8 That energy by which he seeks the truth,  
 9 From her that happy stillness of the mind  
 10 Which fits him to receive it when unsought.

11 Such benefit the humblest intellects  
 12 Partake of, each in their degree; 'tis mine  
 13 To speak, what I myself have known and felt;  
 14 Smooth task! for words find easy way, inspired

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15 By gratitude, and confidence in truth.  
 16 Long time in search of knowledge did I range

17 The field of human life, in heart and mind  
 18 Benighted; but, the dawn beginning now  
 19 To re-appear, 'twas proved that not in vain  
 20 I had been taught to reverence a Power  
 21 That is the visible quality and shape  
 22 And image of right reason; that matures  
 23 Her processes by steadfast laws; gives birth  
 24 To no impatient or fallacious hopes,  
 25 No heat of passion or excessive zeal,  
 26 No vain conceits; provokes to no quick turns  
 27 Of self-applauding intellect; but trains  
 28 To meekness, and exalts by humble faith;  
 29 Holds up before the mind intoxicate  
 30 With present objects, and the busy dance  
 31 Of things that pass away, a temperate show  
 32 Of objects that endure; and by this course  
 33 Disposes her, when over-fondly set  
 34 On throwing off incumbrances, to seek  
 35 In man, and in the frame of social life,  
 36 Whate'er there is desirable and good  
 37 Of kindred permanence, unchanged in form  
 38 And function, or, through strict vicissitude  
 39 Of life and death, revolving. Above all

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40 Were re-established now those watchful thoughts  
 41 Which, seeing little worthy or sublime  
 42 In what the Historian's pen so much delights  
 43 To blazon---power and energy detached  
 44 From moral purpose---early tutored me  
 45 To look with feelings of fraternal love  
 46 Upon the unassuming things that hold  
 47 A silent station in this beauteous world.

48 Thus moderated, thus composed, I found  
 49 Once more in Man an object of delight,  
 50 Of pure imagination, and of love;  
 51 And, as the horizon of my mind enlarged,  
 52 Again I took the intellectual eye  
 53 For my instructor, studious more to see  
 54 Great truths, than touch and handle little ones.  
 55 Knowledge was given accordingly; my trust  
 56 Became more firm in feelings that had stood  
 57 The test of such a trial; clearer far  
 58 My sense of excellence---of right and wrong:  
 59 The promise of the present time retired  
 60 Into its true proportion; sanguine schemes,  
 61 Ambitious projects, pleased me less; I sought  
 62 For present good in life's familiar face,  
 63 And built thereon my hopes of good to come.

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64 With settling judgments now of what would last  
 65 And what would disappear; prepared to find  
 66 Presumption, folly, madness, in the men  
 67 Who thrust themselves upon the passive world  
 68 As Rulers of the world; to see in these,  
 69 Even when the public welfare is their aim,  
 70 Plans without thought, or built on theories  
 71 Vague and unsound; and having brought the books  
 72 Of modern statist to their proper test,  
 73 Life, human life, with all its sacred claims  
 74 Of sex and age, and heaven-descended rights,  
 75 Mortal, or those beyond the reach of death;  
 76 And having thus discerned how dire a thing  
 77 Is worshipped in that idol proudly named  
 78 "The Wealth of Nations," *where* alone that wealth  
 79 Is lodged, and how increased; and having gained  
 80 A more judicious knowledge of the worth  
 81 And dignity of individual man,  
 82 No composition of the brain, but man  
 83 Of whom we read, the man whom we behold  
 84 With our own eyes---I could not but inquire---  
 85 Not with less interest than heretofore,  
 86 But greater, though in spirit more subdued---  
 87 Why is this glorious creature to be found  
 88 One only in ten thousand? What one is,

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89 Why may not millions be? What bars are thrown  
 90 By Nature in the way of such a hope?  
 91 Our animal appetites and daily wants,  
 92 Are these obstructions insurmountable?  
 93 If not, then others vanish into air.  
 94 "Inspect the basis of the social pile:  
 95 Inquire," said I, "how much of mental power  
 96 And genuine virtue they possess who live  
 97 By bodily toil, labour exceeding far  
 98 Their due proportion, under all the weight  
 99 Of that injustice which upon ourselves  
 100 Ourselves entail." Such estimate to frame  
 101 I chiefly looked (what need to look beyond?)  
 102 Among the natural abodes of men,  
 103 Fields with their rural works; recalled to mind  
 104 My earliest notices; with these compared  
 105 The observations made in later youth,  
 106 And to that day continued.---For, the time  
 107 Had never been when throes of mighty Nations

108 And the world's tumult unto me could yield,  
109 How far soe'er transported and possessed,  
110 Full measure of content; but still I craved  
111 An intermingling of distinct regards  
112 And truths of individual sympathy  
113 Nearer ourselves. Such often might be gleaned

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114 From the great City, else it must have proved  
115 To me a heart-depressing wilderness;  
116 But much was wanting: therefore did I turn  
117 To you, ye pathways, and ye lonely roads;  
118 Sought you enriched with everything I prized,  
119 With human kindnesses and simple joys.

120 Oh! next to one dear state of bliss, vouchsafed  
121 Alas! to few in this untoward world,  
122 The bliss of walking daily in life's prime  
123 Through field or forest with the maid we love,  
124 While yet our hearts are young, while yet we breathe  
125 Nothing but happiness, in some lone nook,  
126 Deep vale, or any where, the home of both,  
127 From which it would be misery to stir:  
128 Oh! next to such enjoyment of our youth,  
129 In my esteem, next to such dear delight,  
130 Was that of wandering on from day to day  
131 Where I could meditate in peace, and cull  
132 Knowledge that step by step might lead me on  
133 To wisdom; or, as lightsome as a bird  
134 Wafted upon the wind from distant lands,  
135 Sing notes of greeting to strange fields or groves,  
136 Which lacked not voice to welcome me in turn:  
137 And, when that pleasant toil had ceased to please,

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138 Converse with men, where if we meet a face  
139 We almost meet a friend, on naked heaths  
140 With long long ways before, by cottage bench,  
141 Or well-spring where the weary traveller rests.

142 Who doth not love to follow with his eye  
143 The windings of a public way? the sight,  
144 Familiar object as it is, hath wrought  
145 On my imagination since the morn  
146 Of childhood, when a disappearing line,  
147 One daily present to my eyes, that crossed  
148 The naked summit of a far-off hill  
149 Beyond the limits that my feet had trod,  
150 Was like an invitation into space

151 Boundless, or guide into eternity.  
152 Yes, something of the grandeur which invests  
153 The mariner who sails the roaring sea  
154 Through storm and darkness, early in my mind  
155 Surrounded, too, the wanderers of the earth;  
156 Grandeur as much, and loveliness far more.  
157 Awed have I been by strolling Bedlamites;  
158 From many other uncouth vagrants (passed  
159 In fear) have walked with quicker step; but why  
160 Take note of this? When I began to enquire,  
161 To watch and question those I met, and speak

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162 Without reserve to them, the lonely roads  
163 Were open schools in which I daily read  
164 With most delight the passions of mankind,  
165 Whether by words, looks, sighs, or tears, revealed;  
166 There saw into the depth of human souls,  
167 Souls that appear to have no depth at all  
168 To careless eyes. And---now convinced at heart  
169 How little those formalities, to which  
170 With overweening trust alone we give  
171 The name of Education, have to do  
172 With real feeling and just sense; how vain  
173 A correspondence with the talking world  
174 Proves to the most; and called to make good search  
175 If man's estate, by doom of Nature yoked  
176 With toil, be therefore yoked with ignorance;  
177 If virtue be indeed so hard to rear,  
178 And intellectual strength so rare a boon---  
179 I prized such walks still more, for there I found  
180 Hope to my hope, and to my pleasure peace  
181 And steadiness, and healing and repose  
182 To every angry passion. There I heard,  
183 From mouths of men obscure and lowly, truths  
184 Replete with honour; sounds in unison  
185 With loftiest promises of good and fair.

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186 There are who think that strong affection, love  
187 Known by whatever name, is falsely deemed  
188 A gift, to use a term which they would use,  
189 Of vulgar nature; that its growth requires  
190 Retirement, leisure, language purified  
191 By manners studied and elaborate;  
192 That whose feels such passion in its strength  
193 Must live within the very light and air  
194 Of courteous usages refined by art.



195 True is it, where oppression worse than death  
 196 Salutes the being at his birth, where grace  
 197 Of culture hath been utterly unknown,  
 198 And poverty and labour in excess  
 199 From day to day pre-occupy the ground  
 200 Of the affections, and to Nature's self  
 201 Oppose a deeper nature; there, indeed,  
 202 Love cannot be; nor does it thrive with ease  
 203 Among the close and overcrowded haunts  
 204 Of cities, where the human heart is sick,  
 205 And the eye feeds it not, and cannot feed.  
 206 ---Yes, in those wanderings deeply did I feel  
 207 How we mislead each other; above all,  
 208 How books mislead us, seeking their reward  
 209 From judgments of the wealthy Few, who see  
 210 By artificial lights; how they debase

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211 The Many for the pleasure of those Few;  
 212 Effeminately level down the truth  
 213 To certain general notions, for the sake  
 214 Of being understood at once, or else  
 215 Through want of better knowledge in the heads  
 216 That framed them; flattering self-conceit with words,  
 217 That, while they most ambitiously set forth  
 218 Extrinsic differences, the outward marks  
 219 Whereby society has parted man  
 220 From man, neglect the universal heart.

221 Here, calling up to mind what then I saw,  
 222 A youthful traveller, and see daily now  
 223 In the familiar circuit of my home,  
 224 Here might I pause, and bend in reverence  
 225 To Nature, and the power of human minds,  
 226 To men as they are men within themselves.  
 227 How oft high service is performed within,  
 228 When all the external man is rude in show,---  
 229 Not like a temple rich with pomp and gold,  
 230 But a mere mountain chapel, that protects  
 231 Its simple worshippers from sun and shower.  
 232 Of these, said I, shall be my song; of these,  
 233 If future years mature me for the task,  
 234 Will I record the praises, making verse

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235 Deal boldly with substantial things; in truth  
 236 And sanctity of passion, speak of these,  
 237 That justice may be done, obeisance paid  
 238 Where it is due: thus haply shall I teach,

239 Inspire, through unadulterated ears  
 240 Pour rapture, tenderness, and hope,---my theme  
 241 No other than the very heart of man,  
 242 As found among the best of those who live,  
 243 Not unexalted by religious faith,  
 244 Nor uninformed by books, good books, though few,  
 245 In Nature's presence: thence may I select  
 246 Sorrow, that is not sorrow, but delight;  
 247 And miserable love, that is not pain  
 248 To hear of, for the glory that redounds  
 249 Therefrom to human kind, and what we are.  
 250 Be mine to follow with no timid step  
 251 Where knowledge leads me: it shall be my pride  
 252 That I have dared to tread this holy ground,  
 253 Speaking no dream, but things oracular;  
 254 Matter not lightly to be heard by those  
 255 Who to the letter of the outward promise  
 256 Do read the invisible soul; by men adroit  
 257 In speech, and for communion with the world  
 258 Accomplished; minds whose faculties are then  
 259 Most active when they are most eloquent,

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260 And elevated most when most admired.  
 261 Men may be found of other mould than these,  
 262 Who are their own upholders, to themselves  
 263 Encouragement, and energy, and will,  
 264 Expressing liveliest thoughts in lively words  
 265 As native passion dictates. Others, too,  
 266 There are among the walks of homely life  
 267 Still higher, men for contemplation framed,  
 268 Shy, and unpractised in the strife of phrase;  
 269 Meek men, whose very souls perhaps would sink  
 270 Beneath them, summoned to such intercourse:  
 271 Theirs is the language of the heavens, the power,  
 272 The thought, the image, and the silent joy:  
 273 Words are but under-agents in their souls;  
 274 When they are grasping with their greatest strength,  
 275 They do not breathe among them: this I speak  
 276 In gratitude to God, Who feeds our hearts  
 277 For His own service; knoweth, loveth us,  
 278 When we are unregarded by the world.

279 Also, about this time did I receive  
 280 Convictions still more strong than heretofore,  
 281 Not only that the inner frame is good,  
 282 And graciously composed, but that, no less,  
 283 Nature for all conditions wants not power

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284 To consecrate, if we have eyes to see,  
285 The outside of her creatures, and to breathe  
286 Grandeur upon the very humblest face  
287 Of human life. I felt that the array  
288 Of act and circumstance, and visible form,  
289 Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind  
290 What passion makes them; that meanwhile the forms  
291 Of Nature have a passion in themselves,  
292 That intermingles with those works of man  
293 To which she summons him; although the works  
294 Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own;  
295 And that the Genius of the Poet hence  
296 May boldly take his way among mankind  
297 Wherever Nature leads; that he hath stood  
298 By Nature's side among the men of old,  
299 And so shall stand for ever. Dearest Friend!  
300 If thou partake the animating faith  
301 That Poets, even as Prophets, each with each  
302 Connected in a mighty scheme of truth,  
303 Have each his own peculiar faculty,  
304 Heaven's gift, a sense that fits him to perceive  
305 Objects unseen before, thou wilt not blame  
306 The humblest of this band who dares to hope  
307 That unto him hath also been vouchsafed  
308 An insight that in some sort he possesses,

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309 A privilege whereby a work of his,  
310 Proceeding from a source of untaught things,  
311 Creative and enduring, may become  
312 A power like one of Nature's. To a hope  
313 Not less ambitious once among the wilds  
314 Of Sarum's Plain, my youthful spirit was raised;  
315 There, as I ranged at will the pastoral downs  
316 Trackless and smooth, or paced the bare white roads  
317 Lengthening in solitude their dreary line,  
318 Time with his retinue of ages fled  
319 Backwards, nor checked his flight until I saw  
320 Our dim ancestral Past in vision clear;  
321 Saw multitudes of men, and, here and there,  
322 A single Briton clothed in wolf-skin vest,  
323 With shield and stone-axe, stride across the wold;  
324 The voice of spears was heard, the rattling spear  
325 Shaken by arms of mighty bone, in strength,  
326 Long mouldered, of barbaric majesty.  
327 I called on Darkness---but before the word  
328 Was uttered, midnight darkness seemed to take  
329 All objects from my sight; and lo! again  
330 The Desert visible by dismal flames;

331 It is the sacrificial altar, fed  
332 With living men---how deep the groans! the voice  
333 Of those that crowd the giant wicker thrills

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334 The monumental hillocks, and the pomp  
335 Is for both worlds, the living and the dead.  
336 At other moments (for through that wide waste  
337 Three summer days I roamed) where'er the Plain  
338 Was figured o'er with circles, lines, or mounds,  
339 That yet survive, a work, as some divine,  
340 Shaped by the Druids, so to represent  
341 Their knowledge of the heavens, and image forth  
342 The constellations; gently was I charmed  
343 Into a waking dream, a reverie  
344 That, with believing eyes, where'er I turned,  
345 Beheld long-bearded teachers, with white wands  
346 Uplifted, pointing to the starry sky,  
347 Alternately, and plain below, while breath  
348 Of music swayed their motions, and the waste  
349 Rejoiced with them and me in those sweet sounds.

350 This for the past, and things that may be viewed  
351 Or fancied in the obscurity of years  
352 From monumental hints: and thou, O Friend!  
353 Pleased with some unpremeditated strains  
354 That served those wanderings to beguile, hast said  
355 That then and there my mind had exercised  
356 Upon the vulgar forms of present things,  
357 The actual world of our familiar days,

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358 Yet higher power; had caught from them a tone,  
359 An image, and a character, by books  
360 Not hitherto reflected. Call we this  
361 A partial judgment---and yet why? for *then*  
362 We were as strangers; and I may not speak  
363 Thus wrongfully of verse, however rude,  
364 Which on thy young imagination, trained  
365 In the great City, broke like light from far.  
366 Moreover, each man's Mind is to herself  
367 Witness and judge; and I remember well  
368 That in life's every-day appearances  
369 I seemed about this time to gain clear sight  
370 Of a new world---a world, too, that was fit  
371 To be transmitted, and to other eyes  
372 Made visible; as ruled by those fixed laws  
373 Whence spiritual dignity originates,  
374 Which do both give it being and maintain

375 A balance, an ennobling interchange  
 376 Of action from without and from within;  
 377 The excellence, pure function, and best power  
 378 Both of the object seen, and eye that sees.

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## BOOK XIV. CONCLUSION.

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1 **In** one of those excursions (may they ne'er  
 2 Fade from remembrance!) through the Northern tracts  
 3 Of Cambria ranging with a youthful friend,  
 4 I left Bethgelert's huts at couching-time,  
 5 And westward took my way, to see the sun  
 6 Rise from the top of Snowdon. To the door  
 7 Of a rude cottage at the mountain's base  
 8 We came, and roused the shepherd who attends  
 9 The adventurous stranger's steps, a trusty guide;  
 10 Then, cheered by short refreshment, sallied forth.

11 It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,  
 12 Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog  
 13 Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;  
 14 But, undiscouraged, we began to climb

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15 The mountain-side. The mist soon girt us round,  
 16 And, after ordinary travellers' talk  
 17 With our conductor, pensively we sank  
 18 Each into commerce with his private thoughts:  
 19 Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself  
 20 Was nothing either seen or heard that checked  
 21 Those musings or diverted, save that once  
 22 The shepherd's lurcher, who, among the crags,  
 23 Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased  
 24 His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.  
 25 This small adventure, for even such it seemed  
 26 In that wild place and at the dead of night,  
 27 Being over and forgotten, on we wound  
 28 In silence as before. With forehead bent  
 29 Earthward, as if in opposition set  
 30 Against an enemy, I panted up  
 31 With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.

32 Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,  
33 Ascending at loose distance each from each,  
34 And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;  
35 When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,  
36 And with a step or two seemed brighter still;  
37 Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,  
38 For instantly a light upon the turf  
39 Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,

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40 The Moon hung naked in a firmament  
41 Of azure without cloud, and at my feet  
42 Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.  
43 A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved  
44 All over this still ocean; and beyond,  
45 Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,  
46 In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,  
47 Into the main Atlantic, that appeared  
48 To dwindle, and give up his majesty,  
49 Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.  
50 Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none  
51 Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars  
52 Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light  
53 In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,  
54 Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed  
55 Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay  
56 All meek and silent, save that through a rift---  
57 Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,  
58 A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place---  
59 Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams  
60 Innumerable, roaring with one voice!  
61 Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,  
62 For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

63 When into air had partially dissolved

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64 That vision, given to spirits of the night  
65 And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought  
66 Reflected, it appeared to me the type  
67 Of a majestic intellect, its acts  
68 And its possessions, what it has and craves,  
69 What in itself it is, and would become.  
70 There I beheld the emblem of a mind  
71 That feeds upon infinity, that broods  
72 Over the dark abyss, intent to hear  
73 Its voices issuing forth to silent light  
74 In one continuous stream; a mind sustained  
75 By recognitions of transcendent power,

76 In sense conducting to ideal form,  
77 In soul of more than mortal privilege.  
78 One function, above all, of such a mind  
79 Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,  
80 'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,  
81 That mutual domination which she loves  
82 To exert upon the face of outward things,  
83 So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed  
84 With interchangeable supremacy,  
85 That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,  
86 And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all  
87 Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus  
88 To bodily sense exhibits, is the express

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89 Resemblance of that glorious faculty  
90 That higher minds bear with them as their own.  
91 This is the very spirit in which they deal  
92 With the whole compass of the universe:  
93 They from their native selves can send abroad  
94 Kindred mutations; for themselves create  
95 A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns  
96 Created for them, catch it, or are caught  
97 By its inevitable mastery,  
98 Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound  
99 Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.  
100 Them the enduring and the transient both  
101 Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things  
102 From least suggestions; ever on the watch,  
103 Willing to work and to be wrought upon,  
104 They need not extraordinary calls  
105 To rouse them; in a world of life they live,  
106 By sensible impressions not enthralled,  
107 But by their quickening impulse made more prompt  
108 To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,  
109 And with the generations of mankind  
110 Spread over time, past, present, and to come,  
111 Age after age, till Time shall be no more.  
112 Such minds are truly from the Deity,  
113 For they are Powers; and hence the highest bliss

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114 That flesh can know is theirs---the consciousness  
115 Of Whom they are, habitually infused  
116 Through every image and through every thought,  
117 And all affections by communion raised  
118 From earth to heaven, from human to divine;  
119 Hence endless occupation for the Soul,  
120 Whether discursive or intuitive;



121 Hence cheerfulness for acts of daily life,  
 122 Emotions which best foresight need not fear,  
 123 Most worthy then of trust when most intense.  
 124 Hence, amid ills that vex and wrongs that crush  
 125 Our hearts---if here the words of Holy Writ  
 126 May with fit reverence be applied---that peace  
 127 Which passeth understanding, that repose  
 128 In moral judgments which from this pure source  
 129 Must come, or will by man be sought in vain.

130 Oh! who is he that hath his whole life long  
 131 Preserved, enlarged, this freedom in himself?  
 132 For this alone is genuine liberty:  
 133 Where is the favoured being who hath held  
 134 That course unchecked, unerring, and untired,  
 135 In one perpetual progress smooth and bright?---  
 136 A humbler destiny have we retraced,  
 137 And told of lapse and hesitating choice,

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138 And backward wanderings along thorny ways:  
 139 Yet---compassed round by mountain solitudes,  
 140 Within whose solemn temple I received  
 141 My earliest visitations, careless then  
 142 Of what was given me; and which now I range,  
 143 A meditative, oft a suffering man---  
 144 Do I declare---in accents which, from truth  
 145 Deriving cheerful confidence, shall blend  
 146 Their modulation with these vocal streams---  
 147 That, whatsoever falls my better mind,  
 148 Revolving with the accidents of life,  
 149 May have sustained, that, howsoe'er misled,  
 150 Never did I, in quest of right and wrong,  
 151 Tamper with conscience from a private aim;  
 152 Nor was in any public hope the dupe  
 153 Of selfish passions; nor did ever yield  
 154 Wilfully to mean cares or low pursuits,  
 155 But shrunk with apprehensive jealousy  
 156 From every combination which might aid  
 157 The tendency, too potent in itself,  
 158 Of use and custom to bow down the soul  
 159 Under a growing weight of vulgar sense,  
 160 And substitute a universe of death  
 161 For that which moves with light and life informed,  
 162 Actual, divine, and true. To fear and love,

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163 To love as prime and chief, for there fear ends,  
 164 Be this ascribed; to early intercourse,

165 In presence of sublime or beautiful forms,  
 166 With the adverse principles of pain and joy---  
 167 Evil as one is rashly named by men  
 168 Who know not what they speak. By love subsists  
 169 All lasting grandeur, by pervading love;  
 170 That gone, we are as dust.---Behold the fields  
 171 In balmy spring-time full of rising flowers  
 172 And joyous creatures; see that pair, the lamb  
 173 And the lamb's mother, and their tender ways  
 174 Shall touch thee to the heart; thou callest this love,  
 175 And not inaptly so, for love it is,  
 176 Far as it carries thee. In some green bower  
 177 Rest, and be not alone, but have thou there  
 178 The One who is thy choice of all the world:  
 179 There linger, listening, gazing, with delight  
 180 Impassioned, but delight how pitiable!  
 181 Unless this love by a still higher love  
 182 Be hallowed, love that breathes not without awe;  
 183 Love that adores, but on the knees of prayer,  
 184 By heaven inspired; that frees from chains the soul,  
 185 Lifted, in union with the purest, best,  
 186 Of earth-born passions, on the wings of praise  
 187 Bearing a tribute to the Almighty's Throne.

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188 This spiritual Love acts not nor can exist  
 189 Without Imagination, which, in truth,  
 190 Is but another name for absolute power  
 191 And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,  
 192 And Reason in her most exalted mood.  
 193 This faculty hath been the feeding source  
 194 Of our long labour: we have traced the stream  
 195 From the blind cavern whence is faintly heard  
 196 Its natal murmur; followed it to light  
 197 And open day; accompanied its course  
 198 Among the ways of Nature, for a time  
 199 Lost sight of it bewildered and engulfed:  
 200 Then given it greeting as it rose once more  
 201 In strength, reflecting from its placid breast  
 202 The works of man and face of human life;  
 203 And lastly, from its progress have we drawn  
 204 Faith in life endless, the sustaining thought  
 205 Of human Being, Eternity, and God.

206 Imagination having been our theme,  
 207 So also hath that intellectual Love,  
 208 For they are each in each, and cannot stand  
 209 Dividually.---Here must thou be, O Man!  
 210 Power to thyself; no Helper hast thou here;

211 Here keepest thou in singleness thy state:

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212 No other can divide with thee this work:  
 213 No secondary hand can intervene  
 214 To fashion this ability; 'tis thine,  
 215 The prime and vital principle is thine  
 216 In the recesses of thy nature, far  
 217 From any reach of outward fellowship,  
 218 Else is not thine at all. But joy to him,  
 219 Oh, joy to him who here hath sown, hath laid  
 220 Here, the foundation of his future years!  
 221 For all that friendship, all that love can do,  
 222 All that a darling countenance can look  
 223 Or dear voice utter, to complete the man,  
 224 Perfect him, made imperfect in himself,  
 225 All shall be his: and he whose soul hath risen  
 226 Up to the height of feeling intellect  
 227 Shall want no humbler tenderness; his heart  
 228 Be tender as a nursing mother's heart;  
 229 Of female softness shall his life be full,  
 230 Of humble cares and delicate desires,  
 231 Mild interests and gentlest sympathies.

232 Child of my parents! Sister of my soul!  
 233 Thanks in sincerest verse have been elsewhere  
 234 Poured out for all the early tenderness  
 235 Which I from thee imbibed: and 'tis most true

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236 That later seasons owed to thee no less;  
 237 For, spite of thy sweet influence and the touch  
 238 Of kindred hands that opened out the springs  
 239 Of genial thought in childhood, and in spite  
 240 Of all that unassisted I had marked  
 241 In life or nature of those charms minute  
 242 That win their way into the heart by stealth  
 243 (Still to the very going-out of youth),  
 244 I too exclusively esteemed *that* love,  
 245 And sought *that* beauty, which, as Milton sings,  
 246 Hath terror in it. Thou didst soften down  
 247 This over-sternness; but for thee, dear Friend!  
 248 My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood  
 249 In her original self too confident,  
 250 Retained too long a countenance severe;  
 251 A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds  
 252 Familiar, and a favourite of the stars:  
 253 But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,  
 254 Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,



298 Of Providence; and in reverence for duty,  
299 Here, if need be, struggling with storms, and there  
300 Strewing in peace life's humblest ground with herbs,  
301 At every season green, sweet at all hours.

302 And now, O Friend! this history is brought  
303 To its appointed close: the discipline  
304 And consummation of a Poet's mind,  
305 In everything that stood most prominent,  
306 Have faithfully been pictured; we have reached  
307 The time (our guiding object from the first)  
308 When we may, not presumptuously, I hope,

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309 Suppose my powers so far confirmed, and such  
310 My knowledge, as to make me capable  
311 Of building up a Work that shall endure.  
312 Yet much hath been omitted, as need was;  
313 Of books how much! and even of the other wealth  
314 That is collected among woods and fields,  
315 Far more: for Nature's secondary grace  
316 Hath hitherto been barely touched upon,  
317 The charm more superficial that attends  
318 Her works, as they present to Fancy's choice  
319 Apt illustrations of the moral world,  
320 Caught at a glance, or traced with curious pains.

321 Finally, and above all, O Friend! (I speak  
322 With due regret) how much is overlooked  
323 In human nature and her subtle ways,  
324 As studied first in our own hearts, and then  
325 In life among the passions of mankind,  
326 Varying their composition and their hue,  
327 Where'er we move, under the diverse shapes  
328 That individual character presents  
329 To an attentive eye. For progress meet,  
330 Along this intricate and difficult path,  
331 Whate'er was wanting, something had I gained,  
332 As one of many schoolfellows compelled,

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333 In hardy independence, to stand up  
334 Amid conflicting interests, and the shock  
335 Of various tempers; to endure and note  
336 What was not understood, though known to be;  
337 Among the mysteries of love and hate,  
338 Honour and shame, looking to right and left,  
339 Unchecked by innocence too delicate,  
340 And moral notions too intolerant,



383 I have protracted, in the unwearied heavens  
384 Singing, and often with more plaintive voice  
385 To earth attempered and her deep-drawn sighs,  
386 Yet centring all in love, and in the end  
387 All gratulant, if rightly understood.

388 Whether to me shall be allotted life,  
389 And, with life, power to accomplish aught of worth,  
390 That will be deemed no insufficient plea  
391 For having given the story of myself,  
392 Is all uncertain: but, beloved Friend!  
393 When, looking back, thou seest, in clearer view  
394 Than any liveliest sight of yesterday,  
395 That summer, under whose indulgent skies,  
396 Upon smooth Quantock's airy ridge we roved  
397 Unchecked, or loitered 'mid her sylvan combs,  
398 Thou in bewitching words, with happy heart,  
399 Didst chaunt the vision of that Ancient Man,  
400 The bright-eyed Mariner, and rueful woes  
401 Didst utter of the Lady Christabel;  
402 And I, associate with such labour, steeped  
403 In soft forgetfulness the livelong hours,  
404 Murmuring of him who, joyous hap, was found,

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405 After the perils of his moonlight ride,  
406 Near the loud waterfall; or her who sate  
407 In misery near the miserable Thorn;  
408 When thou dost to that summer turn thy thoughts,  
409 And hast before thee all which then we were,  
410 To thee, in memory of that happiness,  
411 It will be known, by thee at least, my Friend!  
412 Felt, that the history of a Poet's mind  
413 Is labour not unworthy of regard:  
414 To thee the work shall justify itself.

415 The last and later portions of this gift  
416 Have been prepared, not with the buoyant spirits  
417 That were our daily portion when we first  
418 Together wantoned in wild Poesy,  
419 But, under pressure of a private grief,  
420 Keen and enduring, which the mind and heart,  
421 That in this meditative history  
422 Have been laid open, needs must make me feel  
423 More deeply, yet enable me to bear  
424 More firmly; and a comfort now hath risen  
425 From hope that thou art near, and wilt be soon  
426 Restored to us in renovated health;  
427 When, after the first mingling of our tears,



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428 'Mong other consolations, we may draw  
429 Some pleasure from this offering of my love.

430 Oh! yet a few short years of useful life,  
431 And all will be complete, thy race be run,  
432 Thy monument of glory will be raised;  
433 Then, though (too weak to tread the ways of truth)  
434 This age fall back to old idolatry,  
435 Though men return to servitude as fast  
436 As the tide ebbs, to ignominy and shame  
437 By nations sink together, we shall still  
438 Find solace---knowing what we have learnt to know,  
439 Rich in true happiness if allowed to be  
440 Faithful alike in forwarding a day  
441 Of firmer trust, joint labourers in the work  
442 (Should Providence such grace to us vouchsafe)  
443 Of their deliverance, surely yet to come.  
444 Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak  
445 A lasting inspiration, sanctified  
446 By reason, blest by faith: what we have loved,  
447 Others will love, and we will teach them how;  
448 Instruct them how the mind of man becomes  
449 A thousand times more beautiful than the earth  
450 On which he dwells, above this frame of things

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451 (Which, 'mid all revolution in the hopes  
452 And fears of men, doth still remain unchanged)  
453 In beauty exalted, as it is itself  
454 Of quality and fabric more divine.

THE END.

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