

Classic Poetry Series

**Thomas Hood**  
**- poems -**

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## Thomas Hood(1789-1845)

He was born in London to Thomas Hood and Elizabeth Sands in the Poultry (Cheapside) above his father's bookshop. Hood's paternal family had been Scottish farmers from the village of Errol near Dundee. The Elder Hood was a partner in the business of Verner, Hood, and Sharp, and was a member of the Associated booksellers. Hood's son, Tom Hood, claimed that his grandfather had been the first to open up the book trade with America and he had great success in new editions of old books.

"Next to being a citizen of the world," writes Thomas Hood in his *Literary Reminiscences*, "it must be the best thing to be born a citizen of the world's greatest city." On the death of her husband in 1811, Mrs Hood moved to Islington, where Thomas Hood had a schoolmaster who, appreciating his talents, "made him feel it impossible not to take an interest in learning while he seemed so interested in teaching." Under the care of this "decayed dominie", he earned a few guineas—his first literary fee—by revising for the press a new edition of *Paul and Virginia*.

Hood left his private school master at 14 years of age and was admitted soon after into the counting house of a friend of his family, where he "turned his stool into a Pegasus on three legs, every foot, of course, being a dactyl or a spondee."; However, the uncongenial profession affected his health, which was never strong, and he began to study engraving. The exact nature and course of his study is unclear and various sources tell different stories. Reid emphasizes his work under his maternal uncle Robert Sands. But no papers of apprenticeship exist and we also know from his letters that he studied with a Mr. Harris. Furthermore, Hood's daughter in her *Memorials* mentions her father's association with the Le Keux brothers who were successful engravers in the City. The labour of engraving was no better for his health than the counting house had been, and Hood was sent to his father's relations at Dundee, Scotland. Here he stayed in the house of his maternal aunt, Jean Keay, for some months and then, after a falling out with her he moved on to the boarding house of one of her friends, Mrs Butterworth where he lived for the rest of his time in Scotland. In Dundee, Hood made a number of close friends with whom he continued to correspond for many years, led a healthy outdoor life, and also became a large and indiscriminate reader. It was also during his time here that Hood began to seriously write poetry and had his first published work, a letter to the editor of the *Dundee Advertiser*.

He had married in May 1824, and *Odes and Addresses*—his first work—was

written in conjunction with his brother-in-law J.H. Reynolds, a friend of John Keats. S. T. Coleridge wrote to Charles Lamb averring that the book must be his work. The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies (1827) and a dramatic romance, Lamia, published later, belong to this time. The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies was a volume of serious verse. But he was known as a humorist, and the public rejected this little book almost entirely.

Hood was particularly fond of practical jokes which he was said to have enjoyed perpetrating on members of his family. In the Memorials of Thomas Hood largely written by daughter, there is a story of Hood playing one such joke on his wife. He instructs Mrs. Hood to purchase some fish for the evening meal from the woman who regularly comes to the door selling her husband's catch. But he warns her to watch for any plaice that "has any appearance of red or orange spots, as they are a sure sign of an advanced stage of decomposition." Of course when the fish-seller comes Mrs. Hood refuses to purchase her plaice she exclaims "My good woman... I could not think of buying any plaice with those very unpleasant red spots!" Hood was much amused by the fish-sellers expression of amazement at complete ignorance of the appearance of plaice.

The series of the Comic Annual, dating from 1830, was a kind of publication at that time popular, which Hood undertook and continued, almost unassisted, for several years. Under that somewhat frivolous title he treated all the leading events of the day in caricature, without personal malice, and with an under-current of sympathy. The attention of the reader was distracted, by the incessant use of puns, of which Hood had written in his own vindication:

"However critics may take offence,

A double meaning has double sense."

He was probably aware of this danger. As he gained experience as a writer, his diction became simpler.

# A Lake And A Fairy Boat

A lake and a fairy boat  
To sail in the moonlight clear, -  
And merrily we would float  
From the dragons that watch us here!

Thy gown should be snow-white silk  
And strings of oriental pearls,  
Like gossamers dipped in milk,  
Should twine with thy raven curls!

Red rubies should deck thy hands,  
And diamonds should be thy dower -  
But fairies have broke their wands,  
And wishing has lost its power!

Thomas Hood

# A Parental Ode To My Son, Aged 3 Years And 5 Months

Thou happy, happy elf!  
(But stop,—first let me kiss away that tear—)  
Thou tiny image of myself!  
(My love, he's poking peas into his ear!)  
Thou merry, laughing sprite!  
With spirits feather-light,  
Untouched by sorrow, and unsoiled by sin;  
(Good Heavens! the child is swallowing a pin!)

Thou little tricksy Puck!  
With antic toys so funnily bestuck,  
Light as the singing bird that wings the air;  
(The door! the door! he'll tumble down the stair!)  
Thou darling of thy sire!  
(Why, Jane, he'll set his pinafore afire!)  
Thou imp of mirth and joy!  
In love's dear chain, so strong and bright a link,  
Thou idol of thy parents; (Drat the boy!  
There goes my ink!)

Thou cherub—but of earth;  
Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,  
In harmless sport and myrth,  
(That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail!)  
Thou human hummingbee, extracting honey  
From every blossom in the world that blows,  
Singing in youth's elysium ever sunny,  
(Another tumble!—that's his precious nose!)

Thy father's pride and hope!  
(He'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope!)  
With pure heart newly stamped from Nature's mint;  
(Where did he learn that squint!)  
Thou young domestic dove!  
(He'll have that jug off with another shove!)  
Dear nursling of the Hymeneal nest!  
(Are those torn clothes his best?)

Little epitome of man!  
(He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan!)  
Touched with the beautiful tints of dawning life  
(He's got a knife!)

Thou enviable being!  
No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky foreseeing,  
Play on, play on,  
My elfin John!  
Toss the light ball—bestride the stick—  
(I knew so many cakes would make him sick!)  
With fancies, buoyant as the thistle-down,  
Prompting the face grotesque, and antic brisk,  
With many a lamb-like frisk,  
(He's got the scissors, snipping at your gown!)

Thou pretty opening rose!  
(Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose!)  
Balmy and breathing music like the South,  
(He really brings my heart into my mouth!)  
Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,  
(I wish that window had an iron bar!)  
Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove;  
(I'll tell you what, my love,  
I cannot write unless he's sent above!)

Thomas Hood

# A Retrospective Review

## I

Oh, when I was a tiny boy,  
My days and nights were full of joy,  
My mates were blithe and kind!—  
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,  
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,  
To cast a look behind!

## II

A hoop was an eternal round  
Of pleasure. In those days I found  
A top a joyous thing;—  
But now those past delights I drop,  
My head, alas! is all my top,  
And careful thoughts the string!

## III

My marbles—once my bag was stored,—  
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,  
With Theseus for a taw!  
My playful horse has slipt his string,  
Forgotten all his capering,  
And harness'd to the law!

## IV

My kite—how fast and far it flew!  
Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew  
My pleasure from the sky!  
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,  
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams  
Will never soar so high!

V

My joys are wingless all and dead;  
My dumps are made of more than lead;—  
My flights soon find a fall;  
My fears prevail, my fancies droop,  
Joy never cometh with a hoop,  
And seldom with a call!

VI

My football's laid upon the shelf;  
I am a shuttlecock myself  
The world knocks to and fro;—  
My archery is all unlearn'd,  
And grief against myself has turn'd  
My arrows and my bow!

VII

No more in noontide sun I bask;  
My authorship's an endless task,  
My head's ne'er out of school:  
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,  
I have too many foes to fight,  
And friends grown strangely cool!

VIII

The very chum that shared my cake  
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,  
It makes me shrink and sigh:—  
On this I will not dwell and hang,—  
The changeling would not feel a pang  
Though these should meet his eye!

IX



No skies so blue or so serene  
As then;—no leaves look half so green  
As clothed the playground tree!  
All things I loved are altered so,  
Nor does it ease my heart to know  
That change resides in me!

X

Oh for the garb that marked the boy,  
The trousers made of corduroy,  
Well ink'd with black and red;  
The crownless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—  
It only let the sunshine still  
Repose upon my head!

XI

Oh for the riband round the neck!  
The careless dogs-ears apt to deck  
My book and collar both!  
How can this formal man be styled  
Merely an Alexandrine child,  
A boy of larger growth?

XII

Oh for that small, small beer anew!  
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-blue  
That wash'd my sweet meals down;  
The master even!—and that small Turk  
That fagg'd me!—worse is now my work—  
A fag for all the town!

XIII

Oh for the lessons learned by heart!

Ay, though the very birch's smart  
Should mark those hours again;  
I'd 'kiss the rod,' and be resign'd  
Beneath the stroke, and even find  
Some sugar in the cane!

XIV

The Arabian Nights rehearsed in bed!  
The Fairy Tales in school-time read,  
By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun!  
The angel form that always walk'd  
In all my dreams, and look'd and talk'd  
Exactly like Miss Brown!

XV

The omne bene—Christmas come!  
The prize of merit, won for home—  
Merit had prizes then!  
But now I write for days and days,  
For fame—a deal of empty praise,  
Without the silver pen!

XVI

Then 'home, sweet home!' the crowded coach—  
The joyous shout—the loud approach—  
The winding horns like rams'!  
The meeting sweet that made me thrill,  
The sweetmeats, almost sweeter still,  
No 'satis' to the 'jams'!—

XVII

When that I was a tiny boy  
My days and nights were full of joy,  
My mates were blithe and kind!

No wonder that I sometimes sigh,  
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,  
To cast a look behind!

Thomas Hood

# Allegory

I had a gig-horse, and I called him Pleasure  
Because on Sundays for a little jaunt  
He was so fast and showy, quite a treasure;  
Although he sometimes kicked and shied aslant.  
I had a chaise, and christened it Enjoyment,  
With yellow body and the wheels of red,  
Because it was only used for one employment,  
Namely, to go wherever Pleasure led.  
I had a wife, her nickname was Delight:  
A son called Frolic, who was never still:  
Alas! how often dark succeeds to bright!  
Delight was thrown, and Frolic had a spill,  
Enjoyment was upset and shattered quite,  
And Pleasure fell a splitter on Paine's Hill.

Thomas Hood

## Allegory: A Moral Vehicle

I had a gig-horse, and I called him Pleasure  
Because on Sundays for a little jaunt  
He was so fast and showy, quite a treasure;  
Although he sometimes kicked and shied aslant.  
I had a chaise, and christened it Enjoyment,  
With yellow body and the wheels of red,  
Because it was only used for one employment,  
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I had a wife, her nickname was Delight:  
A son called Frolic, who was never still:  
Alas! how often dark succeeds to bright!  
Delight was thrown, and Frolic had a spill,  
Enjoyment was upset and shattered quite,  
And Pleasure fell a splitter on Paine's Hill.

Thomas Hood

# Anticipation

'Coming events cast their shadow before.'

I had a vision in the summer light—  
Sorrow was in it, and my inward sight  
Ached with sad images. The touch of tears  
Gushed down my cheeks:—the figured woes of years  
Casting their shadows across sunny hours.  
Oh, there was nothing sorrowful in flowers  
 wooing the glances of an April sun,  
Or apple blossoms opening one by one  
Their crimson bosoms—or the twittered words  
And warbled sentences of merry birds;—  
Or the small glitter and the humming wings  
Of golden flies and many colored things—  
Oh, these were nothing sad—nor to see Her,  
Sitting beneath the comfortable stir  
Of early leaves—casting the playful grace  
Of moving shadows in so fair a face—  
Nor in her brow serene—nor in the love  
Of her mild eyes drinking the light above  
With a long thirst—nor in her gentle smile—  
Nor in her hand that shone blood-red the while  
She raised it in the sun. All these were dear  
To heart and eye—but an invisible fear  
Shook in the trees and chilled upon the air,  
And if one spot was laughing brightest—there  
My soul most sank and darkened in despair!—  
As if the shadows of a curtained room  
Haunted me in the sun—as if the bloom  
Of early flow'rets had no sweets for me,  
Nor apple blossoms any blush to see—  
As if the hour had brought too bright a day—  
And little birds were all too gay!—too gay!—  
As if the beauty of that Lovely One  
Were all a fable.—Full before the sun  
Stood Death and cast a shadow long before,  
Like a dark pall enshrouding her all o'er,  
Till eyes, and lips, and smiles, were all no more!



# Autumn

I Saw old Autumn in the misty morn  
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening  
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing  
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,  
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn;—  
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright  
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,  
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.

Where are the songs of Summer?—With the sun,  
Oping the dusky eyelids of the south,  
Till shade and silence waken up as one,  
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.  
Where are the merry birds?—Away, away,  
On panting wings through the inclement skies,  
Lest owls should prey  
Undazzled at noonday,  
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.

Where are the blooms of Summer?—In the west,  
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours,  
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest  
Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her flow'rs  
To a most gloomy breast.  
Where is the pride of Summer,—the green prime,—  
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—Three  
On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime  
Trembling,—and one upon the old oak-tree!  
Where is the Dryad's immortality?—  
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,  
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through  
In the smooth holly's green eternity.

The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd hoard,  
The ants have brimm'd their garner with ripe grain,  
And honey bees have stored  
The sweets of Summer in their luscious cells;  
The swallows all have wing'd across the main;  
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,



And sighs her tearful spells  
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.  
Alone, alone,  
Upon a mossy stone,  
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone  
With the last leaves for a love-rosary,  
Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,  
Like a dim picture of the drownèd past  
In the hush'd mind's mysterious far away,  
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last  
Into that distance, gray upon the gray.

O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded  
Under the languid downfall of her hair:  
She wears a coronal of flowers faded  
Upon her forehead, and a face of care;—  
There is enough of wither'd everywhere  
To make her bower,—and enough of gloom;  
There is enough of sadness to invite,  
If only for the rose that died, whose doom  
Is Beauty's,—she that with the living bloom  
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light:  
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite  
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear,—  
Enough of chilly droppings for her bowl;  
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,  
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

Thomas Hood

## Autumn Iii

The Autumn is old,  
The sere leaves are flying;—  
He hath gather'd up gold,  
And now he is dying;—  
Old Age, begin sighing!  
The vintage is ripe,  
The harvest is heaping;—  
But some that have sow'd  
Have no riches for reaping;—  
Poor wretch, fall a-weeping!  
The year's in the wane,  
There is nothing adorning,  
The night has no eve,  
And the day has no morning;—  
Cold winter gives warning.  
The rivers run chill,  
The red sun is sinking,  
And I am grown old,  
And life is fast shrinking;  
Here's enow for sad thinking!

Thomas Hood

## Bianca's Dream - A Venetian Story

BIANCA!—fair Bianca!—who could dwell  
With safety on her dark and hazel gaze,  
Nor find there lurk'd in it a witching spell,  
Fatal to balmy nights and blessed days?  
The peaceful breath that made the bosom swell,  
She turn'd to gas, and set it in a blaze;  
Each eye of hers had Love's Eupyrion in it,  
That he could light his link at in a minute.

So that, wherever in her charms she shone,  
A thousand breasts were kindled into flame;  
Maidens who cursed her looks forgot their own,  
And beaux were turn'd to flambeaux where she  
came;  
All hearts indeed were conquer'd but her own,  
Which none could ever temper down or tame:  
In short, to take our haberdasher's hints,  
She might have written over it,—'from Flints.'

She was, in truth, the wonder of her sex,  
At least in Venice—where with eyes of brown  
Tenderly languid, ladies seldom vex  
An amorous gentle with a needless frown;  
Where gondolas convey guitars by pecks,  
And Love at casements climbeth up and down,  
Whom for his tricks and custom in that kind,  
Some have considered a Venetian blind.

Howbeit, this difference was quickly taught,  
Amongst more youths who had this cruel jailer,  
To hapless Julio—all in vain he sought  
With each new moon his hatter and his tailor;  
In vain the richest padusoy he bought,  
And went in bran new beaver to assail her—  
As if to show that Love had made him smart  
All over—and not merely round his heart.

In vain he labour'd thro' the sylvan park  
Bianca haunted in—that where she came,  
Her learned eyes in wandering might mark  
The twisted cypher of her maiden name,  
Wholesomely going thro' a course of bark:  
No one was touched or troubled by his flame,  
Except the Dryads, those old maids that grow  
In trees,—like wooden dolls in embryo.

In vain complaining elegies he writ,  
And taught his tuneful instrument to grieve,  
And sang in quavers how his heart was split,  
Constant beneath her lattice with each eve;  
She mock'd his wooing with her wicked wit,  
And slash'd his suit so that it matched his sleeve,  
Till he grew silent at the vesper star,  
And, quite despairing, hamstring'd his guitar.

Bianca's heart was coldly frosted o'er  
With snows unmelting—an eternal sheet,  
But his was red within him, like the core  
Of old Vesuvius, with perpetual heat;  
And oft he longed internally to pour  
His flames and glowing lava at her feet,  
But when his burnings he began to spout.  
She stopp'd his mouth, and put the crater out.

Meanwhile he wasted in the eyes of men,  
So thin, he seem'd a sort of skeleton-key  
Suspended at death's door—so pale—and then  
He turn'd as nervous as an aspen tree;  
The life of man is three score years and ten,  
But he was perishing at twenty-three,  
For people truly said, as grief grew stronger,  
'It could not shorten his poor life—much longer.'

For why, he neither slept, nor drank, nor fed,  
Nor relished any kind of mirth below;  
Fire in his heart, and frenzy in his head,  
Love had become his universal foe,

Salt in his sugar—nightmare in his bed,  
At last, no wonder wretched Julio,  
A sorrow-ridden thing, in utter dearth  
Of hope,—made up his mind to cut her girth!

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For hapless lovers always died of old,  
Sooner than chew reflection's bitter cud;  
So Thisbe stuck herself, what time 'tis told,  
The tender-hearted mulberries wept blood;  
And so poor Sappho when her boy was cold,  
Drown'd her salt tear drops in a salter flood,  
Their fame still breathing, tho' their breath be past,  
For those old suitors lived beyond their last.

So Julio went to drown,—when life was dull,  
But took his corks, and merely had a bath;  
And once he pull'd a trigger at his skull,  
But merely broke a window in his wrath;  
And once, his hopeless being to annul,  
He tied a pack-thread to a beam of lath,  
A line so ample, 'twas a query whether  
'Twas meant to be a halter or a tether.

Smile not in scorn, that Julio did not thrust  
His sorrows thro'—'tis horrible to die!  
And come down, with our little all of dust,  
That dun of all the duns to satisfy:  
To leave life's pleasant city as we must,  
In Death's most dreary spunging-house to lie,  
Where even all our personals must go  
To pay the debt of nature that we owe!

So Julio liv'd:—'twas nothing but a pet  
He took at life—a momentary spite;  
Besides, he hoped that time would some day get  
The better of love's flame, however bright;  
A thing that time has never compass'd yet,  
For love, we know, is an immortal light.

Like that old fire, that, quite beyond a doubt,  
Was always in,—for none have found it out.

Meanwhile, Bianca dream'd—'twas once when Night  
Along the darken'd plain began to creep,  
Like a young Hottentot, whose eyes are bright,  
Altho' in skin as sooty as a sweep:  
The flow'rs had shut their eyes—the zephyr light  
Was gone, for it had rock'd the leaves to sleep.  
And all the little birds had laid their heads  
Under their wings—sleeping in feather beds.

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Lone in her chamber sate the dark-ey'd maid,  
By easy stages jaunting thro' her pray'rs,  
But list'ning side-long to a serenade,  
That robb'd the saints a little of their shares;  
For Julio underneath the lattice play'd  
His Deh Vieni, and such amorous airs,  
Born only underneath Italian skies,  
Where every fiddle has a Bridge of Sighs.

Sweet was the tune—the words were even sweeter—  
Praising her eyes, her lips, her nose, her hair,  
With all the common tropes wherewith in metre  
The hackney poets overcharge their fair.  
Her shape was like Diana's, but completer;  
Her brow with Grecian Helen's might compare:  
Cupid, alas! was cruel Sagittarius,  
Julio—the weeping water-man Aquarius.

Now, after listing to such laudings rare,  
'Twas very natural indeed to go—  
What if she did postpone one little pray'r—  
To ask her mirror 'if it was not so?'  
'Twas a large mirror, none the worse for wear,  
Reflecting her at once from top to toe:  
And there she gazed upon that glossy track,  
That show'd her front face tho' it 'gave her back.'

And long her lovely eyes were held in thrall,  
By that dear page where first the woman reads:  
That Julio was no flatt'rer, none at all,  
She told herself—and then she told her beads;  
Meanwhile, the nerves insensibly let fall  
Two curtains fairer than the lily breeds;  
For Sleep had crept and kiss'd her unawares,  
Just at the half-way milestone of her pray'rs.

Then like a drooping rose so bended she,  
Till her bow'd head upon her hand reposed;  
But still she plainly saw, or seem'd to see,  
That fair reflection, tho' her eyes were closed,  
A beauty-bright as it was wont to be,  
A portrait Fancy painted while she dozed:  
'Tis very natural some people say,  
To dream of what we dwell on in the day.

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Still shone her face—yet not, alas! the same,  
But 'gan some dreary touches to assume,  
And sadder thoughts, with sadder changes came—  
Her eyes resigned their light, her lips their bloom,  
Her teeth fell out, her tresses did the same,  
Her cheeks were tinged with bile, her eyes with  
rheum:  
There was a throbbing at her heart within,  
For, oh! there was a shooting in her chin.

And lo! upon her sad desponding brow,  
The cruel trenches of besieging age,  
With seams, but most unseemly, 'gan to show  
Her place was booking for the seventh stage;  
And where her raven tresses used to flow,  
Some locks that Time had left her in his rage.  
And some mock ringlets, made her forehead shady,  
A compound (like our Psalms) of Tête and braidy.

Then for her shape—alas! how Saturn wrecks,  
And bends, and corkscrews all the frame about,  
Doubles the hams, and crooks the straightest necks,  
Draws in the nape, and pushes forth the snout,  
Makes backs and stomachs concave or convex:  
Witness those pensioners called In and Out,  
Who all day watching first and second rater,  
Quaintly unbend themselves—but grow no  
straighter.

So Time with fair Bianca dealt, and made  
Her shape a bow, that once was like an arrow;  
His iron hand upon her spine he laid,  
And twisted all awry her 'winsome marrow.'  
In truth it was a change!—she had obey'd  
The holy Pope before her chest grew narrow,  
But spectacles and palsy seem'd to make her  
Something between a Glassite and a Quaker.

Her grief and gall meanwhile were quite extreme,  
And she had ample reason for her trouble;  
For what sad maiden can endure to seem  
Set in for singleness, tho' growing double.  
The fancy madden'd her; but now the dream,  
Grown thin by getting bigger, like a bubble,  
Burst,—but still left some fragments of its size,  
That, like the soapsuds, smarted in her eyes.

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And here—just here—as she began to heed  
The real world, her clock chimed out its score;  
A clock it was of the Venetian breed,  
That cried the hour from one to twenty-four;  
The works moreover standing in some need  
Of workmanship, it struck some dozens more;  
A warning voice that clench'd Bianca's fears,  
Such strokes referring doubtless to her years.

At fifteen chimes she was but half a nun,



By twenty she had quite renounced the veil;  
She thought of Julio just at twenty-one,  
And thirty made her very sad and pale,  
To paint that ruin where her charms would run;  
At forty all the maid began to fail,  
And thought no higher, as the late dream cross'd her,  
Of single blessedness, than single Gloster.

And so Bianca changed;—the next sweet even,  
With Julio in a black Venetian bark,  
Row'd slow and stealthily—the hour, eleven,  
Just sounding from the tow'r of old St. Mark;  
She sate with eyes turn'd quietly to heav'n,  
Perchance rejoicing in the grateful dark  
That veil'd her blushing cheek,—for Julio brought her  
Of course—to break the ice upon the water.

But what a puzzle is one's serious mind  
To open;—oysters, when the ice is thick,  
Are not so difficult and disinclin'd;  
And Julio felt the declaration stick  
About his throat in a most awful kind;  
However, he contrived by bits to pick  
His trouble forth,—much like a rotten cork  
Grop'd from a long-necked bottle with a fork.

But love is still the quickest of all readers;  
And Julio spent besides those signs profuse  
That English telegraphs and foreign pleaders,  
In help of language, are so apt to use,  
Arms, shoulders, fingers, all were interceders,  
Nods, shrugs, and bends,—Bianca could not choose  
But soften to his suit with more facility,  
He told his story with so much agility.

-30-

'Be thou my park, and I will be thy dear,  
(So he began at last to speak or quote  
Be thou my bark, and I thy gondolier,

(For passion takes this figurative note  
Be thou my light, and I thy chandelier;  
Be thou my dove, and I will be thy cote:  
My lily be, and I will be thy river;  
Be thou my life—and I will be thy liver.)

This, with more tender logic of the kind,  
He pour'd into her small and shell-like ear,  
That timidly against his lips inclin'd;  
Meanwhile her eyes glanced on the silver sphere  
That even now began to steal behind  
A dewy vapour, which was lingering near,  
Wherein the dull moon crept all dim and pale,  
Just like a virgin putting on the veil:—

Bidding adieu to all her sparks—the stars,  
That erst had woo'd and worshipp'd in her train,  
Saturn and Hesperus, and gallant Mars—  
Never to flirt with heavenly eyes again.  
Meanwhile, remindful of the convent bars,  
Bianca did not watch these signs in vain,  
But turn'd to Julio at the dark eclipse,  
With words, like verbal kisses, on her lips.

He took the hint full speedily, and, back'd  
By love, and night, and the occasion's meetness,  
Bestow'd a something on her cheek that smack'd  
(Tho' quite in silence) of ambrosial sweetness;  
That made her think all other kisses lack'd  
Till then, but what she knew not, of completeness;  
Being used but sisterly salutes to feel,  
Insipid things—like sandwiches of veal.

He took her hand, and soon she felt him wring  
The pretty fingers all instead of one;  
Anon his stealthy arm began to cling  
About her waist that had been clasp'd by none,  
Their dear confessions I forbear to sing,  
Since cold description would but be outrun;  
For bliss and Irish watches have the pow'r,  
In twenty minutes, to lose half an hour!



## Birthday Verses

Good morrow to the golden morning,  
Good morrow to the world's delight—  
I've come to bless thy life's beginning,  
Since it makes my own so bright!  
I have brought no roses, sweetest,  
I could find no flowers, dear,—  
It was when all sweets were over  
Thou wert born to bless the year.  
But I've brought thee jewels, dearest,  
In thy bonny locks to shine,—  
And if love shows in their glances,  
They have learn'd that look of mine!

Thomas Hood

# By Eve'ry Sweet Tradition Of True Hearts

By ev'ry sweet tradition of true hearts,  
Graven by Time, in love with his own lore;  
By all old martyrdoms and antique smarts,  
Wherein Love died to be alive the more;  
Yea, by the sad impression on the shore,  
Left by the drown'd Leander, to endear  
That coast for ever, where the billow's roar  
Moaneth for pity in the Poet's ear;  
By Hero's faith, and the foreboding tear  
That quench'd her brand's last twinkle in its fall;  
By Sappho's leap, and the low rustling fear  
That sigh'd around her flight; I swear by all,  
The world shall find such pattern in my act,  
As if Love's great examples still were lack'd.

Thomas Hood

# Christmas Holidays

Along the Woodford road there comes a noise  
Of wheels, and Mr. Rounding's neat post-chaise  
Struggles along, drawn by a pair of bays,  
With Reverend Mr. Crow and six small boys,  
Who ever and anon declare their joys  
With trumping horns and juvenile huzzas,  
At going home to spend their Christmas days,  
And changing learning's pains for pleasure's toys.  
Six weeks elapse, and down the Woodford way  
A heavy coach drags six more heavy souls,  
But no glad urchins shout, no trumpets bray,  
The carriage makes a halt, the gate-bell tolls,  
And little boys walk in as dull and mum  
As six new scholars to the Deaf and Dumb!

Thomas Hood

# Death

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh  
This eloquent breath shall take its speechless flight;  
That sometime these bright stars, that now reply  
In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night;  
That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,  
And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow;  
That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal sprite  
Be lapped in alien clay and laid below;  
It is not death to know this,--but to know  
That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves  
In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go  
So duly and so oft,--and when grass waves  
Over the past-away, there may be then  
No resurrection in the minds of men.

Thomas Hood

# Fair Ines

O saw ye not fair Ines?  
She 's gone into the West,  
To dazzle when the sun is down,  
And rob the world of rest:  
She took our daylight with her,  
The smiles that we love best,  
With morning blushes on her cheek,  
And pearls upon her breast.

O turn again, fair Ines,  
Before the fall of night,  
For fear the Moon should shine alone,  
And stars unrivall'd bright;  
And blessèd will the lover be  
That walks beneath their light,  
And breathes the love against thy cheek  
I dare not even write!

Would I had been, fair Ines,  
That gallant cavalier,  
Who rode so gaily by thy side,  
And whisper'd thee so near!  
Were there no bonny dames at home,  
Or no true lovers here,  
That he should cross the seas to win  
The dearest of the dear?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,  
Descend along the shore,  
With bands of noble gentlemen,  
And banners waved before;  
And gentle youth and maidens gay,  
And snowy plumes they wore:  
It would have been a beauteous dream,—  
If it had been no more!

Alas, alas! fair Ines,  
She went away with song,  
With Music waiting on her steps,



And shoutings of the throng;  
But some were sad, and felt no mirth,  
But only Music's wrong,  
In sounds that sang Farewell, farewell,  
To her you've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines!  
That vessel never bore  
So fair a lady on its deck,  
Nor danced so light before,—  
Alas for pleasure on the sea,  
And sorrow on the shore!  
The smile that bless'd one lover's heart  
Has broken many more!

Thomas Hood

# Faithless Nelly Gray

*A Pathetic Ballad*

Ben Battle was a soldier bold,  
And used to war's alarms;  
But a cannon-ball took off his legs,  
So he laid down his arms.

Now as they bore him off the field,  
Said he, 'Let others shoot;  
For here I leave my second leg,  
And the Forty-second Foot.'

The army-surgeons made him limbs:  
Said he, 'They're only pegs;  
But there's as wooden members quite,  
As represent my legs.'

Now Ben he loved a pretty maid, --  
Her name was Nelly Gray;  
So he went to pay her his devours,  
When he devoured his pay.

But when he called on Nelly Gray,  
She made him quite a scoff;  
And when she saw his wooden legs,  
Began to take them off.

'O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!'  
Is this your love so warm?  
The love that loves a scarlet coat  
Should be a little more uniform.

Said she, 'I loved a soldier once,  
For he was blithe and brave;  
But I will never have a man  
With both legs in the grave

'Before you had those timber toes  
Your love I did allow;

But then, you know, you stand upon  
Another footing now.'

'O Nelly Gray! O Nelly Gray!  
For all your jeering speeches,  
At duty's call I left my legs  
In Badajos's breaches.'

'Why, then,' said she, 'you've lost the feet  
Of legs in war's alarms,  
And now you cannot wear your shoes  
Upon your feats of arms!'

'O false and fickle Nelly Gray!  
I know why you refuse:  
Though I've no feet, some other man  
Is standing in my shoes.

'I wish I ne'er had seen your face;  
But, now, a long farewell!  
For you will be my death' -- alas!  
You will not be my Nell!'

Now when he went from Nelly Gray  
His heart so heavy got,  
And life was such a burden grown,  
It made him take a knot.

So round his melancholy neck  
A rope he did intwine,  
And, for his second time in life,  
Enlisted in the Line.

One end he tied around a beam,  
And then removed his pegs;  
And, as his legs were off -- of course  
He soon was off his legs.

And there he hung till he was dead  
As any nail in town;  
For, though distress had cut him up,  
It could not cut him down.

A dozen men sat on his corpse,  
To find out why he died, --  
And they buried Ben in four cross-roads  
With a stake in his inside.

Thomas Hood

# Faithless Sally Brown

Young Ben he was a nice young man,  
A carpenter by trade;  
And he fell in love with Sally Brown,  
That was a lady's maid.

But as they fetch'd a walk one day,  
They met a press-gang crew;  
And Sally she did faint away,  
Whilst Ben he was brought to.

The Boatswain swore with wicked words,  
Enough to shock a saint,  
That though she did seem in a fit,  
'Twas nothing but a feint.

"Come, girl," said he, "hold up your head,  
He'll be as good as me;  
For when your swain is in our boat,  
A boatswain he will be."

So when they'd made their game of her,  
And taken off her elf,  
She roused, and found she only was  
A coming to herself.

"And is he gone, and is he gone?"  
She cried, and wept outright:  
"Then I will to the water side,  
And see him out of sight."

A waterman came up to her,--  
"Now, young woman," said he,  
"If you weep on so, you will make  
Eye-water in the sea."

"Alas! they've taken my beau Ben  
To sail with old Benbow;"  
And her woe began to run afresh,  
As if she'd said Gee woe!

Says he, "They've only taken him  
To the Tender ship, you see";  
"The Tender-ship," cried Sally Brown  
"What a hard-ship that must be!"

"O! would I were a mermaid now,  
For then I'd follow him;  
But Oh!--I'm not a fish-woman,  
And so I cannot swim.

"Alas! I was not born beneath  
The virgin and the scales,  
So I must curse my cruel stars,  
And walk about in Wales."

Now Ben had sail'd to many a place  
That's underneath the world;  
But in two years the ship came home,  
And all her sails were furl'd.

But when he call'd on Sally Brown,  
To see how she went on,  
He found she'd got another Ben,  
Whose Christian-name was John.

"O Sally Brown, O Sally Brown,  
How could you serve me so?  
I've met with many a breeze before,  
But never such a blow":

Then reading on his 'bacco box  
He heaved a bitter sigh,  
And then began to eye his pipe,  
And then to pipe his eye.

And then he tried to sing "All's Well,"  
But could not though he tried;  
His head was turn'd, and so he chew'd  
His pigtail till he died.

His death, which happen'd in his berth,

At forty-odd befell:  
They went and told the sexton, and  
The sexton toll'd the bell.

Thomas Hood

## False Poets And True (To Wordsworth)

Look how the lark soars upward and is gone,  
Turning a spirit as he nears the sky!  
His voice is heard, but body there is none  
To fix the vague excursions of the eye.  
So, poets' songs are with us, tho' they die  
Obscured, and hid by death's oblivious shroud,  
And Earth inherits the rich melody  
Like raining music from the morning cloud.  
Yet, few there be who pipe so sweet and loud  
Their voices reach us through the lapse of space:  
The noisy day is deafen'd by a crowd  
Of undistinguished birds, a twittering race;  
But only lark and nightingale forlorn  
Fill up the silences of night and morn.

Thomas Hood



# Farewell, Life! My Senses Swim

Farewell, Life! My senses swim,  
And the world is growing dim;  
Thronging shadows cloud the light,  
Like the advent of the night,—  
Colder, colder, colder still,  
Upward steals a vapor chill—  
Strong the earthy odor grows—  
I smell the mould above the rose!

Welcome, Life! the Spirit strives!  
Strength returns, and hope revives;  
Cloudy fears and shapes forlorn  
Fly like shadows at the morn,—  
O'er the earth there comes a bloom—  
Sunny light for sullen gloom,  
Warm perfume for vapor cold—  
I smell the rose above the mould!

Thomas Hood

# Flowers

I will not have the mad Clytie,  
Whose head is turned by the sun;  
The tulip is a courtly queen,  
Whom, therefore, I will shun;  
The cowslip is a country wench,  
The violet is a nun; -  
But I will woo the dainty rose,  
The queen of everyone.

The pea is but a wanton witch,  
In too much haste to wed,  
And clasps her rings on every hand  
The wolfsbane I should dread; -  
Nor will I dreary rosemary  
That always mourns the dead; -  
But I will woo the dainty rose,  
With her cheeks of tender red.

The lily is all in white, like a saint,  
And so is no mate for me -  
And the daisy's cheek is tipped with blush,  
She is of such low degree;  
Jasmine is sweet, and has many loves,  
And the broom's betrothed to the bee; -  
But I will plight with the dainty rose,  
For fairest of all is she.

Thomas Hood

# Gold!

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!  
Bright and yellow, hard and cold  
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled,  
Heavy to get and light to hold,  
Hoarded, bartered, bought and sold,  
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled,  
Spurned by young, but hung by old  
To the verge of a church yard mold;  
Price of many a crime untold.  
Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!  
Good or bad a thousand fold!  
How widely its agencies vary,  
To save - to ruin - to curse - to bless -  
As even its minted coins express :  
Now stamped with the image of Queen Bess,  
And now of a bloody Mary.

Thomas Hood

# Hymn To The Sun

Giver of glowing light!  
Though but a god of other days,  
The kings and sages  
Of wiser ages  
Still live and gladden in thy genial rays!  
King of the tuneful lyre,  
Still poets' hymns to thee belong;  
Though lips are cold  
Whereon of old  
Thy beams all turn'd to worshipping and song!  
Lord of the dreadful bow,  
None triumph now for Python's death;  
But thou dost save  
From hungry grave  
The life that hangs upon a summer breath.  
Father of rosy day,  
No more thy clouds of incense rise;  
But waking flow'rs  
At morning hours,  
Give out their sweets to meet thee in the skies.  
God of the Delphic fame,  
No more thou listenest to hymns sublime;  
But they will leave  
On winds at eve,  
A solemn echo to the end of time.

Thomas Hood

# I Love Thee

I love thee—I love thee!  
'Tis all that I can say;—  
It is my vision in the night,  
My dreaming in the day;  
The very echo of my heart,  
The blessing when I pray:  
I love thee—I love thee!  
Is all that I can say.  
I love thee—I love thee!  
Is ever on my tongue;  
In all my proudest poesy  
That chorus still is sung;  
It is the verdict of my eyes,  
Amidst the gay and young:  
I love thee—I love thee!  
A thousand maids among.  
I love thee—I love thee!  
Thy bright hazel glance,  
The mellow lute upon those lips,  
Whose tender tones entrance;  
But most, dear heart of hearts, thy proofs  
That still these words enhance,  
I love thee—I love thee!  
Whatever be thy chance.

Thomas Hood

# I Remember, I Remember

I Remember, I Remember

I remember, I remember  
The house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn;  
He never came a wink too soon  
Nor brought too long a day;  
But now, I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember  
The roses red and white,  
The violets and the lily cups--  
Those flowers made of light!  
The lilacs where the robin built,  
And where my brother set  
The laburnum on his birthday,--  
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember  
Where I was used to swing,  
And thought the air must rush as fresh  
To swallows on the wing;  
My spirit flew in feathers then  
That is so heavy now,  
The summer pools could hardly cool  
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember  
The fir-trees dark and high;  
I used to think their slender tops  
Were close against the sky:  
It was a childish ignorance,  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from Heaven  
Than when I was a boy.



# In Rotterdam

I

I gaze upon a city,—  
A city new and strange,—  
Down many a watery vista  
My fancy takes a range;  
From side to side I saunter,  
And wonder where I am;  
And can you be in England,  
And I at Rotterdam!

II

Before me lie dark waters  
In broad canals and deep,  
Whereon the silver moonbeams  
Sleep, restless in their sleep;  
A sort of vulgar Venice  
Reminds me where I am;  
Yes, yes, you are in England,  
And I'm at Rotterdam.

III

Tall houses with quaint gables,  
Where frequent windows shine,  
And quays that lead to bridges,  
And trees in formal line,  
And masts of spicy vessels  
From western Surinam,  
All tell me you're in England,  
But I'm in Rotterdam.

IV

Those sailors, how outlandish  
The face and form of each!  
They deal in foreign gestures,  
And use a foreign speech;



A tongue not learn'd near Isis,  
Or studied by the Cam,  
Declares that you're in England,  
And I'm at Rotterdam.

V

And now across a market  
My doubtful way I trace,  
Where stands a solemn statue,  
The Genius of the place;  
And to the great Erasmus  
I offer my salaam;  
Who tells me you're in England,  
But I'm at Rotterdam.

VI

The coffee-room is open—  
I mingle in its crowd,—  
The dominos are noisy—  
The hookahs raise a cloud;  
The flavor, none of Fearon's,  
That mingles with my dram,  
Reminds me you're in England,  
And I'm at Rotterdam.

VII

Then here it goes, a bumper—  
The toast it shall be mine,  
In schiedam, or in sherry,  
Tokay, or hock of Rhine;  
It well deserves the brightest,  
Where sunbeam ever swam—  
'The Girl I love in England'  
I drink at Rotterdam!

Thomas Hood

## Is There A Bitter Pang For Love Removed

Is there a bitter pang for love removed,  
O God! The dead love doth not cost more tears  
Than the alive, the loving, the beloved—  
Not yet, not yet beyond all hopes and fears!  
Would I were laid  
Under the shade  
Of the calm grave, and the long grass of years,—

That love might die with sorrow:—I am sorrow;  
And she, that loves me tenderest, doth press  
Most poison from my cruel lips, and borrow  
Only new anguish from the old caress;  
Oh, this world's grief  
Hath no relief

In being wrung from a great happiness.  
Would I had never filled thine eyes with love,  
For love is only tears: would I had never  
Breathed such a curse-like blessing as we prove;  
Now, if 'Farewell' could bless thee, I would sever!  
Would I were laid  
Under the shade  
Of the cold tomb, and the long grass forever!

Thomas Hood

# It Was Not In The Winter

It was not in the Winter  
Our loving lot was cast;  
It was the Time of Roses,—  
We plucked them as we passed!  
That churlish season never frown'd  
On early lovers yet:—  
Oh, no—the world was newly crown'd  
With flowers when first we met!  
'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,  
But still you held me fast;  
It was the Time of Roses,—  
We pluck'd them as we pass'd.—  
What else could peer thy glowing cheek,  
That tears began to stud?  
And when I ask'd the like of Love,  
You snatched a damask bud;  
And oped it to the dainty core,  
Still glowing to the last.—  
It was the Time of Roses,—  
We plucked them as we pass'd!

Thomas Hood

# Lear

A poor old king, with sorrow for my crown,  
Throned upon straw, and mantled with the wind—  
For pity, my own tears have made me blind  
That I might never see my children's frown;  
And, may be, madness, like a friend, has thrown  
A folded fillet over my dark mind,  
So that unkindly speech may sound for kind—  
Albeit I know not.—I am childish grown—  
And have not gold to purchase wit withal—  
I that have once maintain'd most royal state—  
A very bankrupt now that may not call  
My child, my child—all beggar'd save in tears,  
Wherewith I daily weep an old man's fate,  
Foolish—and blind—and overcome with years!

Thomas Hood

## Let Us Make A Leap, My Dear

Let us make a leap, my dear,  
In our love, of many a year,  
And date it very far away,  
On a bright clear summer day,  
When the heart was like a sun  
To itself, and falsehood none;  
And the rosy lips a part  
Of the very loving heart,  
And the shining of the eye  
But a sign to know it by;—  
When my faults were all forgiven,  
And my life deserved of Heaven.  
Dearest, let us reckon so,  
And love for all that long ago;  
Each absence count a year complete,  
And keep a birthday when we meet.

Thomas Hood

# Lines On Seeing My Wife And Two Children Sleeping In The Same Chamber

And has the earth lost its so spacious round,  
The sky its blue circumference above,  
That in this little chamber there is found  
Both earth and heaven—my universe of love!  
All that my God can give me, or remove,  
Here sleeping, save myself, in mimic death.  
Sweet that in this small compass I behave  
To live their living and to breathe their breath!  
Almost I wish that, with one common sigh,  
We might resign all mundane care and strife,  
And seek together that transcendent sky,  
Where Father, Mother, Children, Husband, Wife,  
Together pant in everlasting life!

Thomas Hood

## Love, Dearest Lady, Such As I Would Speak

Love, dearest Lady, such as I would speak,  
Lives not within the humor of the eye;—  
Not being but an outward phantasy,  
That skims the surface of a tinted cheek,—  
Else it would wane with beauty, and grow weak,  
As if the rose made summer,—and so lie  
Amongst the perishable things that die,  
Unlike the love which I would give and seek:  
Whose health is of no hue—to feel decay  
With cheeks' decay, that have a rosy prime.  
Love is its own great loveliness always,  
And takes new lustre from the touch of time;  
Its bough owns no December and no May,  
But bears its blossom into Winter's clime.

Thomas Hood

# Lycus The Centaur

FROM AN UNROLLED MANUSCRIPT OF APOLLONIUS CURIUS

(The Argument: Lycus, detained by Circe in her magical dominion, is beloved by a Water Nymph, who, desiring to render him immortal, has recourse to the Sorceress. Circe gives her an incantation to pronounce, which should turn Lycus into a horse; but the horrible effect of the charm causing her to break off in the midst, he becomes a Centaur).

Who hath ever been lured and bound by a spell  
To wander, fore-doomed, in that circle of hell  
Where Witchery works with her will like a god,  
Works more than the wonders of time at a nod,—  
At a word,—at a touch,—at a flash of the eye,  
But each form is a cheat, and each sound is a lie,  
Things born of a wish—to endure for a thought,  
Or last for long ages—to vanish to nought,  
Or put on new semblance? O Jove, I had given  
The throne of a kingdom to know if that heaven,  
And the earth and its streams were of Circe, or whether  
They kept the world's birthday and brighten'd together!  
For I loved them in terror, and constantly dreaded  
That the earth where I trod, and the cave where I bedded,  
The face I might dote on, should live out the lease  
Of the charm that created, and suddenly cease:  
And I gave me to slumber, as if from one dream  
To another—each horrid,—and drank of the stream  
Like a first taste of blood, lest as water I quaff'd  
Swift poison, and never should breathe from the draught,—  
Such drink as her own monarch husband drain'd up  
When he pledged her, and Fate closed his eyes in the cup.  
And I pluck'd of the fruit with held breath, and a fear  
That the branch would start back and scream out in my ear;  
For once, at my suppering, I plucked in the dusk  
An apple, juice-gushing and fragrant of musk;  
But by daylight my fingers were crimson'd with gore,



And the half-eaten fragment was flesh at the core;  
And once—only once—for the love of its blush,  
I broke a bloom bough, but there came such a gush  
On my hand, that it fainted away in weak fright,  
While the leaf-hidden woodpecker shriek'd at the sight;  
And oh! such an agony thrill'd in that note,  
That my soul, startling up, beat its wings in my throat,  
As it long'd to be free of a body whose hand  
Was doom'd to work torments a Fury had plann'd!

There I stood without stir, yet how willing to flee,  
As if rooted and horror-turn'd into a tree,—  
Oh! for innocent death,—and to suddenly win it,  
I drank of the stream, but no poison was in it;  
I plunged in its waters, but ere I could sink,  
Some invisible fate pull'd me back to the brink;  
I sprang from the rock, from its pinnacle height,  
But fell on the grass with a grasshopper's flight;  
I ran at my fears—they were fears and no more,  
For the bear would not mangle my limbs, nor the boar,  
But moan'd—all their brutalized flesh could not smother  
The horrible truth,—we were kin to each other!

They were mournfully gentle, and group'd for relief,  
All foes in their skin, but all friends in their grief:  
The leopard was there,—baby-mild in its feature;  
And the tiger, black-barr'd, with the gaze of a creature  
That knew gentle pity; the bristle-back'd boar,  
His innocent tusks stain'd with mulberry gore;  
And the laughing hyena—but laughing no more;  
And the snake, not with magical orbs to devise  
Strange death, but with woman's attraction of eyes;  
The tall ugly ape, that still bore a dim shine  
Through his hairy eclipse of a manhood divine;  
And the elephant stately, with more than its reason,  
How thoughtful in sadness! but this is no season  
To reckon them up from the lag-bellied toad  
To the mammoth, whose sobs shook his ponderous load.  
There were woes of all shapes, wretched forms, when I came,  
That hung down their heads with a human-like shame;

The elephant hid in the boughs, and the bear  
Shed over his eyes the dark veil of his hair;  
And the womanly soul turning sick with disgust,  
Tried to vomit herself from her serpentine crust;  
While all groan'd their groans into one at their lot,  
As I brought them the image of what they were not.

Then rose a wild sound of the human voice choking  
Through vile brutal organs—low tremulous croaking:  
Cries swallow'd abruptly—deep animal tones  
Attuned to strange passion, and full-utter'd groans;  
All shuddering weaken, till hush'd in a pause  
Of tongues in mute motion and wide-yawning jaws;  
And I guessed that those horrors were meant to tell o'er  
The tale of their woes; but the silence told more,  
That writhed on their tongues; and I knelt on the sod,  
And pray'd with my voice to the cloud-stirring god,  
For the sad congregation of supplicants there,  
That upturn'd to his heaven brute faces of prayer;  
And I ceased, and they utter'd a moaning so deep,  
That I wept for my heart-ease,—but they could not weep,  
And gazed with red eyeballs, all wistfully dry,  
At the comfort of tears in a stag's human eye.  
Then I motion'd them round, and, to soothe their distress,  
I caress'd, and they bent them to meet my caress,  
Their necks to my arm, and their heads to my palm,  
And with poor grateful eyes suffer'd meekly and calm  
Those tokens of kindness, withheld by hard fate  
From returns that might chill the warm pity to hate;  
So they passively bow'd—save the serpent, that leapt  
To my breast like a sister, and pressingly crept  
In embrace of my neck, and with close kisses blister'd  
My lips in rash love,—then drew backward, and glister'd  
Her eyes in my face, and loud hissing affright,  
Dropt down, but swift started away from my sight!

This sorrow was theirs, but thrice wretched my lot,  
Turn'd brute in my soul, though my body was not,  
When I fled from the sorrow of womanly faces,  
That shrouded their woe in the shade of lone places,

And dash'd off bright tears, till their fingers were wet,  
And then wiped their lids with long tresses of jet:  
But I fled—though they stretch'd out their hands, all entangled  
With hair, and blood-stain'd of the breasts they had mangled,—  
Though they call'd—and perchance but to ask, had I seen  
Their loves, or to tell the vile wrongs that had been:  
But I stayed not to hear, lest the story should hold  
Some hell-form of words, some enchantment, once told,  
Might translate me in flesh to a brute; and I dreaded  
To gaze on their charms, lest my faith should be wedded  
With some pity,—and love in that pity perchance—  
To a thing not all lovely; for once at glance,  
Methought, where one sat, I descried a bright wonder  
That flow'd like a long silver rivulet under  
The long fenny grass,—with so lovely a breast,  
Could it be a snake-tail made the charm of the rest?

So I roamed in that circle of horrors, and Fear  
Walk'd with me, by hills, and in valleys, and near  
Cluster'd trees for their gloom—not to shelter from heat—  
But lest a brute-shadow should grow at my feet;  
And besides that full oft in the sunshiny place  
Dark shadows would gather like clouds on its face,  
In the horrible likeness of demons (that none  
Could see, like invisible flames in the sun);  
But grew to one monster that seized on the light,  
Like the dragon that strangles the moon in the night;  
Fierce sphinxes, long serpents, and asps of the south;  
Wild birds of huge beak, and all horrors that drouth  
Engenders of slime in the land of the pest,  
Vile shapes without shape, and foul bats of the West,  
Bringing Night on their wings; and the bodies wherein  
Great Brahma imprisons the spirits of sin,  
Many-handed, that blent in one phantom of fight  
Like a Titan, and threatfully warr'd with the light;  
I have heard the wild shriek that gave signal to close,  
When they rushed on that shadowy Python of foes,  
That met with sharp beaks and wide gaping of jaws,  
With flappings of wings, and fierce grasping of claws,  
And whirls of long tails:—I have seen the quick flutter  
Of fragments dissevered,—and necks stretch'd to utter

Long screamings of pain,—the swift motion of blows,  
And wrestling of arms—to the flight at the close,  
When the dust of the earth startled upward in rings,  
And flew on the whirlwind that follow'd their wings.

Thus they fled—not forgotten—but often to grow  
Like fears in my eyes, when I walk'd to and fro  
In the shadows, and felt from some beings unseen  
The warm touch of kisses, but clean or unclean  
I knew not, nor whether the love I had won  
Was of heaven or hell—till one day in the sun,  
In its very noon-blaze, I could fancy a thing  
Of beauty, but faint as the cloud-mirrors fling  
On the gaze of the shepherd that watches the sky,  
Half-seen and half-dream'd in the soul of his eye.  
And when in my musings I gazed on the stream,  
In motionless trances of thought, there would seem  
A face like that face, looking upward through mine:  
With his eyes full of love, and the dim-drownd shine  
Of limbs and fair garments, like clouds in that blue  
Serene:—there I stood for long hours but to view  
Those fond earnest eyes that were ever uplifted  
Towards me, and wink'd as the water-weed drifted  
Between; but the fish knew that presence, and plied  
Their long curvy tails, and swift darted aside.

There I gazed for lost time, and forgot all the things  
That once had been wonders—the fishes with wings,  
And the glimmer of magnified eyes that look'd up  
From the glooms of the bottom like pearls in a cup,  
And the huge endless serpent of silvery gleam,  
Slow winding along like a tide in the stream.  
Some maid of the waters, some Naiad, methought  
Held me dear in the pearl of her eye—and I brought  
My wish to that fancy; and often I dash'd  
My limbs in the water, and suddenly splash'd  
The cool drops around me, yet clung to the brink,  
Chill'd by watery fears, how that beauty might sink  
With my life in her arms to her garden, and bind me  
With its long tangled grasses, or cruelly wind me

In some eddy to hum out my life in her ear,  
Like a spider-caught bee,—and in aid of that fear  
Came the tardy remembrance—Oh falsest of men!  
Why was not that beauty remember'd till then?  
My love, my safe love, whose glad life would have run  
Into mine—like a drop—that our fate might be one,  
That now, even now,—may-be,—clasp'd in a dream,  
That form which I gave to some jilt of the stream,  
And gazed with fond eyes that her tears tried to smother  
On a mock of those eyes that I gave to another!

Then I rose from the stream, but the eyes of my mind,  
Still full of the tempter, kept gazing behind  
On her crystalline face, while I painfully leapt  
To the bank, and shook off the curst waters, and wept  
With my brow in the reeds; and the reeds to my ear  
Bow'd, bent by no wind, and in whispers of fear,  
Growing small with large secrets, foretold me of one  
That loved me,—but oh to fly from her, and shun  
Her love like a pest—though her love was as true  
To mine as her stream to the heavenly blue;  
For why should I love her with love that would bring  
All misfortune, like hate, on so joyous a thing?  
Because of her rival,—even Her whose witch-face  
I had slighted, and therefore was doom'd in that place  
To roam, and had roam'd, where all horrors grew rank,  
Nine days ere I wept with my brow on that bank;  
Her name be not named, but her spite would not fail  
To our love like a blight; and they told me the tale  
Of Scylla,—and Picus, imprison'd to speak  
His shrill-screaming woe through a woodpecker's beak.

Then they ceased—I had heard as the voice of my star  
That told me the truth of my fortunes—thus far  
I had read of my sorrow, and lay in the hush  
Of deep meditation,—when lo! a light crush  
Of the reeds, and I turn'd and look'd round in the night  
Of new sunshine, and saw, as I sipp'd of the light  
Narrow-winking, the realized nymph of the stream,  
Rising up from the wave with the bend and the gleam

Of a fountain, and o'er her white arms she kept throwing  
Bright torrents of hair, that went flowing and flowing  
In falls to her feet, and the blue waters roll'd  
Down her limbs like a garment, in many a fold,  
Sun-spangled, gold-broider'd, and fled far behind,  
Like an infinite train. So she came and reclined  
In the reeds, and I hunger'd to see her unseal  
The buds of her eyes that would ope and reveal  
The blue that was in them;—they oped and she raised  
Two orbs of pure crystal, and timidly gazed  
With her eyes on my eyes; but their color and shine  
Was of that which they look'd on, and mostly of mine—  
For she loved me,—except when she blush'd, and they sank,  
Shame-humbled, to number the stones on the bank,  
Or her play-idle fingers, while lisp'ing she told me  
How she put on her veil, and in love to behold me  
Would wing through the sun till she fainted away  
Like a mist, and then flew to her waters and lay  
In love-patience long hours, and sore dazzled her eyes  
In watching for mine 'gainst the midsummer skies.  
But now they were heal'd,—O my heart, it still dances  
When I think of the charm of her changeable glances,  
And my image how small when it sank in the deep  
Of her eyes where her soul was,—Alas! now they weep,  
And none knoweth where. In what stream do her eyes  
Shed invisible tears? Who beholds where her sighs  
Flow in eddies, or sees the ascent of the leaf  
She has pluck'd with her tresses? Who listens her grief  
Like a far fall of waters, or hears where her feet  
Grow emphatic among the loose pebbles, and beat  
Them together? Ah! surely her flowers float adown  
To the sea unaccepted, and little ones drown  
For need of her mercy,—even he whose twin-brother  
Will miss him forever; and the sorrowful mother  
Imploreth in vain for his body to kiss  
And cling to, all dripping and cold as it is,  
Because that soft pity is lost in hard pain  
We loved,—how we loved!—for I thought not again  
Of the woes that were whisper'd like fears in that place  
If I gave me to beauty. Her face was the face,  
Far away, and her eyes were the eyes that were drown'd  
For my absence,—her arms were the arms that sought round

And claspt me to nought; for I gazed and became  
Only true to my falsehood, and had but one name  
For two loves, and call'd ever on Ægle, sweet maid  
Of the sky-loving waters,—and was not afraid  
Of the sight of her skin;—for it never could be;  
Her beauty and love were misfortunes to me!

Thus our bliss had endured for a time-shorten'd space,  
Like a day made of three, and the smile of her face  
Had been with me for joy,—when she told me indeed  
Her love was self-task'd with a work that would need  
Some short hours, for in truth 'twas the veriest pity  
Our love should not last, and then sang me a ditty,  
Of one with warm lips that should love her, and love her  
When suns were burnt dim and long ages past over.  
So she fled with her voice, and I patiently nested  
My limbs in the reeds, in still quiet, and rested  
Till my thoughts grew extinct, and I sank in a sleep  
Of dreams,—but their meaning was hidden too deep  
To be read what their woe was;—but still it was woe  
That was writ on all faces that swam to and fro  
In that river of night;—and the gaze of their eyes  
Was sad,—and the bend of their brows,—and their cries  
Were seen, but I heard not. The warm touch of tears  
Travell'd down my cold cheeks, and I shook till my fears  
Awaked me, and lo! I was couch'd in a bower,  
The growth of long summers rear'd up in an hour!  
Then I said, in the fear of my dream, I will fly  
From this magic, but could not, because that my eye  
Grew love-idle among the rich blooms; and the earth  
Held me down with its coolness of touch, and the mirth  
Of some bird was above me,—who, even in fear,  
Would startle the thrush? and methought there drew near  
A form as of Ægle,—but it was not the face  
Hope made, and I knew the witch-Queen of that place,  
Even Circe the Cruel, that came like a Death,  
Which I fear'd, and yet fled not, for want of my breath.  
There was thought in her face, and her eyes were not raised  
From the grass at her foot, but I saw, as I gazed,  
Her spite—and her countenance changed with her mind  
As she plann'd how to thrall me with beauty, and bind

My soul to her charms,—and her long tresses play'd  
From shade into shine and from shine into shade,  
Like a day in mid-autumn,—first fair, O how fair!  
With long snaky locks of the adder-black hair  
That clung round her neck,—those dark locks that I prize,  
For the sake of a maid that once loved me with eyes  
Of that fathomless hue,—but they changed as they roll'd,  
And brighten'd, and suddenly blazed into gold  
That she comb'd into flames, and the locks that fell down  
Turn'd dark as they fell, but I slighted their brown,  
Nor loved, till I saw the light ringlets shed wild,  
That innocence wears when she is but a child;  
And her eyes,—Oh I ne'er had been witched with their shine,  
Had they been any other, my Ægle, than thine!

Then I gave me to magic, and gazed till I madden'd  
In the full of their light,—but I sadden'd and sadden'd  
The deeper I look'd,—till I sank on the snow  
Of her bosom, a thing made of terror and woe,  
And answer'd its throb with the shudder of fears,  
And hid my cold eyes from her eyes with my tears,  
And strain'd her white arms with the still languid weight  
Of a fainting distress. There she sat like the Fate  
That is nurse unto Death, and bent over in shame  
To hide me from her the true Ægle—that came  
With the words on her lips the false witch had fore-given  
To make me immortal—for now I was even  
At the portals of Death, who but waited the hush  
Of world-sounds in my ears to cry welcome, and rush  
With my soul to the banks of his black-flowing river.  
Oh, would it had flown from my body forever,  
Ere I listen'd those words, when I felt with a start,  
The life-blood rush back in one throb to my heart,  
And saw the pale lips where the rest of that spell  
Had perished in horror—and heard the farewell  
Of that voice that was drown'd in the dash of the stream!  
How fain had I follow'd, and plunged with that scream  
Into death, but my being indignantly lagg'd  
Through the brutalized flesh that I painfully dragg'd  
Behind me:—O Circe! O mother of spite!  
Speak the last of that curse! and imprison me quite



In the husk of a brute,—that no pity may name  
The man that I was,—that no kindred may claim—  
'The monster I am! Let me utterly be  
Brute-buried, and Nature's dishonor with me  
Uninscribed!'—But she listen'd my prayer, that was praise  
To her malice, with smiles, and advised me to gaze  
On the river for love,—and perchance she would make  
In pity a maid without eyes for my sake,  
And she left me like Scorn. Then I ask'd of the wave,  
What monster I was, and it trembled and gave  
The true shape of my grief, and I turn'd with my face  
From all waters forever, and fled through that place,  
Till with horror more strong than all magic I pass'd  
Its bounds, and the world was before me at last.

There I wander'd in sorrow, and shunned the abodes  
Of men, that stood up in the likeness of Gods,  
But I saw from afar the warm shine of the sun  
On the cities, where man was a million, not one;  
And I saw the white smoke of their altars ascending,  
That show'd where the hearts of many were blending,  
And the wind in my face brought shrill voices that came  
From the trumpets that gather'd whole bands in one fame  
As a chorus of man,—and they stream'd from the gates  
Like a dusky libation poured out to the Fates.  
But at times there were gentler processions of peace  
That I watch'd with my soul in my eyes till their cease,  
There were women! there men! but to me a third sex  
I saw them all dots—yet I loved them as specks:  
And oft to assuage a sad yearning of eyes  
I stole near the city, but stole covert-wise  
Like a wild beast of love, and perchance to be smitten  
By some hand that I rather had wept on than bitten!  
Oh, I once had a haunt near a cot where a mother  
Daily sat in the shade with her child, and would smother  
Its eyelids in kisses, and then in its sleep  
Sang dreams in its ear of its manhood, while deep  
In a thicket of willows I gazed o'er the brooks  
That murmur'd between us and kiss'd them with looks;  
But the willows unbosom'd their secret, and never  
I return'd to a spot I had startled forever,

Though I oft long'd to know, but could ask it of none,  
Was the mother still fair, and how big was her son?

For the haunters of fields they all shunn'd me by flight;  
The men in their horror, the women in fright;  
None ever remain'd save a child once that sported  
Among the wild bluebells, and playfully courted  
The breeze; and beside him a speckled snake lay  
Tight strangled, because it had hiss'd him away  
From the flower at his finger; he rose and drew near  
Like a Son of Immortals, one born to no fear,  
But with strength of black locks and with eyes azure bright  
To grow to large manhood of merciful might.  
He came, with his face of bold wonder, to feel,  
The hair of my side, and to lift up my heel,  
And question'd my face with wide eyes; but when under  
My lids he saw tears,—for I wept at his wonder,  
He stroked me, and utter'd such kindness then,  
That the once love of women, the friendship of men  
In past sorrow, no kindness e'er came like a kiss  
On my heart in its desolate day such as this!  
And I yearn'd at his cheeks in my love, and down bent,  
And lifted him up in my arms with intent  
To kiss him,—but he cruel-kindly, alas!  
Held out to my lips a pluck'd handful of grass!  
Then I dropt him in horror, but felt as I fled  
The stone he indignantly hurl'd at my head,  
That dissever'd my ear,—but I felt not, whose fate  
Was to meet more distress in his love than his hate!

Thus I wander'd, companion'd of grief and forlorn  
Till I wish'd for that land where my being was born  
But what was that land with its love, where my home  
Was self-shut against me; for why should I come  
Like an after-distress to my gray-bearded father,  
With a blight to the last of his sight?—let him rather  
Lament for me dead, and shed tears in the urn  
Where I was not, and still in fond memory turn  
To his son even such as he left him. Oh, how  
Could I walk with the youth once my fellows, but now  
Like Gods to my humbled estate?—or how bear  
The steeds once the pride of my eyes and the care

Of my hands? Then I turn'd me self-banish'd, and came  
Into Thessaly here, where I met with the same  
As myself. I have heard how they met by a stream  
In games, and were suddenly changed by a scream  
That made wretches of many, as she roll'd her wild eyes  
Against heaven, and so vanish'd.—The gentle and wise  
Lose their thoughts in deep studies, and others their ill  
In the mirth of mankind where they mingle them still.

Thomas Hood

# Midnight

Unfathomable Night! how dost thou sweep  
Over the flooded earth, and darkly hide  
The mighty city under thy full tide;  
Making a silent palace for old Sleep,  
Like his own temple under the hush'd deep,  
Where all the busy day he doth abide,  
And forth at the late dark, outspreadeth wide  
His dusky wings, whence the cold waters sweep!  
How peacefully the living millions lie!  
Lull'd unto death beneath his poppy spells;  
There is no breath—no living stir—no cry  
No tread of foot—no song—no music-call—  
Only the sound of melancholy bells—  
The voice of Time—survivor of them all!

Thomas Hood

## Miss Killmansegg And Her Precious Leg. A Legend

“Who hath not felt that breath in the air,  
A perfume and freshness strange and rare,  
A warmth in the light, and a bliss everywhere,  
When young hearts yearn together?  
All sweets below, and all sunny above,  
Oh! there's nothing in life like making love,  
Save making hay in fine weather!”

Thomas Hood

# My Heart Is Sick With Longing

My heart is sick with longing, tho' I feed  
On hope; Time goes with such a heavy pace  
That neither brings nor takes from thy embrace,  
As if he slept—forgetting his old speed:  
For, as in sunshine only we can read  
The march of minutes on the dial's face,  
So in the shadows of this lonely place  
There is no love, and Time is dead indeed.  
But when, dear lady, I am near thy heart,  
Thy smile is time, and then so swift it flies,  
It seems we only meet to tear apart,  
With aching hands and lingering of eyes.  
Alas, alas! that we must learn hours' flight  
By the same light of love that makes them bright!

Thomas Hood

# No!

No sun--no moon!  
No morn--no noon!  
No dawn--no dusk--no proper time of day--  
No sky--no earthly view--  
No distance looking blue--  
No road--no street--no "t'other side this way"--  
No end to any Row--  
No indications where the Crescents go--  
No top to any steeple--  
No recognitions of familiar people--  
No courtesies for showing 'em--  
No knowing 'em!  
No traveling at all--no locomotion--  
No inkling of the way--no notion--  
"No go" by land or ocean--  
No mail--no post--  
No news from any foreign coast--  
No Park, no Ring, no afternoon gentility--  
No company--no nobility--  
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,  
No comfortable feel in any member--  
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,  
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds--  
November!

Thomas Hood

# November

No sun - no moon!  
No morn - no noon -  
No dawn - no dusk - no proper time of day.  
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,  
No comfortable feel in any member -  
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,  
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds! -  
November!

Thomas Hood



# O Lady, Leave Thy Silken Thread

O Lady, leave thy silken thread  
And flowery tapestry:  
There's living roses on the bush,  
And blossoms on the tree;  
Stoop where thou wilt, thy careless hand  
Some random bud will meet;  
Thou canst not tread, but thou wilt find  
The daisy at thy feet.  
'Tis like the birthday of the world,  
When earth was born in bloom;  
The light is made of many dyes,  
The air is all perfume;  
There's crimson buds, and white and blue—  
The very rainbow showers  
Have turn'd to blossoms where they fell,  
And sown the earth with flowers.  
There's fairy tulips in the east,  
The garden of the sun;  
The very streams reflect the hues,  
And blossom as they run:  
While Morn opes like a crimson rose,  
Still wet with pearly showers;  
Then, lady, leave the silken thread  
Thou twinest into flowers!

Thomas Hood

# Ode On A Distant Prospect Of Clapham Academy

I

Ah me! those old familiar bounds!  
That classic house, those classic grounds  
My pensive thought recalls!  
What tender urchins now confine,  
What little captives now repine,  
Within yon irksome walls?

II

Ay, that's the very house! I know  
Its ugly windows, ten a-row!  
Its chimneys in the rear!  
And there's the iron rod so high,  
That drew the thunder from the sky  
And turn'd our table-beer!

III

There I was birch'd! there I was bred!  
There like a little Adam fed  
From Learning's woeful tree!  
The weary tasks I used to con!—  
The hopeless leaves I wept upon!—  
Most fruitless leaves to me!—

IV

The summon'd class!—the awful bow!—  
I wonder who is master now  
And wholesome anguish sheds!  
How many ushers now employs,  
How many maids to see the boys  
Have nothing in their heads!

V

And Mrs. S—?—Doth she abet  
(Like Pallas in the parlor) yet  
Some favor'd two or three,—  
The little Crichtons of the hour,  
Her muffin-medals that devour,  
And swill her prize—bohea?

VI

Ay, there's the playground! there's the lime,  
Beneath whose shade in summer's prime  
So wildly I have read!—  
Who sits there now, and skims the cream  
Of young Romance, and weaves a dream  
Of Love and Cottage-bread?

VII

Who struts the Randall of the walk?  
Who models tiny heads in chalk?  
Who scoops the light canoe?  
What early genius buds apace?  
Where's Poynter? Harris? Bowers? Chase?  
Hal Baylis? blithe Carew?

VIII

Alack! they're gone—a thousand ways!  
And some are serving in 'the Greys,'  
And some have perish'd young!—  
Jack Harris weds his second wife;  
Hal Baylis drives the wane of life;  
And blithe Carew—is hung!

IX

Grave Bowers teaches A B C  
To savages at Owhyee;  
Poor Chase is with the worms!—  
All, all are gone—the olden breed!—  
New crops of mushroom boys succeed,  
'And push us from our forms!'

X

Lo! where they scramble forth, and shout,  
And leap, and skip, and mob about,  
At play where we have play'd!  
Some hop, some run, (some fall,) some twine  
Their crony arms; some in the shine,—  
And some are in the shade!

XI

Lo there what mix'd conditions run!  
The orphan lad; the widow's son;  
And Fortune's favor'd care—  
The wealthy-born, for whom she hath  
Mac-Adamised the future path—  
The Nabob's pamper'd heir!

XII

Some brightly starr'd—some evil born,—  
For honor some, and some for scorn,—  
For fair or foul renown!  
Good, bad, indiff'rent—none may lack!  
Look, here's a White, and there's a Black  
And there's a Creole brown!

XIII

Some laugh and sing, some mope and weep,

And wish their frugal sires would keep  
Their only sons at home;—  
Some tease their future tense, and plan  
The full-grown doings of the man,  
And plant for years to come!

#### XIV

A foolish wish! There's one at hoop;  
And four at fives! and five who stoop  
The marble law to speed!  
And one that curvets in and out,  
Reining his fellow Cob about,—  
Would I were in his steed!

#### XV

Yet he would gladly halt and drop  
That boyish harness off, to swop  
With this world's heavy van—  
To toil, to tug. O little fool!  
While thou canst be a horse at school,  
To wish to be a man!

#### XVI

Perchance thou deem'st it were a thing  
To wear a crown,—to be a king!  
And sleep on regal down!  
Alas! thou know'st not kingly cares;  
For happier is thy head that wears  
That hat without a crown!

#### XVII

And dost thou think that years acquire  
New added joys? Dost think thy sire  
More happy than his son?  
That manhood's mirth?—Oh, go thy ways

To Drury-lane when—plays,  
And see how forced our fun!

XVIII

Thy taws are brave!—thy tops are rare!—  
Our tops are spun with coils of care,  
Our dumps are no delight!—  
The Elgin marbles are but tame,  
And 'tis at best a sorry game  
To fly the Muse's kite!

XIX

Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,  
Our topmost joys fall dull and dead  
Like balls with no rebound!  
And often with a faded eye  
We look behind, and send a sigh  
Towards that merry ground!

XX

Then be contented. Thou hast got  
The most of heaven in thy young lot;  
There's sky-blue in thy cup!  
Thou'lt find thy Manhood all too fast—  
Soon come, soon gone! and Age at last  
A sorry breaking-up!

Thomas Hood

# Ode To Autumn

I saw old Autumn in the misty morn  
Stand shadowless like Silence, listening  
To silence, for no lonely bird would sing  
Into his hollow ear from woods forlorn,  
Nor lowly hedge nor solitary thorn;  
Shaking his languid locks all dewy bright  
With tangled gossamer that fell by night,  
Pearling his coronet of golden corn.  
Where are the songs of Summer?—With the sun,  
Opening the dusky eyelids of the south,  
Till shade and silence waken up as one,  
And Morning sings with a warm odorous mouth.  
Where are the merry birds?—Away, away,  
On panting wings through the inclement skies,  
Lest owls should prey  
Undazzled at noon-day,  
And tear with horny beak their lustrous eyes.  
Where are the blooms of Summer?—In the west,  
Blushing their last to the last sunny hours.  
When the mild Eve by sudden Night is prest  
Like tearful Proserpine, snatch'd from her flow'rs  
To a most gloomy breast.  
Where is the pride of Summer,—the green prime,—  
The many, many leaves all twinkling?—Three  
On the moss'd elm; three on the naked lime  
Trembling,—and one upon the old oak tree!  
Where is the Dryad's immortality?—  
Gone into mournful cypress and dark yew,  
Or wearing the long gloomy Winter through  
In the smooth holly's green eternity.  
The squirrel gloats on his accomplish'd hoard,  
The ants have brimm'd their garners with ripe grain,  
And honey been save stored  
The sweets of summer in their luscious cells;  
The swallows all have wing'd across the main;  
But here the Autumn melancholy dwells,  
And sighs her tearful spells  
Amongst the sunless shadows of the plain.  
Alone, alone,

Upon a mossy stone,  
She sits and reckons up the dead and gone,  
With the last leaves for a love-rosary;  
Whilst all the wither'd world looks drearily,  
Like a dim picture of the drown'd past  
In the hush'd mind's mysterious far-away,  
Doubtful what ghostly thing will steal the last  
Into that distance, gray upon the gray.  
O go and sit with her, and be o'ershaded  
Under the languid downfall of her hair;  
She wears a coronal of flowers faded  
Upon her forehead, and a face of care;—  
There is enough of wither'd everywhere  
To make her bower,—and enough of gloom;  
There is enough of sadness to invite,  
If only for the rose that died, whose doom  
Is Beauty's,—she that with the living bloom  
Of conscious cheeks most beautifies the light:  
There is enough of sorrowing, and quite  
Enough of bitter fruits the earth doth bear,—  
Enough of chilly droppings from her bowl;  
Enough of fear and shadowy despair,  
To frame her cloudy prison for the soul!

Thomas Hood



# Ode To Captain Paery

'By the North Pole, I do challenge thee!'  
From 'Love's Labour's Lost.'

I

Paery, my man! has thy brave leg  
Yet struck its foot against the peg  
On which the world is spun?  
Or hast thou found No Thoroughfare  
Writ by the hand of Nature there  
Where man has never run!

II

Hast thou yet traced the Great Unknown  
Of channels in the Frozen Zone,  
Or held at Icy Bay,  
Hast thou still miss'd the proper track  
For homeward Indian men that lack  
A bracing by the way?

III

Still hast thou wasted toil and trouble  
On nothing but the North-Sea Bubble  
Of geographic scholar?  
Or found new ways for ships to shape,  
Instead of winding round the Cape,  
A short cut thro' the collar?

IV

Hast found the way that sighs were sent to  
The Pole—tho' God knows whom they went to!  
That track reveal'd to Pope—

Or if the Arctic waters sally,  
Or terminate in some blind alley,  
A chilly path to grope?

V

Alas! tho' Ross, in love with snows,  
Has painted them couleur de rose,  
It is a dismal doom,  
As Clauclio saith, to Winter thrice,  
'In regions of thick-ribbed ice'—  
All bright,—and yet all gloom!

VI

'Tis well for Gheber souls that sit  
Before the fire and worship it  
With pecks of Wallsend coals,  
With feet upon the fender's front,  
Roasting their corns—like Mr. Hunt—  
To speculate on poles.

VII

'Tis easy for our Naval Board—  
'Tis easy for our Civic Lord  
Of London and of ease,  
That lies in ninety feet of down,  
With fur on his nocturnal gown,  
To talk of Frozen Seas!

VIII

'Tis fine for Monsieur Ude to sit,  
And prate about the mundane spit,  
And babble of Cook's track—  
He'd roast the leather off his toes,  
Ere he would trudge thro' polar snows,

To plant a British Jack!

IX

Oh, not the proud licentious great,  
That travel on a carpet skate,  
Can value toils like thine!  
What 'tis to take a Hecla range,  
Through ice unknown to Mrs. Grange,  
And alpine lumps of brine?

X

But we, that mount the Hill o' Rhyme,  
Can tell how hard it is to climb  
The lofty slippery steep,  
Ah! there are more Snow Hills than that  
Which doth black Newgate, like a hat,  
Upon its forehead, keep.

XI

Perchance thou'rt now—while I am writing—  
Feeling a bear's wet grinder biting  
About thy frozen spine!  
Or thou thyself art eating whale,  
Oily, and underdone, and stale,  
That, haply, cross'd thy line!

XII

But I'll not dream such dreams of ill—  
Rather will I believe thee still  
Safe cellar'd in the snow,—  
Reciting many a gallant story,  
Of British kings and British glory,  
To crony Esquimaux—

### XIII

Cheering that dismal game where Night  
Makes one slow move from black to white  
Thro' all the tedious year,—  
Or smitten by some fond frost fair,  
That comb'd out crystals from her hair,  
Wooing a seal-skin dear!

### XIV

So much a long communion tends,  
As Byron says, to make us friends  
With what we daily view—  
God knows the daintiest taste may come  
To love a nose that's like a plum  
In marble, cold and blue!

### XV

To dote on hair, an oily fleece!  
As tho' it hung from Helen o' Greece—  
They say that love prevails  
Ev'n in the veriest polar land—  
And surely she may steal thy hand  
That used to steal thy nails!

### XVI

But ah, ere thou art fixed to marry,  
And take a polar Mrs. Parry,  
Think of a six months' gloom—  
Think of the wintry waste, and hers,  
Each furnish'd with a dozen furs,  
Think of thine icy dome!

### XVII

Think of the children born to blubber!  
Ah me! hast thou an Indian rubber  
Inside!—to hold a meal  
For months,—about a stone and half  
Of whale, and part of a sea calf—  
A fillet of salt veal!—

XVIII

Some walrus ham—no trifle but  
A decent steak—a solid cut  
Of seal—no wafer slice!  
A reindeer's tongue and drink beside!  
Gallons of sperm—not rectified!  
And pails of water-ice!

XIX

Oh, canst thou fast and then feast thus?  
Still come away, and teach to us  
Those blessed alternations—  
To-day to run our dinners fine,  
To feed on air and then to dine  
With Civic Corporations—

XX

To save th' Old Bailey daily shilling,  
And then to take a half-year's filling  
In P.N.'s pious Row—  
When ask'd to Hock and haunch o' ven'son,  
Thro' something we have worn our pens on  
For Longman and his Co.

XXI

O come and tell us what the Pole is—

Whether it singular and sole is,—  
Or straight, or crooked bent,—  
If very thick or very thin,—  
Made of what wood—and if akin  
To those there be in Kent?

XXII

There's Combe, there's Spurzheim, and there's Gall,  
Have talk'd of poles—yet, after all,  
What has the public learn'd?  
And Hunt's account must still defer,—  
He sought the poll at Westminster—  
And is not yet return'd!

XXIII

Alvanly asks if whist, dear soul,  
Is play'd in snow-towns near the Pole,  
And how the fur-man deals?  
And Eldon doubts if it be true,  
That icy Chancellors really do  
Exist upon the seals!

XXIV

Barrow, by well-fed office grates,  
Talks of his own bechristen'd Straits,  
And longs that he were there;  
And Croker, in his cabriolet,  
Sighs o'er his brown horse, at his Bay,  
And pants to cross the mer!

XXV

O come away, and set us right,  
And, haply, throw a northern light  
On questions such as these:—

Whether, when this drown'd world was lost.  
The surflux waves were lock'd in frost,  
And turned to Icy Seas!

XXVI

Is Ursa Major white or black?  
Or do the Polar tribes attack  
Their neighbors—and what for?  
Whether they ever play at cuffs,  
And then, if they take off their muffs  
In pugilistic war?

XXVII

Tells us, is Winter champion there,  
As in our milder fighting air?  
Say, what are Chilly loans?  
What cures they have for rheums beside,  
And if their hearts get ossified  
From eating bread of bones?

XXVIII

Whether they are such dwarfs—the quicker  
To circulate the vital liquor,—  
And then, from head to heel—  
How short the Methodists must choose  
Their dumpy envoys not to lose  
Their toes in spite of zeal?

XXIX

Whether 'twill soften or sublime it  
To preach of Hell in such a climate—  
Whether may Wesley hope  
To win their souls—or that old function  
Of seals—with the extreme of unction—

Bespeaks them for the Pope?

XXX

Whether the lamps will e'er be 'learn'd'  
Where six months' 'midnight oil' is burn'd  
Or Letters must confer  
With people that have never conn'd  
An A, B, C, but live beyond  
The Sound of Lancaster!

XXXI

O come away at any rate—  
Well hast thou earn'd a downier state—  
With all thy hardy peers—  
Good lack, thou must be glad to smell dock,  
And rub thy feet with opodeldock,  
After such frosty years.

XXXII

Mayhap, some gentle dame at last,  
Smit by the perils thou hast pass'd.  
However coy before,  
Shall bid thee now set up thy rest  
In that  
Brest Harbor,  
woman's breast,  
And tempt the Fates no more!

Thomas Hood



# Ode To Melancholy

Come, let us set our careful breasts,  
Like Philomel, against the thorn,  
To aggravate the inward grief,  
That makes her accents so forlorn;  
The world has many cruel points,  
Whereby our bosoms have been torn,  
And there are dainty themes of grief,  
In sadness to outlast the morn,—  
True honor's dearth, affection's death,  
Neglectful pride, and cankering scorn,  
With all the piteous tales that tears  
Have water'd since the world was born.

The world!—it is a wilderness,  
Where tears are hung on every tree;  
For thus my gloomy phantasy  
Makes all things weep with me!  
Come let us sit and watch the sky,  
And fancy clouds, where no clouds be;  
Grief is enough to blot the eye,  
And make heaven black with misery.  
Why should birds sing such merry notes,  
Unless they were more blest than we?  
No sorrow ever chokes their throats,  
Except sweet nightingale; for she  
Was born to pain our hearts the more  
With her sad melody.  
Why shines the Sun, except that he  
Makes gloomy nooks for Grief to hide,  
And pensive shades for Melancholy,  
When all the earth is bright beside?  
Let clay wear smiles, and green grass wave,  
Mirth shall not win us back again,  
Whilst man is made of his own grave,  
And fairest clouds but gilded rain!

I saw my mother in her shroud,  
Her cheek was cold and very pale;  
And ever since I've look'd on all

As creatures doom'd to fail!  
Why do buds ope except to die?  
Ay, let us watch the roses wither,  
And think of our loves' cheeks;  
And oh! how quickly time doth fly  
To bring death's winter hither!  
Minutes, hours, days, and weeks,  
Months, years, and ages, shrink to nought;  
An age past is but a thought!

Ay, let us think of Him awhile  
That, with a coffin for a boat,  
Rows daily o'er the Stygian moat,  
And for our table choose a tomb:  
There's dark enough in any skull  
To charge with black a raven plume;  
And for the saddest funeral thoughts  
A winding-sheet hath ample room,  
Where Death, with his keen-pointed style,  
Hath writ the common doom.  
How wide the yew-tree spreads its gloom,  
And o'er the dead lets fall its dew,  
As if in tears it wept for them,  
The many human families  
That sleep around its stem!

How cold the dead have made these stones,  
With natural drops kept ever wet!  
Lo! here the best—the worst—the world  
Doth now remember or forget,  
Are in one common ruin hurl'd,  
And love and hate are calmly met;  
The loveliest eyes that ever shone,  
The fairest hands, and locks of jet.  
Is't not enough to vex our souls,  
And fill our eyes, that we have set  
Our love upon a rose's leaf,  
Our hearts upon a violet?  
Blue eyes, red cheeks, are frailer yet;  
And sometimes at their swift decay  
Beforehand we must fret.  
The roses bud and bloom, again;

But Love may haunt the grave of Love,  
And watch the mould in vain.

O clasp me, sweet, whilst thou art mine,  
And do not take my tears amiss;  
For tears must flow to wash away  
A thought that shows so stern as this:  
Forgive, if sometime I forget,  
In woe to come, the present bliss;  
As frightened Proserpine let fall  
Her flowers at the sight of Dis,  
Ev'n so the dark and bright will kiss.  
The sunniest things throw sternest shade,  
And there is ev'n a happiness  
That makes the heart afraid!

Now let us with a spell invoke  
The full-orb'd moon to grieve our eyes;  
Not bright, not bright, but, with a cloud  
Lapp'd all about her, let her rise  
All pale and dim, as if from rest  
The ghost of the late-buried sun  
Had crept into the skies.  
The Moon! she is the source of sighs,  
The very face to make us sad;  
If but to think in other times  
The same calm quiet look she had,  
As if the world held nothing base,  
Of vile and mean, of fierce and bad;  
The same fair light that shone in streams,  
The fairy lamp that charmed the lad;  
For so it is, with spent delights  
She taunts men's brains, and makes them mad.

All things are touch'd with Melancholy,  
Born of the secret soul's mistrust,  
To feel her fair ethereal wings  
Weigh'd down with vile degraded dust;  
Even the bright extremes of joy  
Bring on conclusions of disgust,  
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,  
Whose fragrance ends in must.

O give her, then, her tribute just,  
Her sighs and tears, and musings holy;  
There is no music in the life  
That sounds with idiot laughter solely;  
There's not a string attuned to mirth,  
But has its chord in Melancholy.

Thomas Hood

## Ode To Rae Wilson Esq.

A WANDERER, Wilson, from my native land,  
Remote, O Rae, from godliness and thee,  
Where rolls between us the eternal sea,  
Besides some furlongs of a foreign sand,—  
Beyond the broadest Scotch of London Wall;  
Beyond the loudest Saint that has a call;  
Across the wavy waste between us stretch'd,  
A friendly missive warns me of a stricture,  
Wherein my likeness you have darkly etch'd,  
And though I have not seen the shadow sketch'd,  
Thus I remark prophetic on the picture.

I guess the features:—in a line to paint  
Their moral ugliness, I'm not a saint.  
Not one of those self-constituted saints,  
Quacks—not physicians—in the cure of souls,  
Censors who sniff out mortal taints,  
And call the devil over his own coals—  
Those pseudo Privy Councillors of God,  
Who write down judgments with a pen hard-nibb'd;  
Ushers of Beelzebub's Black Rod,  
Commending sinners, not to ice thick-ribb'd,  
But endless flames, to scorch them up like flax—  
Yet sure of heav'n themselves, as if they'd cribb'd  
Th' impression of St. Peter's keys in wax!

Of such a character no single trace  
Exists, I know, in my fictitious face;  
There wants a certain cast about the eye;  
A certain lifting of the nose's tip;  
A certain curling of the nether lip,  
In scorn of all that is, beneath the sky;  
In brief it is an aspect deleterious,  
A face decidedly not serious,  
A face profane, that would not do at all  
To make a face at Exeter Hall,—  
That Hall where bigots rant, and cant, and pray,  
And laud each other face to face,  
Till ev'ry farthing-candle ray

Conceives itself a great gas-light of grace.

Well!—be the graceless lineaments confest!  
I do enjoy this bounteous beauteous earth;  
And dote upon a jest  
'Within the limits of becoming mirth';—  
No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,  
Nor think I'm pious when I'm only bilious—  
Nor study in my sanctum supercilious  
To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.  
I pray for grace—repent each sinful act—  
Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible;  
And love my neighbour far too well, in fact,  
To call and twit him with a godly tract  
That's turn'd by application to a libel.  
My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,  
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,  
And have a horror of regarding heaven  
As anybody's rotten borough.

What else? no part I take in party fray,  
With troops from Billingsgate's slang-whanging  
tartars,  
I fear no Pope—and let great Ernest play  
At Fox and Goose with Foxs' Martyrs!  
I own I laugh at over-righteous men,  
I own I shake my sides at ranters,  
And treat sham-Abr'am saints with wicked banter,  
I even own, that there are times—but then  
It's when I've got my wine—I say d——canters!

I've no ambition to enact the spy  
On fellow souls, a Spiritual Pry—  
'Tis said that people ought to guard their noses,  
Who thrust them into matters none of theirs;  
And tho' no delicacy discomposes  
Your Saint, yet I consider faith and pray'rs  
Amongst the privatest of men's affairs.

I do not hash the Gospel in my books,  
And thus upon the public mind intrude it,  
As if I thought, like Otaheitan cooks,

No food was fit to eat till I had chewed it.  
On Bible stilts I don't affect to stalk;  
Nor lard with Scripture my familiar talk,—  
For man may pious texts repeat,  
And yet religion have no inward seat;  
'Tis not so plain as the old Hill of Howth,  
A man has got his belly full of meat  
Because he talks with victuals in his mouth!

Mere verbiage,—it is not worth a carrot!  
Why, Socrates—or Plato—where's the odds?—  
Once taught a jay to supplicate the Gods,  
And made a Polly-theist of a Parrot!

A mere professor, spite of all his cant, is  
Not a whit better than a Mantis,—  
An insect, of what clime I can't determine,  
That lifts its paws most parson-like, and thence,  
By simple savages—thro' sheer pretence—  
Is reckon'd quite a saint amongst the vermin.

But where's the reverence, or where the nous,  
To ride on one's religion thro' the lobby,  
Whether a stalking-horse or hobby,  
To show its pious paces to 'the house'?

I honestly confess that I would hinder  
The Scottish member's legislative rigs,  
That spiritual Pinder,  
Who looks on erring souls as straying pigs,  
That must be lash'd by law, wherever found,  
And driv'n to church, as to the parish pound.  
I do confess, without reserve or wheedle,  
I view that grovelling idea as one  
Worthy some parish clerk's ambitious son,  
A charity-boy, who longs to be a beadle.

On such a vital topic sure 'tis odd  
How much a man can differ from his neighbour:  
One wishes worship freely giv'n to God,  
Another wants to make it statute-labour—  
The broad distinction in a line to draw,

As means to lead us to the skies above,  
You say—Sir Andrew and his love of law,  
And I—the Saviour with his law of love.

Spontaneously to God should tend the soul,  
Like the magnetic needle to the Pole;  
But what were that intrinsic virtue worth,  
Suppose some fellow, with more zeal than  
knowledge,  
Fresh from St. Andrew's College,  
Should nail the conscious needle to the north?

I do confess that I abhor and shrink  
From schemes, with a religious willy-nilly,  
That frown upon St. Giles's sins, but blink  
The peccadilloes of all Piccadilly—  
My soul revolts at such a bare hypocrisy,  
And will not, dare not, fancy in accord  
The Lord of Hosts with an Exclusive Lord  
Of this world's aristocracy.  
It will not own a notion so unholy,  
As thinking that the rich by easy trips  
May go to heav'n, whereas the poor and lowly  
Must work their passage, as they do in ships.

One place there is—beneath the burial sod,  
Where all mankind are equalized by death;  
Another place there is—the Fane of God,  
Where all are equal, who draw living breath;—  
Juggle who will elsewhere with his own soul,  
Playing the Judas with a temporal dole—  
He who can come beneath that awful cope,  
In the dread presence of a Maker just,  
Who metes to ev'ry pinch of human dust  
One even measure of immortal hope—  
He who can stand within that holy door,  
With soul unbow'd by that pure spirit-level,  
And frame unequal laws for rich and poor,—  
Might sit for Hell and represent the Devil!

Such are the solemn sentiments, O Rae,  
In your last Journey-Work, perchance you ravage,



Seeming, but in more courtly terms, to say  
I'm but a heedless, creedless, godless savage;  
A very Guy, deserving fire and faggots,—  
A Scoffer, always on the grin,  
And sadly given to the mortal sin  
Of liking Maw-worms less than merry maggots!

The humble records of my life to search,  
I have not herded with mere pagan beasts;  
But sometimes I have 'sat at good men's feasts,'  
And I have been 'where bells have knoll'd to  
church.'

Dear bells! how sweet the sounds of village bells  
When on the undulating air they swim!  
Now loud as welcomes! faint, now, as farewells!  
And trembling all about the breezy dells  
As flutter'd by the wings of Cherubim.  
Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;  
And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above  
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love,—  
With, now and then, the coo of the wild pigeon;—  
O Pagans, Heathens, Infidels and Doubters!  
If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,  
Will the harsh voices of church cads and touters?

A man may cry 'Church! Church!' at ev'ry word,  
With no more piety than other people—  
A daw's not reckon'd a religious bird  
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.  
The Temple is a good, a holy place,  
But quacking only gives it an ill savour;  
While saintly mountebanks the porch disgrace,  
And bring religion's self into disfavour!

Behold yon servitor of God and Mammon,  
Who, binding up his Bible with his Ledger,  
Blends Gospel texts with trading gammon,  
A black-leg saint, a spiritual hedger,  
Who backs his rigid Sabbath, so to speak,  
Against the wicked remnant of the week,  
A saving bet against his sinful bias—  
'Rogue that I am,' he whispers to himself,

'I lie—I cheat—do anything for pelf,  
But who on earth can say I am not pious?'

In proof how over-righteousness re-acts,  
Accept an anecdote well based on facts.  
One Sunday morning—(at the day don't fret)—  
In riding with a friend to Ponder's End  
Outside the stage, we happened to commend  
A certain mansion that we saw To Let.  
'Ay,' cried our coachman, with our talk to grapple  
'You're right! no house along the road comes nigh  
it!  
'Twas built by the same man as built yon chapel  
And master wanted once to buy it,—  
But t'other driv the bargain much too hard—  
He ax'd sure-ly a sum purdigious!  
But being so particular religious,  
Why, that, you see, put master on his guard!'

Church is 'a little heav'n below,  
I have been there and still would go,'—  
Yet I am none of those, who think it odd  
A man can pray unbidden from the cassock,  
And, passing by the customary hassock,  
Kneel down remote upon the simple sod,  
And sue in formâ pauperis to God.  
As for the rest,—intolerant to none,  
Whatever shape the pious rite may bear,  
Ev'n the poor Pagan's homage to the Sun  
I would not harshly scorn, lest even there  
I spurn'd some elements of Christian pray'r—  
An aim, tho' erring, at a 'world ayont,'  
Acknowledgment of good—of man's futility,  
A sense of need, and weakness, and indeed  
That very thing so many Christians want—  
Humility.  
Such, unto Papists, Jews or turban'd Turks,  
Such is my spirit—(I don't mean my wraith!)  
Such, may it please you, is my humble faith;  
I know, full well, you do not like my works!  
I have not sought, 'tis true, the Holy Land,  
As full of texts as Cuddie Headrigg's mother,

The Bible in one hand,  
And my own commonplace-book in the other—  
But you have been to Palestine—alas!  
Some minds improve by travel, others, rather,  
Resemble copper wire, or brass,  
Which gets the narrower by going farther!  
Worthless are all such Pilgrimages—very!  
If Palmers at the Holy Tomb contrive  
The human heats and rancour to revive  
That at the Sepulchre they ought to bury.  
A sorry sight it is to rest the eye on,  
To see a Christian creature graze at Sion,  
Then homeward, of the saintly pasture full,  
Rush bellowing, and breathing fire and smoke,  
At crippled Papistry to butt and poke,  
Exactly as a skittish Scottish bull  
Hunts an old woman in a scarlet cloak!

Why leave a serious, moral, pious home,  
Scotland, renown'd for sanctity of old,  
Far distant Catholics to rate and scold  
For—doing as the Romans do at Rome?  
With such a bristling spirit wherefore quit  
The Land of Cakes for any land of wafers,  
About the graceless images to flit,  
And buzz and chafe importunate as chafers,  
Longing to carve the carvers to Scotch collops?—  
People who hold such absolute opinions  
Should stay at home, in Protestant dominions,  
Not travel like male Mrs. Trollopes.

Gifted with noble tendency to climb,  
Yet weak at the same time,  
Faith is a kind of parasitic plant,  
That grasps the nearest stem with tendril-rings;  
And as the climate and the soil may grant,  
So is the sort of tree to which it clings.  
Consider then, before, like Hurlothrumbo  
You aim your club at any creed on earth,  
That, by the simple accident of birth,  
You might have been High Priest to Mumbo Jumbo.  
For me—thro' heathen ignorance perchance,

Not having knelt in Palestine,—I feel  
None of that griffinish excess of zeal,  
Some travellers would blaze with here in France.  
Dolls I can see in virgin-like array,  
Nor for a scuffle with the idols hanker  
Like crazy Quixote at the puppet's play,  
If their 'offence be rank,' should mine be rancour?  
Mild light, and by degrees, should be the plan  
To cure the dark and erring mind;  
But who would rush at a benighted man,  
And give him two black eyes for being blind?

Suppose the tender but luxuriant hop  
Around a canker'd stem should twine,  
What Kentish boor would tear away the prop  
So roughly as to wound, nay, kill the bine?  
The images, 'tis true, are strangely dress'd,  
With gauds and toys extremely out of season;  
The carving nothing of the very best,  
The whole repugnant to the eye of reason,  
Shocking to Taste, and to Fine Arts a treason—  
Yet ne'er o'erlook in bigotry of sect  
One truly Catholic, one common form,  
At which uncheck'd  
All Christian hearts may kindle or keep warm.  
Say, was it to my spirit's gain or loss,  
One bright and balmy morning, as I went  
From Liege's lovely environs to Ghent,  
If hard by the wayside I found a cross,  
That made me breathe a pray'r upon the spot—  
While Nature of herself, as if to trace  
The emblem's use, had trail'd around its base  
The blue significant Forget-me-not?  
Methought, the claims of Charity to urge  
More forcibly, along with Faith and Hope,  
The pious choice had pitched upon the verge  
Of a delicious slope  
Giving the eye much variegated scope;—  
'Look round,' it whisper'd, 'on that prospect rare,  
Those vales so verdant, and those hills so blue;  
Enjoy the sunny world, so fresh, and fair,  
But'—(how the simple legend pierced me thro'!)

'PRIEZ POUR LES MALHEUREUX.'

With sweet kind natures, as in honey'd cells,  
Religion lives, and feels herself at home;  
But only on a formal visit dwells  
Where wasps instead of bees have formed the comb.  
Shun pride, O Rae!—whatever sort beside  
You take in lieu, shun spiritual pride!  
A pride there is of rank—a pride of birth,  
A pride of learning, and a pride of purse,  
A London pride—in short, there be on earth  
A host of prides, some better and some worse;  
But of all prides, since Lucifer's attaint,  
The proudest swells a self-elected Saint.

To picture that cold pride so harsh and hard,  
Fancy a peacock in a poultry yard.  
Behold him in conceited circles sail,  
Strutting and dancing, and now planted stiff,  
In all his pomp of pageantry, as if  
He felt 'the eyes of Europe' on his tail!  
As for the humble breed retain'd by man,  
He scorns the whole domestic clan—  
He bows, he bridles,  
He wheels, he sidles,  
At last, with stately dodgings, in a corner  
He pens a simple russet hen, to scorn her  
Full in the blaze of his resplendent fan!  
'Look here,' he cries (to give him words),  
'Thou feather'd clay—thou scum of birds!'   
Flirting the rustling plumage in her eyes,—  
'Look here, thou vile predestined sinner,  
Doom'd to be roasted for a dinner,  
Behold those lovely variegated dyes!  
These are the rainbow colors of the skies,  
That Heav'n has shed upon me con amore—  
A Bird of Paradise?—a pretty story!  
I am that Saintly Fowl, thou paltry chick!  
Look at my crown of glory!  
Thou dingy, dirty, drabbled, draggled jill!  
And off goes Partlet, wriggling from a kick,  
With bleeding scalp laid open by his bill!

That little simile exactly paints  
How sinners are despised by saints.  
By saints!—the Hypocrites that ope heav'n's door  
Obsequious to the sinful man of riches—  
But put the wicked, naked, barelegg'd poor  
In parish stocks instead of breeches.

The Saints!—the Bigots that in public spout,  
Spread phosphorus of zeal on scraps of fustian,  
And go like walking 'Lucifers' about  
Mere living bundles of combustion.

The Saints!—the aping Fanatics that talk  
All cant and rant, and rhapsodies high-flown—  
That bid you baulk  
A Sunday walk,  
And shun God's work as you should shun your own.

The Saints!—the Formalists, the extra pious,  
Who think the mortal husk can save the soul,  
By trundling with a mere mechanic bias,  
To church, just like a lignum-vitæ bowl!

The Saints!—the Pharisees, whose beadle stands  
Beside a stern coercive kirk.  
A piece of human mason-work,  
Calling all sermons contrabands,  
In that great Temple that's not made with hands.  
Thrice blessed, rather, is the man, with whom  
The gracious prodigality of nature,  
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the bloom,  
The bounteous providence in ev'ry feature,  
Recall the good Creator to his creature,  
Making all earth a fane, all heav'n its dome!  
To his tuned spirit the wild heather-bells  
Ring Sabbath knells;  
The jubilate of the soaring lark  
Is chant of clerk;  
For choir, the thrush and the gregarious linnet;  
The sod's a cushion for his pious want;  
And, consecrated by the heav'n within it,  
The sky-blue pool, a font.

Each cloud-capped mountain is a holy altar;  
An organ breathes in every grove;  
And the full heart's a Psalter,  
Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love!

Sufficiently by stern necessitarians  
Poor Nature, with her face begrimed by dust,  
Is stoked, coked, smoked, and almost choked; but  
must  
Religion have its own Utilitarians,  
Labell'd with evangelical phylacteries,  
To make the road to heav'n a railway trust,  
And churches—that's the naked fact—mere factories?

Oh! simply open wide the Temple door,  
And let the solemn, swelling, organ greet,  
With Voluntaries meet,  
The willing advent of the rich and poor!  
And while to God the loud Hosannas soar,  
With rich vibrations from the vocal throng—  
From quiet shades that to the woods belong,  
And brooks with music of their own,  
Voices may come to swell the choral song  
With notes of praise they learned in musings lone.

How strange it is while on all vital questions,  
That occupy the House and public mind,  
We always meet with some humane suggestions  
Of gentle measures of a healing kind,  
Instead of harsh severity and vigour,  
The Saint alone his preference retains  
For bills of penalties and pains,  
And marks his narrow code with legal rigor!  
Why shun, as worthless of affiliation,  
What men of all political persuasion  
Extol—and even use upon occasion—  
That Christian principle, Conciliation?  
But possibly the men who make such fuss  
With Sunday pippins and old Trots infirm,  
Attach some other meaning to the term,  
As thus:

One market morning, in my usual rambles,  
Passing along Whitechapel's ancient shambles,  
Where meat was hung in many a joint and quarter,  
I had to halt awhile, like other folks,  
To let a killing butcher coax  
A score of lambs and fatted sheep to slaughter.

A sturdy man he looke'd to fell an ox,  
Bull-fronted, ruddy, with a formal streak  
Of well-greased hair down either cheek,  
As if he dee-dash-dee'd some other flocks  
Beside those woolly-headed stubborn blocks  
That stood before him, in vexatious huddle—  
Poor little lambs, with bleating wethers group'd,  
While, now and then, a thirsty creature stoop'd  
And meekly snuff'd, but did not taste the puddle.

Fierce bark'd the dog, and many a blow was dealt,  
That loin, and chump, and scrag and saddle felt,  
Yet still, that fatal step they all declined it,—  
And shunn'd the tainted door as if they smelt  
Onions, mint sauce, and lemon juice behind it.

At last there came a pause of brutal force,  
The cur was silent, for his jaws were full  
Of tangled locks of tarry wool,  
The man had whoop'd and holloed till dead hoarse.  
The time was ripe for mild expostulation,  
And thus it stammer'd from a stander-by—  
'Zounds!—my good fellow,—it quite makes me—why,  
It really—my dear fellow—do just try  
Conciliation!'

Stringing his nerves like flint,  
The sturdy butcher seized upon the hint,—  
At least he seized upon the foremost wether,—  
And hugg'd and lugg'd and tugg'd him neck and  
crop  
Just nolens volens thro' the open shop—  
If tails come off he didn't care a feather,—  
Then walking to the door and smiling grim,  
He rubb'd his forehead and his sleeve together—



'There!—I have conciliated him!  
Again—good-humouredly to end our quarrel—  
(Good humour should prevail!)  
I'll fit you with a tale,  
Whereto is tied a moral.

Once on a time a certain English lass  
Was seized with symptoms of such deep decline,  
Cough, hectic flushes, ev'ry evil sign,  
That, as their wont is at such desperate pass,  
The Doctors gave her over—to an ass.  
Accordingly, the grisly Shade to milk,  
Each morn the patient quaff'd a frothy bowl  
Of asinine new milk,  
Robbing a shaggy suckling of a foal  
Which got proportionably spare and skinny—  
Meanwhile the neighbours cried 'Poor Mary Ann!  
She can't get over it! she never can!  
When lo! to prove each prophet was a ninny  
The one that died was the poor wet-nurse Jenny.

To aggravate the case,  
There were but two grown donkeys in the place;  
And most unluckily for Eve's sick daughter,  
The other long ear'd creature was a male,  
Who never in his life had given a pail  
Of milk, or even chalk and water.  
No matter: at the usual hour of eight  
Down trots a donkey to the wicket-gate,  
With Mister Simon Gubbins on his back,—  
'Your sarvant, Miss',—a worry spring-like day,—  
Bad time for hasses tho'! good lack! good lack!  
Jenny be dead, Miss,—but I've brought ye Jack,  
He doesn't give no milk—but he can bray.  
So runs the story,  
And, in vain self-glory,  
Some Saints would sneer at Gubbins for his blindness—  
But what the better are their pious saws  
To ailing souls, than dry hee-haws,  
Without the milk of human kindness?



# Ode To The Great Unknown

'O breathe not his name!'

—Moore.

I

Thou Great Unknown!

I do not mean Eternity, nor Death,

That vast incog!

For I suppose thou hast a living breath,

Howbeit we know not from whose lungs 'tis blown,

Thou man of fog!

Parent of many children—child of none!

Nobody's son!

Nobody's daughter—but a parent still!

Still but an ostrich parent of a batch

Of orphan eggs,—left to the world to hatch

Superlative Nil!

A vox and nothing more,—yet not Vauxhall;

A head in papers, yet without a curl!

Not the Invisible Girl!

No hand—but a handwriting on a wall—

A popular nonentity,

Still call'd the same,—without identity!

A lark, heard out of sight,—

A nothing shin'd upon,—invisibly bright,

'Dark with excess of light!'

Constable's literary John-a-nokes—

The real Scottish wizard—and not which,

Nobody—in a niche;

Every one's hoax!

Maybe Sir Walter Scott—

Perhaps not!

Why dost thou so conceal and puzzle curious folks?

II

Thou,—whom the second-sighted never saw,

The Master Fiction of fictitious history!

Chief Nong-tong-paw!  
No mister in the world—and yet all mystery!  
The 'tricksy spirit' of a Scotch Cock Lane—  
A novel Junius puzzling the world's brain—  
A man of Magic—yet no talisman!  
A man of clair obscure—not he o' the moon!  
A star—at noon.  
A non-descriptus in a caravan,  
A private—of no corps—a northern light  
In a dark lantern,—Bogie in a crape—  
A figure—but no shape;  
A vizor—and no knight;  
The real abstract hero of the age;  
The staple Stranger of the stage;  
A Some One made in every man's presumption,  
Frankenstein's monster—but instinct with gumption;  
Another strange state captive in the north,  
Constable-guarded in an iron mask—  
Still let me ask,  
Hast thou no silver platter,  
No door-plate, or no card—or some such matter,  
To scrawl a name upon, and then cast forth?

### III

Thou Scottish Barmecide, feeding the hunger  
Of Curiosity with airy gammon!  
Thou mystery-monger,  
Dealing it out like middle cut of salmon,  
That people buy and can't make head or tail of it;  
(Howbeit that puzzle never hurts the sale of it  
Thou chief of authors mystic and abstractical,  
That lay their proper bodies on the shelf—  
Keeping thyself so truly to thyself,  
Thou Zimmerman made practical!  
Thou secret fountain of a Scottish style,  
That, like the Nile,  
Hideth its source wherever it is bred,  
But still keeps disemboquing  
(Not disembroquing)  
Thro' such broad sandy mouths without a head!

Thou disembodied author—not yet dead,—  
The whole world's literary Absentee!  
Ah! wherefore hast thou fled,  
Thou learned Nemo—wise to a degree,  
Anonymous LL.D.!

#### IV

Thou nameless captain of the nameless gang  
That do—and inquests cannot say who did it!  
Wert thou at Mrs. Donatty's death-pang?  
Hast thou made gravy of Weare's watch—or hid it?  
Hast thou a Blue-Beard chamber? Heaven forbid it!  
I should be very loth to see thee hang!  
I hope thou hast an alibi well plann'd,  
An innocent, altho' an ink-black hand.  
Tho' that hast newly turn'd thy private bolt on  
The curiosity of all invaders—  
I hope thou art merely closeted with Colton,  
Who knows a little of the Holy Land,  
Writing thy next new novel—The Crusaders!

#### V

Perhaps thou wert even born  
To be Unknown.—Perhaps hung, some foggy morn,  
At Captain Coram's charitable wicket,  
Pinn'd to a ticket  
That Fate had made illegible, foreseeing  
The future great unmentionable being.—  
Perhaps thou hast ridden  
A scholar poor on St. Augustine's Back,  
Like Chatterton, and found a dusty pack  
Of Rowley novels in an old chest hidden;  
A little hoard of clever simulation,  
That took the town—and Constable has bidden  
Some hundred pounds for a continuation—  
To keep and clothe thee in genteel starvation.

## VI

I like thy Waverley—first of thy breeding;  
I like its modest 'sixty years ago,'  
As if it was not meant for ages' reading.  
I don't like Ivanhoe,  
Tho' Dymoke does—it makes him think of clattering  
In iron overalls before the king  
Secure from battering, to ladies flattering,  
Tuning, his challenge to the gauntlet's ring—  
Oh better far than all that anvil clang  
It was to hear thee touch the famous string  
Of Robin Hood's tough bow and make it twang,  
Rousing him up, all verdant, with his clan,  
Like Sagittarian Pan!

## VII

I like Guy Mannering—but not that sham son  
Of Brown:—I like that literary Sampson,  
Nine-tenths a Dyer, with a smack of Porson.  
I like Dirk Hatteraick, that rough sea Orson  
That slew the Gauger;  
And Dandie Dinmont, like old Ursa Major;  
And Merrilies, young Bertram's old defender,  
That Scottish Witch of Endor,  
That doom'd thy fame. She was the Witch, I take it,  
To tell a great man's fortune—or to make it!

## VIII

I like thy Antiquary. With his fit on,  
He makes me think of Mr. Britton,  
I like thy Antiquary. With Ins fit on,  
It makes me think  
Who has—or had—within his garden wall,  
A miniature Stone Henge, so very small  
That sparrows find it difficult to sit on;  
And Dousterwivel, like Poyais' M'Gregor;  
And Edie Ochiltree, that old Blue Beggar,

Painted so cleverly,  
I think thou surely knowest Mrs. Beverly!  
I like thy Barber—him that fir'd the Beacon—  
But that's a tender subject now to speak on!

## IX

I like long-arm'd Rob Roy.—His very charms  
Fashion'd him for renown!—In sad sincerity,  
The man that robs or writes must have long arms,  
If he's to hand his deeds down to posterity!  
Witness Miss Biffin's posthumous prosperity,  
Her poor brown crumpled mummy (nothing more)  
Bearing the name she bore,  
A thing Time's tooth is tempted to destroy!  
But Roys can never die—why else, in verity,  
Is Paris echoing with 'Vive le Roy'!  
Aye, Rob shall live again, and deathless Di  
Vernon, of course, shall often live again—  
Whilst there's a stone in Newgate, or a chain,  
Who can pass by  
Nor feel the Thief's in prison and at hand?  
There be Old Bailey Jarvies on the stand!

## X

I like thy Landlord's Tales!—I like that Idol  
Of love and Lammermoor—the blue-eyed maid  
That led to church the mounted cavalcade,  
And then pull'd up with such a bloody bridal!  
Throwing equestrian Hymen on his haunches—  
like the family (not silver) branches  
That hold the tapers  
To light the serious legend of Montrose.—  
I like M'Aulay's second-sighted vapors,  
As if he could not walk or talk alone,  
Without the devil—or the Great Unknown,—  
Dalgetty is the dearest of Ducrows!

## XI

I like St. Leonard's Lily—drench'd with dew!  
I like thy Vision of the Covenanters,  
That bloody-minded Grahame shot and slew.  
I like the battle lost and won;  
The hurly-burlys bravely done,  
The warlike gallop and the warlike canters!  
I like that girded chieftain of the ranters,  
Ready to preach down heathens, or to grapple,  
With one eye on his sword,  
And one upon the Word,—  
How he would cram the Caledonian Chapel!  
I like stern Claverhouse, though he cloth dapple  
His raven steed with blood of many a corse—  
I like dear Mrs. Headrigg, that unravels  
Her texts of scripture on a trotting horse—  
She is so like Rae Wilson when he travels!

## XII

I like thy Kenilworth—but I'm not going  
To take a Retrospective Re-Review  
Of all thy dainty novels—merely showing  
The old familiar faces of a few,  
The question to renew,  
How thou canst leave such deeds without a name,  
Forego the unclaim'd Dividends of fame,  
Forego the smiles of literary houris—  
Mid-Lothian's trump, and Fife's shrill note of praise,  
And all the Carse of Gowrie's,  
When thou might'st have thy statue in Cromarty—  
Or see thy image on Italian trays,  
Betwixt Queen Caroline and Buonaparté,  
Be painted by the Titian of R.A's,  
Or vie in signboards with the Royal Guelph!  
P'rhaps have thy bust set cheek by jowl with Homer's,  
P'rhaps send out plaster proxies of thyself  
To other Englands with Australian roamers—  
Mayhap, in Literary Owhyhee  
Displace the native wooden gods, or be



The china-Lar of a Canadian shelf!

XIII

It is not modesty that bids thee hide—  
She never wastes her blushes out of sight:  
It is not to invite  
The world's decision, for thy fame is tried,—  
And thy fair deeds are scatter'd far and wide,  
Even royal heads are with thy readers reckon'd,—  
From men in trencher caps to trencher scholars  
In crimson collars,  
And learned serjeants in the Forty-Second!  
Whither by land or sea art thou not beckon'd?  
Mayhap exported from the Frith of Forth,  
Defying distance and its dim control;  
Perhaps read about Stromness, and reckon'd worth  
A brace of Miltons for capacious soul—  
Perhaps studied in the whalers, further north,  
And set above ten Shakspeares near the pole!

XIV

Oh, when thou writest by Aladdin's lamp,  
With such a giant genius at command,  
Forever at thy stamp,  
To fill thy treasury from Fairy Land,  
When haply thou might'st ask the pearly hand  
Of some great British Vizier's eldest daughter,  
Tho' princes sought her,  
And lead her in procession hymeneal,  
Oh, why dost thou remain a Beau Ideal!  
Why stay, a ghost, on the Lethean Wharf,  
Envelop'd in Scotch mist and gloomy fogs?  
Why, but because thou art some puny Dwarf,  
Some hopeless Imp, like Biquet with the Tuft,  
Fearing, for all thy wit, to be rebuff'd,  
Or bullied by our great reviewing Gogs?

XV

What in this masquing age  
Maketh Unknowns so many and so shy?  
What but the critic's page?  
One hath a cast, he hides from the world's eye;  
Another hath a wen,—he won't show where;  
A third has sandy hair,  
A hunch upon his back, or legs awry,  
Things for a vile reviewer to espy!  
Another hath a mangel-wurzel nose,—  
Finally, this is dimpled,  
Like a pale crumpet face, or that is pimped,  
Things for a monthly critic to expose—  
Nay, what is thy own case—that being small,  
Thou choosest to be nobody at all!

XVI

Well, thou art prudent, with such puny bones—  
E'en like Elshender, the mysterious elf,  
That shadowy revelation of thyself—  
To build thee a small hut of haunted stones—  
For certainly the first pernicious man  
That ever saw thee, would quickly draw thee  
In some vile literary caravan—  
Shown for a shilling  
Would be thy killing,  
Think of Crachami's miserable span!  
No tinier frame the tiny spark could dwell in  
Than there it fell in—  
But when she felt herself a show, she tried  
To shrink from the world's eye, poor dwarf! and died!

XVII

O since it was thy fortune to be born  
A dwarf on some Scotch Inch, and then to flinch  
From all the Gog-like jostle of great men,  
Still with thy small crow pen

Amuse and charm thy lonely hours forlorn—  
Still Scottish story daintily adorn,  
Be still a shade—and when this age is fled,  
When we poor sons and daughters of reality  
Are in our graves forgotten and quite dead,  
And Time destroys our mottoes of morality—  
The lithographic hand of Old Mortality  
Shall still restore thy emblem on the stone,  
A featureless death's head,  
And rob Oblivion ev'n of the Unknown!

Thomas Hood

# Ode To The Moon

## I

Mother of light! how fairly dost thou go  
Over those hoary crests, divinely led!—  
Art thou that huntress of the silver bow,  
Fabled of old? Or rather dost thou tread  
Those cloudy summits thence to gaze below,  
Like the wild Chamois from her Alpine snow,  
Where hunter never climb'd,—secure from dread?  
How many antique fancies have I read  
Of that mild presence! and how many wrought!  
Wondrous and bright,  
Upon the silver light,  
Chasing fair figures with the artist, Thought!

## II

What art thou like?—Sometimes I see thee ride  
A far-bound galley on its perilous way,  
Whilst breezy waves toss up their silvery spray;—  
Sometimes behold thee glide,  
Cluster'd by all thy family of stars,  
Like a lone widow, through the welkin wide,  
Whose pallid cheek the midnight sorrow mars;—  
Sometimes I watch thee on from steep to steep,  
Timidly lighted by thy vestal torch,  
Till in some Latmian cave I see thee creep,  
To catch the young Endymion asleep,—  
Leaving thy splendor at the jagged porch!—

## III

Oh, thou art beautiful, howe'er it be!  
Huntress, or Dian, or whatever named;  
And he, the veriest Pagan, that first framed  
A silver idol, and ne'er worshipp'd thee!—  
It is too late—or thou should'st have my knee—

Too late now for the old Ephesian vows,  
And not divine the crescent on thy brows!—  
Yet, call thee nothing but the mere mild Moon,  
Behind those chestnut boughs,  
Casting their dappled shadows at my feet;  
I will be grateful for that simple boon,  
In many a thoughtful verse and anthem sweet,  
And bless thy dainty face when'er we meet.

#### IV

In nights far gone,—ay, far away and dead,—  
Before Care-fretted, with a lidless eye,—  
I was thy wooer on my little bed,  
Letting the early hours of rest go by,  
To see thee flood the heaven with milky light,  
And feed thy snow-white swans, before I slept;  
For thou wert then purveyor of my dreams,—  
Thou wert the fairies' armourer, that kept  
Their burnish'd helms, and crowns, and corslets bright,  
Their spears, and glittering mails;  
And ever thou didst spill in winding streams  
Sparkles and midnight gleams,  
For fishes to new gloss their ardent scales!—

#### V

Why sighs?—why creeping tears?—why clasped hands?—  
Is it to count the boy's expended dow'r?  
That fairies since have broke their gifted wands?  
That young Delight, like any o'erblown flower,  
Gave, one by one, its sweet leaves to the ground?—  
Why then, fair Moon, for all thou mark'st no hour,  
Thou art a sadder dial to old Time  
Than ever I have found  
On sunny garden-plot, or moss-grown tow'r,  
Motto'd with stern and melancholy rhyme.

#### VI

Why should I grieve for this?—Oh I must yearn  
Whilst Time, conspirator with Memory,  
Keeps his cold ashes in an ancient urn,  
Richly emboss'd with childhood's revelry,  
With leaves and cluster'd fruits, and flow'rs eterne,—  
(Eternal to the world, though not to me),  
Aye there will those brave sports and blossoms be,  
The deathless wreath, and undecay'd festoon,  
When I am hearsed within,—  
Less than the pallid primrose to the Moon,  
That now she watches through a vapor thin.

## VII

So let it be:—Before I lived to sigh,  
Thou wert in Avon, and a thousand rills,  
Beautiful Orb! and so, whene'er I lie  
Trodden, thou wilt be gazing from thy hills.  
Blest be thy loving light, where'er it spills,  
And bless'd thy fair face, O Mother mild!  
Still shine, the soul of rivers as they run,  
Still lend thy lonely lamp to lovers fond,  
And blend their plighted shadows into one:—  
Still smile at even on the bedded child,  
And close his eyelids with thy silver wand!

Thomas Hood

# Ode To W. Kitchener, M.D.

Author of

The Cook's Oracle, Observations on Vocal Music, The Art of Invigorating and Prolonging Life, Practical Observations on Telescopes, Opera-Glasses, and Spectacles, The Housekeeper's Ledger

and

The Pleasure of Making a Will.

'I rule the roast, as Milton says!'

—Caleb Quotem.

Oh! multifarious man!

Thou Wondrous, Admirable Kitchen Crichton!

Born to enlighten

The laws of Optics, Peptics, Music, Cooking—

Master of the Piano—and the Pan—

As busy with the kitchen as the skies!

Now looking

At some rich stew thro' Galileo's eyes,—

Or boiling eggs—timed to a metronome—

As much at home

In spectacles as in mere isinglass—

In the art of frying brown—as a digression

On music and poetical expression,

Whereas, how few of all our cooks, alas!

Could tell Calliope from 'Callipee!'

How few there be

Could leave the lowest for the highest stories, (Observatories,)

And turn, like thee, Diana's calculator,

However cook's synonymous with Kater!

Alas! still let me say,

How few could lay

The carving knife beside the tuning fork,

Like the proverbial Jack ready for any work!

II

Oh, to behold thy features in thy book!

Thy proper head and shoulders in a plate,  
How it would look!  
With one rais'd eye watching the dial's date,  
And one upon the roast, gently cast down—  
Thy chops—done nicely brown—  
The garnish'd brow—with 'a few leaves of bay'—  
The hair—'done Wiggy's way!'  
And still one studious finger near thy brains,  
As if thou wert just come  
From editing some  
New soup—or hashing Dibdin's cold remains;  
Or, Orpheus-like,—fresh from thy dying strains  
Of music,—Epping luxuries of sound,  
As Milton says, 'in many a bout  
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,'  
Whilst all thy tame stuff'd leopards listen'd round!

### III

Oh, rather thy whole proper length reveal,  
Standing like Fortune,—on the jack—thy wheel.  
(Thou art, like Fortune, full of chops and changes,  
Thou hast a fillet too before thine eye!)  
Scanning our kitchen, and our vocal ranges,  
As tho' it were the same to sing or fry—  
Nay, so it is—hear how Miss Paton's throat  
Makes 'fritters' of a note!  
And how Tom Cook (Fryer and Singer born  
By name and nature) oh! how night and morn  
He for the nicest public taste doth dish up  
The good things from that Pan of music, Bishop!  
And is not reading near akin to feeding,  
Or why should Oxford Sausages be fit  
Receptacles for wit?  
Or why should Cambridge put its little, smart,  
Minc'd brains into a Tart?  
Nay, then, thou wert but wise to frame receipts,  
Book-treats,  
Equally to instruct the Cook and cram her—  
Receipts to be devour'd, as well as read,  
The Culinary Art in gingerbread—



## The Kitchen's Eaten Grammar!

### IV

Oh, very pleasant is thy motley page—  
Aye, very pleasant in its chatty vein—  
So—in a kitchen—would have talk'd Montaigne,  
That merry Gascon—humorist, and sage!  
Let slender minds with single themes engage,  
Like Mr. Bowles with his eternal Pope,—  
Or Haydon on perpetual Haydon,—or  
Hume on 'Twice three make four,'  
Or Lovelass upon Wills,—Thou goest on  
Plaiting ten topics, like Tate Wilkinson!  
Thy brain is like a rich Kaleidoscope,  
Stuff'd with a brilliant medley of odd bits,  
And ever shifting on from change to change,  
Saucepans—old Songs—Pills—Spectacles—and Spits!  
Thy range is wider than a Rumford Range!  
Thy grasp a miracle!—till I recall  
Th' indubitable cause of thy variety—  
Thou art, of course, th' Epitome of all  
That spying—frying—singing—mix'd Society  
Of Scientific Friends, who used to meet  
Welch Rabbits—and thyself—in Warren Street!

### V

Oh, hast thou still those Conversazioni,  
Where learned visitors discoursed—and fed?  
There came Belzoni,  
Fresh from the ashes of Egyptian dead—  
And gentle Poki—and that Royal Pair,  
Of whom thou didst declare—  
'Thanks to the greatest Cooke we ever read—  
They were—what Sandwiches should be—half bred'!  
There fam'd M'Adam from his manual toil  
Relax'd—and freely own'd he took thy hints  
On 'making Broth with Flints'—  
There Parry came, and show'd thee polar oil

For melted butter—Combe with his medullary  
Notions about the Skullery,  
And Mr. Poole, too partial to a broil—  
There witty Rogers came, that punning elf!  
Who used to swear thy book  
Would really look  
A Delphic 'Oracle,' if laid on Delf—  
There, once a month, came Campbell and discuss'd  
His own—and thy own—'Magazine of Taste'—  
There Wilberforce the Just  
Came, in his old black suit, till once he trac'd  
Thy sly advice to Poachers of Black Folks,  
That 'do not break their yolks'—  
Which huff'd him home, in grave disgust and haste!

## VI

There came John Clare, the poet, nor forbore  
Thy Patties—thou wert hand-and-glove with Moore,  
Who call'd thee 'Kitchen Addison'—for why?  
Thou givest rules for Health and Peptic Pills,  
Forms for made dishes, and receipts for Wills,  
'Teaching us how to live and how to die!'  
There came thy Cousin-Cook, good Mrs. Fry—  
There Trench, the Thames Projector, first brought on  
His sine Quay non,—  
There Martin would drop in on Monday eves,  
Or Fridays, from the pens, and raise his breath  
'Gainst cattle days and death,—  
Answer'd by Mellish, feeder of fat beeves,  
Who swore that Frenchmen never could be eager  
For fighting on soup meagre—  
'And yet, (as thou would'st add,) the French have seen  
A Marshall Tureen'!

## VII

Great was thy Evening Cluster!—often grac'd  
With Dollond—Burgess—and Sir Humphry Davy!  
'Twas there M'Dermot first inclin'd to Taste,—

There Colborn learn'd the art of making paste  
 For puffs—and Accum analyzed a gravy.  
 Colman—the Cutter of Coleman Street, 'tis said  
 Came there,—and Parkins with his Ex-wise-head,  
 (His claim to letters)—Kater, too, the Moon's  
 Crony,—and Graham, lofty on balloons,—  
 There Croly stalk'd with holy humor heated,  
 Who wrote a light-horse play, which Yates completed—  
 And Lady Morgan, that grinding organ,  
 And Brasbridge telling anecdotes of spoons,—  
 Madame Valbrèque thrice honor'd thee, and came  
 With great Rossini, his own bow and fiddle,—  
 The Dibdins,—Tom, Charles, Frognall,—came with tuns  
 Of poor old books, old puns!  
 And even Irving spar'd a night from fame,—  
 And talk'd—till thou didst stop him in the middle,  
 To serve round Tewah-diddle!

## VIII

Then all the guests rose up, and sighed good-bye!  
 So let them:—thou thyself art still a Host!  
 Dibdin—Cornaro—Newton—Mrs. Fry!  
 Mrs. Glasse, Mr. Spec!—Lovell—and Weber,  
 Matthews in Quot'em—Moore's fire-worshipping Gheber—  
 Thrice-worthy Worthy, seem by thee engross'd!  
 Howbeit the Peptic Cook still rules the roast,  
 Potent to hush all ventriloquial snarling,—  
 And ease the bosom pangs of indigestion!  
 Thou art, sans question,  
 The Corporation's love its Doctor Darling!  
 Look at the Civic Palate—nay, the Bed  
 Which set dear Mrs. Opie on supplying  
 Illustrations of Lying!  
 Ninety square feet of down from heel to head  
 It measured, and I dread  
 Was haunted by a terrible night Mare,  
 A monstrous burthen on the corporation!—  
 Look at the Bill of Fare for one day's share,  
 Sea-turtles by the score—Oxen by droves,  
 Geese, turkeys, by the flock—fishes and loaves

Countless, as when the Lilliputian nation  
Was making up the huge man-mountain's ration!

## IX

Oh! worthy Doctor! surely thou hast driven  
The squatting Demon from great Garratt's breast—  
(His honor seems to rest!—)  
And what is thy reward?—Hath London given  
Thee public thanks for thy important service?  
Alas! not even  
The tokens it bestowed on Howe and Jervis!—  
Yet could I speak as Orators should speak  
Before the worshipful the Common Council  
(Utter my bold bad grammar and pronounce ill,)  
Thou should'st not miss thy Freedom, for a week,  
Richly engross'd on vellum:—Reason urges  
That he who rules our cookery—that he  
Who edits soups and gravies, ought to be  
A Citizen, where sauce can make a Burgess!

Thomas Hood

# On Mistress Nicely, A Pattern For Housekeepers

She was a woman peerless in her station,  
With household virtues wedded to her name;  
Spotless in linen, grass-bleached in her fame;  
And pure and clear-starched in her conversation;  
Thence in my Castle of Imagination  
She dwells for evermore, the dainty dame,  
To keep all airy draperies from shame  
And all dream furnitures in preservation:

There walketh she with keys quite silver bright,  
In perfect hose and shoes of seemly black,  
Apron and stomacher of lily white,  
And decent order follows in her track:  
The burnished plate grows lustrous in her sight,  
And polished floors and tables shine her back.

Thomas Hood

## Past And Present

I remember, I remember  
The house where I was born,  
The little window where the sun  
Came peeping in at morn;  
He never came a wink too soon  
Nor bought too long a day;  
But now, I often wish the night  
Had borne my breath away.

I remember, I remember  
The roses, red and white,  
The violets, and the lily-cups--  
Those flowers made of light!  
The lilacs where the robin built,  
And where my brother set  
The laburnum on his birthday,--  
The tree is living yet!

I remember, I remember  
Where I was used to swing,  
And thought the air must rush as fresh  
To swallows on the wing;  
My spirit flew in feathers then  
That is so heavy now,  
And summer pools could hardly cool  
The fever on my brow.

I remember, I remember  
The fir trees dark and high;  
I used to think their slender tops  
Were close against the sky:  
It was a childish ignorance,  
But now 'tis little joy  
To know I'm farther off from Heaven  
Than when I was a boy.

Thomas Hood

# Ruth

Ruth

She stood breast-high amid the corn,  
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,  
Like the sweetheart of the sun,  
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,  
Deeply ripen'd;—such a blush  
In the midst of brown was born,  
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,  
Which were blackest none could tell,  
But long lashes veil'd a light,  
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,  
Made her tressy forehead dim;  
Thus she stood amid the stooks,  
Praising God with sweetest looks:—

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,  
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean,  
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,  
Share my harvest and my home.

Thomas Hood

# Serenade

Ah, sweet, thou little knowest how  
I wake and passionate watches keep;  
And yet while I address thee now,  
Methinks thou smilest in thy sleep.  
'Tis sweet enough to make me weep,  
That tender thought of love and thee,  
That while the world is hush'd so deep,  
Thy soul's perhaps awake to me!  
Sleep on, sleep on, sweet bride of sleep!  
With golden visions of thy dower,  
While I this midnight vigil keep,  
And bless thee in thy silent bower;  
To me 'tis sweeter than the power  
Of sleep, and fairy dreams unfurl'd,  
That I alone, at this still hour,  
In patient love outwatch the world.

Thomas Hood



## She's Up And Gone, The Graceless Girl

She's up and gone, the graceless girl,  
And robb'd my failing years!  
My blood before was thin and cold  
But now 'tis turn'd to tears;—  
My shadow falls upon my grave,  
So near the brink I stand,  
She might have stay'd a little yet,  
And led me by the hand!  
Aye, call her on the barren moor,  
And call her on the hill:  
'Tis nothing but the heron's cry,  
And plover's answer shrill;  
My child is flown on wilder wings  
Than they have ever spread,  
And I may even walk a waste  
That widen'd when she fled.  
Full many a thankless child has been,  
But never one like mine;  
Her meat was served on plates of gold,  
Her drink was rosy wine;  
But now she'll share the robin's food,  
And sup the common rill,  
Before her feet will turn again  
To meet her father's will!

Thomas Hood

# Sigh On, Sad Heart, For Love's Eclipse

Sigh on, sad heart, for Love's eclipse  
And Beauty's fairest queen,  
Though 'tis not for my peasant lips  
To soil her name between:  
A king might lay his sceptre down,  
But I am poor and nought,  
The brow should wear a golden crown  
That wears her in its thought.  
The diamonds glancing in her hair,  
Whose sudden beams surprise,  
Might bid such humble hopes beware  
The glancing of her eyes;  
Yet looking once, I look'd too long,  
And if my love is sin,  
Death follows on the heels of wrong,  
And kills the crime within.  
Her dress seem'd wove of lily leaves,  
It was so pure and fine,  
O lofty wears, and lowly weaves,—  
But hodden-gray is mine;  
And homely hose must step apart,  
Where garter'd princes stand,  
But may he wear my love at heart  
That wins her lily hand!  
Alas! there's far from russet frieze  
To silks and satin gowns,  
But I doubt if God made like degrees  
In courtly hearts and clowns.  
My father wrong'd a maiden's mirth,  
And brought her cheeks to blame,  
And all that's lordly of my birth  
Is my reproach and shame!  
'Tis vain to weep,—'tis vain to sigh,  
'Tis vain, this idle speech,  
For where her happy pearls do lie,  
My tears may never reach;  
Yet when I'm gone, e'en lofty pride  
May say, of what has been,  
His love was nobly born and died,

Though all the rest was mean!  
My speech is rude,—but speech is weak  
Such love as mine to tell,  
Yet had I words, I dare not speak,  
So, Lady, fare thee well;  
I will not wish thy better state  
Was one of low degree,  
But I must weep that partial fate  
Made such a churl of me.

Thomas Hood

# Silence

Silence

There is a silence where hath been no sound,  
    There is a silence where no sound may be,  
    In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,  
Or in wide desert where no life is found,  
Which hath been mute, and still must sleep profound;  
    No voice is hush'd—no life treads silently,  
    But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,  
That never spoke, over the idle ground:  
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls  
    Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,  
Though the dun fox or wild hyæna calls,  
    And owls, that flit continually between,  
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan—  
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.

Thomas Hood

## Sonnet (Written In A Volume Of Shakespeare)

How bravely Autumn paints upon the sky  
The gorgeous fame of Summer which is fled!  
Hues of all flow'rs, that in their ashes lie,  
Trophied in that fair light whereon they fed,—  
Tulip, and hyacinth, and sweet rose red,—  
Like exhalations from the leafy mould,  
Look here how honor glorifies the dead,  
And warms their scutcheons with a glance of gold!—  
Such is the memory of poets old,  
Who on Parnassus' hill have bloom'd elate;  
Now they are laid under their marbles cold,  
And turned to clay, whereof they were create;  
But god Apollo hath them all enroll'd,  
And blazon'd on the very clouds of Fate!

Thomas Hood

## Sonnet For The 14th Of February

No popular respect will I omit  
To do thee honor on this happy day,  
When every loyal lover tasks his wit  
His simple truth in studious rhymes to pay,  
And to his mistress dear his hopes convey.  
Rather thou knowest I would still outrun  
All calendars with Love's,—whose date alway  
Thy bright eyes govern better than the Sun,—  
For with thy favor was my life begun;  
And still I reckon on from smiles to smiles,  
And not by summers, for I thrive on none  
But those thy cheerful countenance complies:  
Oh! if it be to choose and call thee mine,  
Love, thou art every day my Valentine.

Thomas Hood

## Sonnet On Receiving A Gift

Look how the golden ocean shines above  
Its pebbly stones, and magnifies their girth;  
So does the bright and blessed light of Love  
Its own things glorify, and raise their worth.  
As weeds seem flowers beneath the flattering brine,  
And stones like gems, and gems as gems indeed,  
Ev'n so our tokens shine; nay, they outshine  
Pebbles and pearls, and gems and coral weed;  
For where be ocean waves but half so clear,  
So calmly constant, and so kindly warm,  
As Love's most mild and glowing atmosphere,  
That hath no dregs to be upturn'd by storm?  
Thus, sweet, thy gracious gifts are gifts of price,  
And more than gold to doting Avarice.

Thomas Hood

## Sonnet To My Wife

The curse of Adam, the old curse of all,  
Though I inherit in this feverish life  
Of worldly toil, vain wishes, and hard strife,  
And fruitless thought, in Care's eternal thrall,  
Yet more sweet honey than of bitter gall  
I taste, through thee, my Eve, my sweet wife.  
Then what was Man's lost Paradise!—how rife  
Of bliss, since love is with him in his fall!  
Such as our own pure passion still might frame,  
Of this fair earth, and its delightful bow'rs,  
If no fell sorrow, like the serpent, came  
To trail its venom o'er the sweetest flow'rs;—  
But oh! as many and such tears are ours,  
As only should be shed for guilt and shame!

Thomas Hood



## Sonnet To Ocean

Shall I rebuke thee, Ocean, my old love,  
That once, in rage, with the wild winds at strife,  
Thou darest menace my unit of a life,  
Sending my clay below, my soul above,  
Whilst roar'd thy waves, like lions when they rove  
By night, and bound upon their prey by stealth!  
Yet didst thou n'er restore my fainting health?—  
Didst thou ne'er murmur gently like the dove?  
Nay, dost thou not against my own dear shore  
Full break, last link between my land and me?—  
My absent friends talk in thy very roar,  
In thy waves' beat their kindly pulse I see,  
And, if I must not see my England more,  
Next to her soil, my grave be found in thee!

Thomas Hood

## Sonnet -Written In Keats

I saw pale Dian, sitting by the brink  
Of silver falls, the overflow of fountains  
From cloudy steeps; and I grew sad to think  
Endymion's foot was silent on those mountains.  
And he but a hush'd name, that Silence keeps  
In dear remembrance,—lonely, and forlorn,  
Singing it to herself until she weeps  
Tears, that perchance still glisten in the morn:—  
And as I mused, in dull imaginings,  
There came a flash of garments, and I knew  
The awful Muse by her harmonious wings  
Charming the air to music as she flew—  
Anon there rose an echo through the vale  
Gave back Enydmiion in a dreamlike tale.

Thomas Hood

# Spring It Is Cheery

Spring it is cheery,  
Winter is dreary,  
Green leaves hang, but the brown must fly;  
When he's forsaken,  
Wither'd and shaken,  
What can an old man do but die?  
Love will not clip him,  
Maids will not lip him,  
Maud and Marian pass him by;  
Youth it is sunny,  
Age has no honey,—  
What can an old man do but die?  
June it was jolly,  
Oh for its folly!  
A dancing leg and a laughing eye;  
Youth may be silly,  
Wisdom is chilly,—  
What can an old man do but die?  
Friends, they are scanty,  
Beggars are plenty,  
If he has followers, I know why;  
Gold's in his clutches,  
(Buying him crutches!)  
What can an old man do but die?

Thomas Hood

## Still Glides The Gentle Streamlet On

Still glides the gentle streamlet on,  
With shifting current new and strange;  
The water that was here is gone,  
But those green shadows do not change.  
Serene, or ruffled by the storm,  
On present waves as on the past,  
The mirrored grave retains its form,  
The self-same trees their semblance cast.  
The hue each fleeting globule wears,  
That drop bequeaths it to the next,  
One picture still the surface bears,  
To illustrate the murmured text.  
So, love, however time may flow,  
Fresh hours pursuing those that flee  
One constant image still shall show  
My tide of life is true to thee!

Thomas Hood

# That Flesh Is Grass Is Now As Clear As Day

“That flesh is grass is now as clear as day,  
To any but the merest purblind pup,  
Death cuts it down, and then, to make her hay,  
My Lady B-- comes and rakes it up.”

Thomas Hood

# The Bridge Of Sighs

One more Unfortunate,  
Weary of breath,  
Rashly importunate,  
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashion'd so slenderly  
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments  
Clinging like cerements;  
Whilst the wave constantly  
Drips from her clothing;  
Take her up instantly,  
Loving, not loathing.

Touch her not scornfully;  
Think of her mournfully,  
Gently and humanly;  
Not of the stains of her,  
All that remains of her  
Now is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny  
Into her mutiny  
Rash and undutiful:  
Past all dishonour,  
Death has left on her  
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,  
One of Eve's family—  
Wipe those poor lips of hers  
Oozing so clammy.

Loop up her tresses  
Escaped from the comb,  
Her fair auburn tresses;

Whilst wonderment guesses  
Where was her home?

Who was her father?  
Who was her mother?  
Had she a sister?  
Had she a brother?  
Or was there a dearer one  
Still, and a nearer one  
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity  
Of Christian charity  
Under the sun!  
O, it was pitiful!  
Near a whole city full,  
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,  
Fatherly, motherly  
Feelings had changed:  
Love, by harsh evidence,  
Thrown from its eminence;  
Even God's providence  
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver  
So far in the river,  
With many a light  
From window and casement,  
From garret to basement,  
She stood, with amazement,  
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March  
Made her tremble and shiver;  
But not the dark arch,  
Or the black flowing river:  
Mad from life's history,  
Glad to death's mystery,  
Swift to be hurl'd—  
Anywhere, anywhere

Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly—  
No matter how coldly  
The rough river ran—  
Over the brink of it,  
Picture it—think of it,  
Dissolute Man!  
Lave in it, drink of it,  
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care;  
Fashion'd so slenderly,  
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly  
Stiffen too rigidly,  
Decently, kindly,  
Smooth and compose them;  
And her eyes, close them,  
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring  
Thro' muddy impurity,  
As when with the daring  
Last look of despairing  
Fix'd on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,  
Spurr'd by contumely,  
Cold inhumanity,  
Burning insanity,  
Into her rest.—  
Cross her hands humbly  
As if praying dumbly,  
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,  
Her evil behaviour,  
And leaving, with meekness,  
Her sins to her Saviour!



Thomas Hood

# The Cigar

Some sigh for this and that,  
My wishes don't go far;  
The world may wag at will,  
So I have my cigar.

Some fret themselves to death  
With Whig and Tory jar;  
I don't care which is in,  
So I have my cigar.

Sir John requests my vote,  
And so does Mr. Marr;  
I don't care how it goes,  
So I have my cigar.

Some want a German row,  
Some wish a Russian war;  
I care not. I'm at peace  
So I have my cigar.

I never see the 'Post,'  
I seldom read the 'Star;'  
The 'Globe' I scarcely heed,  
So I have my cigar.

Honors have come to men  
My juniors at the Bar;  
No matter - I can wait,  
So I have my cigar.

Ambition frets me not;  
A cab or glory's car  
Are just the same to me,  
So I have my cigar.

I worship no vain gods,  
But serve the household Lar;  
I'm sure to be at home,  
So I have my cigar.

I do not seek for fame,  
A general with a scar;  
A private let me be,  
So I have my cigar.

To have my choice among  
The toys of life's bazaar,  
The deuce may take them all  
So I have my cigar.

Some minds are often tost  
By tempests like a tar;  
I always seem in port,  
So I have my cigar.

The ardent flame of love,  
My bosom cannot char,  
I smoke but do not burn,  
So I have my cigar.

They tell me Nancy Low  
Has married Mr. R.;  
The jilt! but I can live,  
So I have my cigar.

Thomas Hood

# The Death Bed

We watch'd her breathing thro' the night,  
Her breathing soft and low,  
As in her breast the wave of life  
Kept heaving to and fro.

But when the morn came dim and sad  
And chill with early showers,  
Her quiet eyelids closed - she had  
Another morn than ours.

Thomas Hood

# The Departure Of Summer

Summer is gone on swallows' wings,  
And Earth has buried all her flowers:  
No more the lark,—the linnet—sings,  
But Silence sits in faded bowers.  
There is a shadow on the plain  
Of Winter ere he comes again,—  
There is in woods a solemn sound  
Of hollow warnings whisper'd round,  
As Echo in her deep recess  
For once had turn'd a prophetess.  
Shuddering Autumn stops to list,  
And breathes his fear in sudden sighs,  
With clouded face, and hazel eyes  
That quench themselves, and hide in mist.  
Yes, Summer's gone like pageant bright;  
Its glorious days of golden light  
Are gone—the mimic suns that quiver,  
Then melt in Time's dark-flowing river.  
Gone the sweetly-scented breeze  
That spoke in music to the trees;  
Gone—for damp and chilly breath,  
As if fresh blown o'er marble seas,  
Or newly from the lungs of Death.  
Gone its virgin roses' blushes,  
Warm as when Aurora rushes  
Freshly from the God's embrace,  
With all her shame upon her face.  
Old Time hath laid them in the mould;  
Sure he is blind as well as old,  
Whose hand relentless never spares  
Young cheeks so beauty-bright as theirs!  
Gone are the flame-eyed lovers now  
From where so blushing-blest they tarried  
Under the hawthorn's blossom-bough,  
Gone; for Day and Night are married.  
All the light of love is fled:—  
Alas! that negro breasts should hide  
The lips that were so rosy red,  
At morning and at even-tide!

Delightful Summer! then adieu  
Till thou shalt visit us anew:  
But who without regretful sigh  
Can say, adieu, and see thee fly?  
Not he that e'er hath felt thy pow'r.  
His joy expanding like a flow'r,  
That cometh after rain and snow,  
Looks up at heaven, and learns to glow:—  
Not he that fled from Babel-strife  
To the green sabbath-land of life,  
To dodge dull Care 'mid clustered trees,  
And cool his forehead in the breeze,—  
Whose spirit, weary-worn perchance,  
Shook from its wings a weight of grief,  
And perch'd upon an aspen leaf,  
For every breath to make it dance.  
Farewell!—on wings of sombre stain,  
That blacken in the last blue skies,  
Thou fly'st; but thou wilt come again  
On the gay wings of butterflies.  
Spring at thy approach will sprout  
Her new Corinthian beauties out,  
Leaf-woven homes, where twitter-words  
Will grow to songs, and eggs to birds;  
Ambitious buds shall swell to flowers,  
And April smiles to sunny hours,  
Bright days shall be, and gentle nights  
Full of soft breath and echo-lights,  
As if the god of sun-time kept  
His eyes half-open while he slept.  
Roses shall be where roses were,  
Not shadows, but reality;  
As if they never perished there,  
But slept in immortality:  
Nature shall thrill with new delight,  
And Time's relumined river run  
Warm as young blood, and dazzling bright,  
As if its source were in the sun!  
But say, hath Winter then no charms?  
Is there no joy, no gladness warms  
His aged heart? no happy wiles  
To cheat the hoary one to smiles?

Onward he comes—the cruel North  
Pours his furious whirlwind forth  
Before him—and we breathe the breath  
Of famish'd bears that howl to death.  
Onward he comes from the rocks that blanch  
O'er solid streams that never flow:  
His tears all ice, his locks all snow,  
Just crept from some huge avalanche—  
A thing half-breathing and half-warm,  
As if one spark began to glow  
Within some statue's marble form,  
Or pilgrim stiffened in the storm.  
Oh! will not Mirth's light arrows fail  
To pierce that frozen coat of mail?  
Oh! will not joy but strive in vain  
To light up those glazed eyes again?  
No! take him in, and blaze the oak,  
And pour the wine, and warm the ale;  
His sides shall shake to many a joke,  
His tongue shall thaw in many a tale,  
His eyes grow bright, his heart be gay,  
And even his palsy charm'd away.  
What heeds he then the boisterous shout  
Of angry winds that scowl without,  
Like shrewish wives at tavern door?  
What heeds he then the wild uproar  
Of billows bursting on the shore?  
In dashing waves, in howling breeze,  
There is a music that can charm him;  
When safe, and sheltered, and at ease,  
He hears the storm that cannot harm him.  
But hark! those shouts! that sudden din  
Of little hearts that laugh within.  
Oh! take him where the youngsters play,  
And he will grow as young as they!  
They come! they come! each blue-eyed Sport,  
The Twelfth-Night King and all his court—  
'Tis Mirth fresh crown'd with misletoe!  
Music with her merry fiddles,  
Joy 'on light fantastic toe,'  
Wit with all his jests and riddles,  
Singing and dancing as they go.

And Love, young Love, among the rest,  
A welcome—nor unbidden guest.  
But still for Summer dost thou grieve?  
Then read our Poets—they shall weave  
A garden of green fancies still,  
Where thy wish may rove at will.  
They have kept for after-treats  
The essences of summer sweets,  
And echoes of its songs that wind  
In endless music through the mind:  
They have stamp'd in visible traces  
The 'thoughts that breathe,' in words that shine—  
The flights of soul in sunny places—  
To greet and company with thine.  
These shall wing thee on to flow'rs—  
The past or future, that shall seem  
All the brighter in thy dream  
For blowing in such desert hours.  
The summer never shines so bright  
As thought-of in a winter's night;  
And the sweetest loveliest rose  
Is in the bud before it blows;  
The dear one of the lover's heart  
Is painted to his longing eyes,  
In charms she ne'er can realize—  
But when she turns again to part.  
Dream thou then, and bind thy brow  
With wreath of fancy roses now,  
And drink of Summer in the cup  
Where the Muse hath mix'd it up;  
The 'dance, and song, and sun-burnt mirth,'  
With the warm nectar of the earth:  
Drink! 'twill glow in every vein,  
And thou shalt dream the winter through:  
Then waken to the sun again,  
And find thy Summer Vision true!

Thomas Hood



# The Dream Fairy

A little fairy comes at night,  
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown'  
with silver spots upon her wings,  
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,  
And when a good child goes to bed  
She waves her wand from right to left  
And makes a circle round her head,

And then it dreams of pleasant things,  
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,  
And trees that bear delicious fruit,  
And bow their branches at a wish;

Of arbours filled with dainty scents  
From lovely flowers that never fade,  
Bright 'flies that flutter in the sun,  
And glow-worms shining in the shade;

And talking birds with gifted tongues  
For singing songs and telling tales,  
And pretty dwarfs to show the way  
Through the fairy hills and fairy dales.

Thomas Hood

# The Dream Of Eugene Aram

'Twas in the prime of summer-time  
An evening calm and cool,  
And four-and-twenty happy boys  
Came bounding out of school:  
There were some that ran and some that leapt,  
Like troutlets in a pool.

Away they sped with gamesome minds,  
And souls untouched by sin;  
To a level mead they came, and there  
They drave the wickets in:  
Pleasantly shone the setting sun  
Over the town of Lynn.

Like sportive deer they coursed about,  
And shouted as they ran,-  
Turning to mirth all things of earth,  
As only boyhood can;  
But the Usher sat remote from all,  
A melancholy man!

His hat was off, his vest apart,  
To catch heaven's blessed breeze;  
For a burning thought was in his brow,  
And his bosom ill at ease:  
So he leaned his head on his hands, and read  
The book upon his knees!

Leaf after leaf he turned it o'er  
Nor ever glanced aside,  
For the peace of his soul he read that book  
In the golden eventide:  
Much study had made him very lean,  
And pale, and leaden-eyed.

At last he shut the pond'rous tome,  
With a fast and fervent grasp  
He strained the dusky covers close,  
And fixed the brazen hasp;

'Oh, God! could I so close my mind,  
And clasp it with a clasp! '

Then leaping on his feet upright,  
Some moody turns he took,-  
Now up the mead, then down the mead,  
And past a shady nook,-  
And lo! he saw a little boy  
That pored upon a book.

'My gentle lad, what is't you read -  
Romance or fairy fable?  
Or is it some historic page,  
Of kings and crowns unstable? '  
The young boy gave an upward glance,-  
'It is 'The Death of Abel.'

The Usher took six hasty strides,  
As smit with sudden pain, -  
Six hasty strides beyond the place,  
Then slowly back again;  
And down he sat beside the lad,  
And talked with him of Cain;

And, long since then, of bloody men,  
Whose deeds tradition saves;  
Of lonely folks cut off unseen,  
And hid in sudden graves;  
Of horrid stabs, in groves forlorn,  
And murders done in caves;

And how the sprites of injured men  
Shriek upward from the sod. -  
Ay, how the ghostly hand will point  
To show the burial clod:  
And unknown facts of guilty acts  
Are seen in dreams from God!

He told how murderers walk the earth  
Beneath the curse of Cain, -  
With crimson clouds before their eyes,  
And flames about their brain:

For blood has left upon their souls  
Its everlasting stain!

'And well,' quoth he, 'I know for truth,  
Their pangs must be extreme, -  
Woe, woe, unutterable woe, -  
Who spill life's sacred stream!  
For why, Methought last night I wrought  
A murder, in a dream!

One that had never done me wrong -  
A feeble man and old;  
I led him to a lonely field,  
The moon shone clear and cold:  
Now here, said I, this man shall die,  
And I will have his gold!

'Two sudden blows with a ragged stick,  
And one with a heavy stone,  
One hurried gash with a hasty knife, -  
And then the deed was done:  
There was nothing lying at my foot  
But lifeless flesh and bone!

'Nothing but lifeless flesh and bone,  
That could not do me ill;  
And yet I feared him all the more,  
For lying there so still:  
There was a manhood in his look,  
That murder could not kill! '

'And lo! the universal air  
Seemed lit with ghastly flame;  
Ten thousand thousand dreadful eyes  
Were looking down in blame:  
I took the dead man by his hand,  
And called upon his name!

'O God! it made me quake to see  
Such sense within the slain!  
But when I touched the lifeless clay,  
The blood gushed out again!

For every clot, a burning spot  
Was scorching in my brain!

'My head was like an ardent coal,  
My heart as solid ice;  
My wretched, wretched soul, I knew,  
Was at the Devil's price:  
A dozen times I groaned: the dead  
Had never groaned but twice!

'And now, from forth the frowning sky,  
From the Heaven's topmost height,  
I heard a voice - the awful voice  
Of the blood-avenging sprite -  
'Thou guilty man! take up thy dead  
And hide it from my sight! '

'I took the dreary body up,  
And cast it in a stream, -  
A sluggish water, black as ink,  
The depth was so extreme:  
My gentle boy, remember this  
Is nothing but a dream!

'Down went the corse with a hollow plunge,  
And vanished in the pool;  
Anon I cleansed my bloody hands,  
And washed my forehead cool,  
And sat among the urchins young,  
That evening in the school.

'Oh, Heaven! to think of their white souls,  
And mine so black and grim!  
I could not share in childish prayer,  
Nor join in Evening Hymn:  
Like a Devil of the Pit I seemed,  
'Mid holy Cherubim!

'And peace went with them, one and all,  
And each calm pillow spread;  
But Guilt was my grim Chamberlain  
That lighted me to bed;

And drew my midnight curtains round  
With fingers bloody red!

'All night I lay in agony,  
In anguish dark and deep,  
My fevered eyes I dared not close,  
But stared aghast at Sleep:  
For Sin had rendered unto her  
The keys of Hell to keep!

'All night I lay in agony,  
From weary chime to chime,  
With one besetting horrid hint,  
That racked me all the time;  
A mighty yearning, like the first  
Fierce impulse unto crime!

'One stern, tyrannic thought, that made  
All other thoughts its slave;  
Stronger and stronger every pulse  
Did that temptation crave, -  
Still urging me to go and see  
The Dead Man in his grave!

'Heavily I rose up, as soon  
As light was in the sky,  
And sought the black accursèd pool  
With a wild misgiving eye:  
And I saw the Dead in the river-bed,  
For the faithless stream was dry.

'Merrily rose the lark, and shook  
The dewdrop from its wing;  
But I never marked its morning flight,  
I never heard it sing:  
For I was stooping once again  
Under the horrid thing.

'With breathless speed, like a soul in chase,  
I took him up and ran;  
There was no time to dig a grave  
Before the day began:

In a lonesome wood, with heaps of leaves,  
I hid the murdered man!

'And all that day I read in school,  
But my thought was elsewhere;  
As soon as the midday task was done,  
In secret I went there:  
And a mighty wind had swept the leaves,  
And still the corpse was bare!

'Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep:  
Or land, or sea, though he should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep.

'So wills the fierce avenging Sprite,  
Till blood for blood atones!  
Ay, though he's buried in a cave,  
And trodden down with stones,  
And years have rotted off his flesh, -  
The world shall see his bones!

'Oh God! that horrid, horrid dream  
Besets me now awake!  
Again- again, with dizzy brain,  
The human life I take:  
And my red right hand grows raging hot,  
Like Cranmer's at the stake.

'And still no peace for the restless clay,  
Will wave or mould allow;  
The horrid thing pursues my soul -  
It stands before me now! '  
The fearful Boy looked up, and saw  
Huge drops upon his brow.

That very night while gentle sleep  
The urchin's eyelids kissed,  
Two stern-faced men set out from Lynn,  
Through the cold and heavy mist;

And Eugene Aram walked between,  
With gyves upon his wrist.

Thomas Hood



# The Exile

The swallow with summer  
Will wing o'er the seas,  
The wind that I sigh to  
Will visit thy trees.  
The ship that it hastens  
Thy ports will contain,  
But me!—I must never  
See England again!  
There's many that weep there,  
But one weeps alone,  
For the tears that are falling  
So far from her own;  
So far from thy own, love,  
We know not our pain;  
If death is between us,  
Or only the main.  
When the white cloud reclines  
On the verge of the sea,  
I fancy the white cliffs,  
And dream upon thee;  
But the cloud spreads its wings  
To the blue heav'n and flies.  
We never shall meet, love,  
Except in the skies!

Thomas Hood

# The Forsaken

The dead are in their silent graves,  
And the dew is cold above,  
And the living weep and sigh,  
Over dust that once was love.  
Once I only wept the dead,  
But now the living cause my pain:  
How couldst thou steal me from my tears,  
To leave me to my tears again?  
My Mother rests beneath the sod,—  
Her rest is calm and very deep:  
I wish'd that she could see our loves,—  
But now I gladden in her sleep.  
Last night unbound my raven locks,  
The morning saw them turned to gray,  
Once they were black and well beloved,  
But thou art changed,—and so are they!  
The useless lock I gave thee once,  
To gaze upon and think of me,  
Was ta'en with smiles,—but this was torn  
In sorrow that I send to thee!

Thomas Hood

# The Haunted House

Oh, very gloomy is the house of woe,  
Where tears are falling while the bell is knelling,  
With all the dark solemnities that show  
That Death is in the dwelling!

Oh, very, very dreary is the room  
Where Love, domestic Love, no longer nestles,  
But smitten by the common stroke of doom,  
The corpse lies on the trestles!

But house of woe, and hearse, and sable pall,  
The narrow home of the departed mortal,  
Ne'er looked so gloomy as that Ghostly Hall,  
With its deserted portal!

The centipede along the threshold crept,  
The cobweb hung across in mazy tangle,  
And in its winding sheet the maggot slept  
At every nook and angle.

The keyhole lodged the earwig and her brood,  
The emmets of the steps has old possession,  
And marched in search of their diurnal food  
In undisturbed procession.

As undisturbed as the prehensile cell  
Of moth or maggot, or the spider's tissue,  
For never foot upon that threshold fell,  
To enter or to issue.

O'er all there hung the shadow of a fear,  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted.

Howbeit, the door I pushed—or so I dreamed--  
Which slowly, slowly gaped, the hinges creaking  
With such a rusty eloquence, it seemed  
That Time himself was speaking.

But Time was dumb within that mansion old,  
Or left his tale to the heraldic banners  
That hung from the corroded walls, and told  
Of former men and manners.

Those tattered flags, that with the opened door,  
Seemed the old wave of battle to remember,  
While fallen fragments danced upon the floor  
Like dead leaves in December.

The startled bats flew out, bird after bird,  
The screech-owl overhead began to flutter,  
And seemed to mock the cry that she had heard  
Some dying victim utter!

A shriek that echoed from the joisted roof,  
And up the stair, and further still and further,  
Till in some ringing chamber far aloof  
It ceased its tale of murder!

Meanwhile the rusty armor rattled round,  
The banner shuddered, and the ragged streamer;  
All things the horrid tenor of the sound  
Acknowledged with a tremor.

The antlers where the helmet hung, and belt,  
Stirred as the tempest stirs the forest branches,  
Or as the stag had trembled when he felt  
The bloodhound at his haunches.

The window jingled in its crumbled frame,  
And through its many gaps of destitution  
Dolorous moans and hollow sighings came,  
Like those of dissolution.

The wood-louse dropped, and rolled into a ball,  
Touched by some impulse occult or mechanic;  
And nameless beetles ran along the wall  
In universal panic.

The subtle spider, that, from overhead,

Hung like a spy on human guilt and error,  
Suddenly turned, and up its slender thread  
Ran with a nimble terror.

The very stains and fractures on the wall,  
Assuming features solemn and terrific,  
Hinted some tragedy of that old hall,  
Locked up in hieroglyphic.

Some tale that might, perchance, have solved the doubt,  
Wherefore, among those flags so dull and livid,  
The banner of the bloody hand shone out  
So ominously vivid.

Some key to that inscrutable appeal  
Which made the very frame of Nature quiver,  
And every thrilling nerve and fiber feel  
So ague-like a shiver.

For over all there hung a cloud of fear,  
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,  
And said, as plain as whisper in the ear,  
The place is haunted!

Prophetic hints that filled the soul with dread,  
But through one gloomy entrance pointing mostly,  
The while some secret inspiration said,  
"That chamber is the ghostly!"

Across the door no gossamer festoon  
Swung pendulous, --no web, no dusty fringes,  
No silky chrysalis or white cocoon,  
About its nooks and hinges.

The spider shunned the interdicted room,  
The moth, the beetle, and the fly were banished,  
And when the sunbeam fell athwart the gloom,  
The very midge had vanished.

One lonely ray that glanced upon a bed,  
As if with awful aim direct and certain,  
To show the Bloody Hand, in burning red,

Embroidered on the curtain.

Thomas Hood

## The Key (A Moorish Romance)

'On the east coast, towards Tunis, the Moors still preserve the key of their ancestors' houses in Spain; to which country they still express the hopes of one day returning and again planting the crescent on the ancient walls of the Alhambra.'

—Scott's

Travels in Morocco and Algiers.

'Is Spain cloven in such a manner as to want closing?'

Sancho Panza in

Don Quixote

The Moor leans on his cushion,  
With the pipe between his lips;  
And still at frequent intervals  
The sweet sherbét he sips;  
But, spite of lulling vapor  
And the sober cooling cup,  
The spirit of the swarthy Moor  
Is fiercely kindling up!

One hand is on his pistol,  
On its ornamented stock,  
While his finger feels the trigger  
And is busy with the lock—  
The other seeks his ataghan,  
And clasps its jewell'd hilt—  
Oh! much of gore in days of yore  
That crooked blade has spilt!

His brows are knit, his eyes of jet  
In vivid blackness roll,  
And gleam with fatal flashes  
Like the fire-damp of the coal;  
His jaws are set, and through his teeth  
He draws a savage breath,  
As if about to raise the shout  
Of Victory or Death!

For why? the last Zebeck that came

And moor'd within the Mole,  
Such tidings unto Tunis brought  
As stir his very soul—  
The cruel jar of civil war,  
The sad and stormy reign,  
That blackens like a thunder cloud  
The sunny land of Spain!

No strife of glorious Chivalry,  
For honor's gain or loss,  
Nor yet that ancient rivalry,  
The Crescent with the Cross.  
No charge of gallant Paladins  
On Moslems stern and stanch;  
But Christians shedding Christian blood  
Beneath the olive's branch!

A war of horrid parricide,  
And brother killing brother;  
Yea, like to 'dogs and sons of dogs'  
That worry one another.  
But let them bite and tear and fight,  
The more the Kaffers slay,  
The sooner Hagar's swarming sons  
Shall make the land a prey!

The sooner shall the Moor behold  
Th' Alhambra's pile again;  
And those who pined in Barbary  
Shall shout for joy in Spain—  
The sooner shall the Crescent wave  
On dear Granada's walls:  
And proud Mohammed Ali sit  
Within his fathers halls!

'Alla-il-alla!' tiger-like  
Up springs the swarthy Moor,  
And, with a wide and hasty stride,  
Steps o'er the marble floor;  
Across the hall, till from the wall,  
Where such quaint patterns be,  
With eager hand he snatches down



And old and massive Key!

A massive Key of curious shape,  
And dark with dirt and rust,  
And well three weary centuries  
The metal might encrust!  
For since the King Boabdil fell  
Before the native stock,  
That ancient Key, so quaint to see,  
Hath never been in lock.

Brought over by the Saracens  
Who fled accross the main,  
A token of the secret hope  
Of going back again;  
From race to race, from hand to hand,  
From house to house it pass'd;  
O will it ever, ever ope  
The Palace gate at last?

Three hundred years and fifty-two  
On post and wall it hung—  
Three hundred years and fifty-two  
A dream to old and young;  
But now a brighter destiny  
The Prophet's will accords:  
The time is come to scour the rust,  
And lubricate the wards.

For should the Moor with sword and lance  
At Algesiras land,  
Where is the bold Bernardo now  
Their progress to withstand?  
To Burgos should the Moslem come,  
Where is the noble Cid  
Five royal crowns to topple down  
As gallant Diaz did?

Hath Xeres any Pounder now,  
When other weapons fail,  
With club to thrash invaders rash,  
Like barley with a flail?

Hath Seville any Perez still,  
To lay his clusters low,  
And ride with seven turbans green  
Around his saddle-bow?

No! never more shall Europe see  
Such Heroes brave and bold,  
Such Valor, Faith and Loyalty,  
As used to shine of old!  
No longer to one battle cry  
United Spaniards run,  
And with their thronging spears uphold  
The Virgin and her Son!

From Cadiz Bay to rough Biscay  
Internal discord dwells,  
And Barcelona bears the scars  
Of Spanish shot and shells.  
The fleets decline, the merchants pine  
For want of foreign trade;  
And gold is scant; and Alicante  
Is seal'd by strict blockade!

The loyal fly, and Valor falls,  
Opposed by court intrigue;  
But treachery and traitors thrive,  
Upheld by foreign league;  
While factions seeking private ends  
By turns usurping reign—  
Well may the dreaming, scheming Moor  
Exulting point to Spain!

Well may he cleanse the rusty Key  
With Afric sand and oil,  
And hope an Andalusian home  
Shall recompense the toil!  
Well may he swear the Moorish spear  
Through wild Castile shall sweep,  
And where the Catalonian sowed  
The Saracen shall reap!

Well may he vow to spurn the Cross

Beneath the Arab hoof,  
And plant the Crescent yet again  
Above th' Alhambra's roof—  
When those from whom St. Jago's name  
In chorus once arose,  
Are shouting Faction's battle-cries,  
And Spain forgets to 'Close!

Well may he swear his ataghan  
Shall rout the traitor swarm,  
And carve them into Arabesques  
That show no human form—  
The blame be theirs, whose bloody feuds  
Invite the savage Moor,  
And tempt him with the ancient Key  
To seek the ancient door!

Thomas Hood

# The Lady's Dream

The lady lay in her bed,  
Her couch so warm and soft,  
But her sleep was restless and broken still;  
For turning often and oft  
From side to side, she mutter'd and moan'd,  
And toss'd her arms aloft.

At last she startled up,  
And gazed on the vacant air,  
With a look of awe, as if she saw  
Some dreadful phantom there—  
And then in the pillow she buried her face  
From visions ill to bear.

The very curtain shook,  
Her terror was so extreme;  
And the light that fell on the broider'd quilt  
Kept a tremulous gleam;  
And her voice was hollow, and shook as she cried:—  
'Oh me! that awful dream'!

'That weary, weary walk,  
In the churchyard's dismal ground!  
And those horrible things, with shady wings,  
That came and flitted round,—  
Death, death, and nothing but death,  
In every sight and sound!

'And oh! those maidens young,  
Who wrought in that dreary room,  
With figures drooping and spectres thin,  
And cheeks without a bloom;—  
And the Voice that cried, 'For the pomp of pride,  
We haste to an early tomb!

"For the pomp and pleasure of Pride,  
We toil like Afric slaves,  
And only to earn a home at last,  
Where yonder cypress waves;'—

And then they pointed—I never saw  
A ground so full of graves!

'And still the coffins came,  
With their sorrowful trains and slow;  
Coffin after coffin still,  
A sad and sickening show;  
From grief exempt, I never had dreamt  
Of such a World of Woe!

'Of the hearts that daily break,  
Of the tears that hourly fall,  
Of the many, many troubles of life,  
That grieve this earthly ball—  
Disease and Hunger, and Pain, and Want,  
But now I dreamt of them all!

'For the blind and the cripple were there,  
And the babe that pined for bread,  
And the houseless man, and the widow poor  
Who begged—to bury the dead;  
The naked, alas, that I might have clad,  
The famish'd I might have fed!

'The sorrow I might have sooth'd,  
And the unregarded tears;  
For many a thronging shape was there,  
From long-forgotten years,  
Ay, even the poor rejected Moor,  
Who raised my childish fears!

'Each pleading look, that long ago  
I scann'd with a heedless eye,  
Each face was gazing as plainly there,  
As when I pass'd it by:  
Woe, woe for me if the past should be  
Thus present when I die!

'No need of sulphurous lake,  
No need of fiery coal,  
But only that crowd of human kind  
Who wanted pity and dole—

In everlasting retrospect—  
Will wring my sinful soul!

'Alas! I have walk'd through life  
Too heedless where I trod;  
Nay, helping to trample my fellow-worm,  
And fill the burial sod—  
Forgetting that even the sparrow falls  
Not unmark'd of God!

'I drank the richest draughts;  
And ate whatever is good—  
Fish, and flesh, and fowl, and fruit,  
Supplied my hungry mood;  
But I never remember'd the wretched ones  
That starve for want of food!

'I dress'd as the noble dress,  
In cloth of silver and gold,  
With silk, and satin, and costly furs,  
In many an ample fold;  
But I never remember'd the naked limbs  
That froze with winter's cold.

'The wounds I might have heal'd!  
The human sorrow and smart!  
And yet it never was in my soul  
To play so ill a part:  
But evil is wrought by want of Thought,  
As well as want of Heart!'

She clasp'd her fervent hands,  
And the tears began to stream;  
Large, and bitter, and fast they fell,  
Remorse was so extreme;  
And yet, oh yet, that many a Dame  
Would dream the Lady's Dream!

Thomas Hood

# The Lament Of Toby, The Learned Pig

Oh, heavy day! oh, day of woe!  
To misery a poster,  
Why was I ever farrowed, why  
Not spitted for a roaster?

In this world, pigs, as well as men,  
Must dance to fortune's fiddlings,  
But must I give the classics up,  
For barley-meal and middlings?

Of what avail that I could spell  
And read, just like my betters,  
If I must come to this at last,  
To litters, not to letters?

Oh, why are pigs made scholars of?  
It baffles my discerning,  
What griskins, fry, and chitterlings  
Can have to do with learning.

Alas! my learning once drew cash,  
But public fame's unstable,  
So I must turn a pig again  
And fatten for the table.

To leave my literary line  
My eyes get red and leaky;  
But Giblett doesn't want me blue,  
But red and white, and streaky.

Old Mullins used to cultivate  
My learning like a gard'ner;  
But Giblett only thinks of lard,  
And not of Doctor Lardner.

He does not care about my brain  
The value of two coppers,  
All that he thinks about my head  
Is, how I'm off for choppers.

Of all my literary kin  
A farewell must be taken,  
Goodbye to the poetic Hogg!  
The philosophic Bacon!

Day after day my lessons fade,  
My intellect gets muddy;  
A trough I have, and not a desk,  
A sty – and not a study!

Another little month, and then  
My progress ends, like Bunyan's;  
The seven sages that I loved  
Will be chopped up with onions!

Then over head and ears in brine  
They'll souse me, like a salmon,  
My mathematics turned to brawn,  
My logic into gammon.

My Hebrew will all retrograde,  
Now I'm put up to fatten,  
My Greek, it will all go to grease,  
The dogs will have my Latin!

Farewell to Oxford ! – and to Bliss!  
To Milman, Crowe, and Glossop, –  
I now must be content with chats,  
Instead of learned gossip!

Farewell to 'Town!' farewell to 'Gown!'  
I've quite outgrown the latter, –  
Instead of Trencher-cap my head  
Will soon be in a platter!

Oh, why did I at Brazen-Nose  
Rout up the roots of knowledge?  
A butcher that can't read will kill  
A pig that's been to college!

For sorrow I could stick myself,



But conscience is a dasher;  
A thing that would be rash in man  
In me would be a rasher!

One thing I ask – when I am dead  
And past the Stygian ditches –  
And that is, let my schoolmaster  
Have one of my two Hitches.

'Twas he who taught my letters so  
I ne'er mistook or missed 'em,  
Simply by ringing at the nose  
According to Bell's system.

Thomas Hood

# The Lay Of The Laborer

A spade! a rake! a hoe!  
A pickaxe, or a bill!  
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,  
A flail, or what ye will—  
And here's a ready hand  
To ply the needful tool,  
And skill'd enough, by lessons rough,  
In Labor's rugged school.

To hedge, or dig the ditch,  
To lop or fell the tree,  
To lay the swarth on the sultry field,  
Or plough the stubborn lea;  
The harvest stack to bind,  
The wheaten rick to thatch,  
And never fear in my pouch to find  
The tinder or the match.

To a flaming barn or farm  
My fancies never roam;  
The fire I yearn to kindle and burn  
Is on the hearth of Home;  
Where children huddle and crouch  
Through dark long winter days,  
Where starving children huddle and crouch,  
To see the cheerful rays,  
A-glowing on the haggard cheek,  
And not in the haggard's blaze!

To Him who sends a drought  
To parch the fields forlorn,  
The rain to flood the meadows with mud,  
The blight to blast the corn,  
To Him I leave to guide  
The bolt in its crooked path,  
To strike the miser's rick, and show  
The skies blood-red with wrath.

A spade! a rake! a hoe!

A pickaxe, or a bill!  
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,  
A flail, or what ye will—  
The corn to thrash, or the hedge to plash,  
The market-team to drive,  
Or mend the fence by the cover side,  
And leave the game alive.

Ay, only give me work,  
And then you need not fear  
That I shall snare his Worship's hare,  
Or kill his Grace's deer;  
Break into his lordship's house,  
To steal the plate so rich;  
Or leave the yeoman that had a purse  
To welter in a ditch.

Wherever Nature needs,  
Wherever Labor calls,  
No job I'll shirk of the hardest work,  
To shun the workhouse walls;  
Where savage laws begrudge  
The pauper babe its breath,  
And doom a wife to a widow's life,  
Before her partner's death.

My only claim is this,  
With labor stiff and stark,  
By lawful turn, my living to earn,  
Between the light and dark;  
My daily bread, and nightly bed,  
My bacon, and drop of beer—  
But all from the hand that holds the land,  
And none from the overseer!

No parish money, or loaf,  
No pauper badges for me,  
A son of the soil, by right of toil  
Entitled to my fee.  
No alms I ask, give me my task:  
Here are the arm, the leg,  
The strength, the sinews of a Man,

To work, and not to beg.

Still one of Adam's heirs,  
Though doom'd by chance of birth  
To dress so mean, and to eat the lean  
Instead of the fat of the earth;  
To make such humble meals  
As honest labor can,  
A bone and a crust, with a grace to God,  
And little thanks to man!

A spade! a rake! a hoe!  
A pickaxe, or a bill!  
A hook to reap, or a scythe to mow,  
A flail, or what ye will—  
Whatever the tool to ply,  
Here is a willing drudge,  
With muscle and limb, and woe to him  
Who does their pay begrudge!

Who every weekly score  
Docks labor's little mite,  
Bestows on the poor at the temple door,  
But robb'd them over night.  
The very shilling he hoped to save,  
As health and morals fail,  
Shall visit me in the new Bastille,  
The Spital, or the Gaol!

Thomas Hood

# The Lee Shore

Sleet! and hail! and thunder!  
And ye winds that rave,  
Till the sands there under  
Tinge the sullen wave --

Winds, that like a demon  
Howl with horrid note  
Round the toiling seaman,  
In his tossing boat --

From his humble dwelling  
On the shingly shore,  
Where the billows swelling  
Keep such hollow roar --

From that weeping woman,  
Seeking with her cries  
Succor superhuman  
From the frowning skies --

From the urchin pining  
For his father's knee --  
From the lattice shining,  
Drive him out to sea!

Let broad leagues dissever  
Him from yonder foam; --  
O, God! to think man ever  
Comes too near his home!

Thomas Hood

# The Lost Heir

'Oh where, and oh where  
Is my bonny laddie gone?'  
\_Old Song\_.

One day, as I was going by  
That part of Holborn christened High,  
I heard a loud and sodden cry,  
That chill'd my very blood;  
And lo! from out a dirty alley,  
Where pigs and Irish went to rally,  
I saw a crazy woman sally,  
Bedaub'd with grease and mud.  
She turn'd her East, she turn'd her West,  
Staring like Pythoness possest,  
With streaming hair and heaving breast,  
As one stark mad with grief.  
This way and that she wildly ran,  
Jostling with woman and with man-  
Her right hand held a frying pan,  
The left a lump of beef.  
At last her frenzy seemed to reach  
A point just capable of speech,  
And with a tone almost a screech,  
As wild as ocean bird's,  
Or female Banter mov'd to preach,  
She gave her 'sorrow-words.'

'O Lord! O dear, my heart will break, I shall  
go stick stark staring wild!  
Has ever a one seen anything about the streets  
like a crying lost-looking child?  
Lawk help me, I don't know where to look, or to  
run, if I only knew which way-  
A Child as is lost about London Streets, and especially  
Seven Dials, is a needle in a bottle of hay.  
I am all in a quiver- get out of my sight, do, you  
wretch, you little Kitty M'Nab!  
You promised to have half an eye to him, you

know you did, you dirty deceitful young drab.  
The last time as ever I see him, poor thing;  
was with my own blessed Motherly eyes,  
Sitting as good as gold in the gutter,  
a-playing at making little dirt pies.  
I wonder he left the court where he was better off  
than all the other young boys,  
With two bricks, an old shoe, nine oyster-shells,  
and a dead kitten by way of toys.  
When his father comes home, and he always comes home  
as sure as ever the clock strikes one,  
He'll be rampant, he will, at his child being lost;  
and the beef and the inguns not done!  
La bless you, good folks, mind your own consarns,  
and don't be making a mob in the street;  
O Sergeant M'Farlane! you have not come across  
my poor little boy, have you, in your beat?  
Do, good people, move on! don't stand staring at me  
like a parcel of stupid stuck pigs;  
Saints forbid! but he's p'r'aps been inviggled  
away up a court for the sake of his clothes  
He'd a very good jacket, for certain,  
for I bought it myself for a shilling one day in Rag Fair;  
And his trowsers considering not very much patch'd,  
and red plush, they was once his Father'  
His shirt, it's very lucky I'd got washing in the tub,  
or that might have gone with the rest  
But he'd got on a very good pinafore  
with only two slits and a burn on the breast.  
He'd a goodish sort of hat, If the crown was sew'd in,  
and not quite so much jagg'd at the brim,  
With one shoe on, and the other shoe is a boot,  
and not a fit, and, you'll know by that if it's him.  
Except being so well dress'd, my mind would misgive,  
some old beggar woman in want of an orphan,  
Had borrow'd the child to go a begging with,  
but I'd rather see him laid out in his coffin!  
Do, good people, move on, such a rabble of boys!  
I'll break every bone of 'em I come near,  
Go home- you're spilling the porter- go home-  
Tommy Jones, go along home with your beer.  
This day is the sorrowfullest day of my life,

ever since my name was Betty Morgan,  
Them vile Savoyards! they lost him once before  
all along of following a Monkey and an Organ:  
O my Billy- my head will turn right round- if  
he's got kiddynapp'd with them Italians,  
They'll make him a plaster parish image boy,  
they will, the outlandish tatterdemallions.  
Billy- where are you, Billy?- I'm as hoarse as a crow,  
with screaming for ye, you young sorrow!  
And shan't have half a voice, no more I shan't,  
for crying fresh herrings to-morrow.  
O Billy, you're bursting my heart in two, and my  
life won't be of no more vally,  
If I'm to see other folk's darlins, and none of  
mine, playing like angels in our alley,  
And what shall I do but cry out my eyes, when I  
looks at the old three-legged chair,  
As Billy used to make coaches and horses of, and  
there ain't no Billy there!  
I would run all the wide world over to find him,  
if I only know'd where to run,  
Little Murphy, now I remember, was once lost  
for a month through stealing a penny bun,-  
The Lord forbid of any child of mine!  
I think it would kill me raily,  
To find my Bill holdin up his little  
innocent hand at the Old Bailey.  
For though I say it as oughtn't, yet I will say,  
you may search for miles and mileses  
And not find one better brought up,  
and more pretty behaved, from one end to t'other  
of St. Giles's.  
And if I called him a beauty, it's no lie, but only  
as a Mother ought to speak;  
You never set eyes on a more handsomer face,  
only it hasn't been washed for a week;  
As for hair, tho' it's red, it's the most nicest hair  
when I've time to just show it the comb;  
I'll owe 'em five pounds, and a blessing besides,  
as will only bring him safe and sound home.  
He's blue eyes, and not to be call'd a squint,  
though a little cast he's certainly got;



And his nose is still a good un, tho' the bridge is  
broke, by his falling on a pewter pint pot;  
He's got the most elegant wide mouth in the  
world, and very large teeth for his age;  
And quite as fit as Mrs. Murdockson's child to  
play Cupid on the Drury Lane Stage.  
And then he has got such dear winning ways-  
but O, I never never shall see him no more!  
O dear! to think of losing him just after nussing  
him back from death's door!  
Only the very last month when the windfalls,  
hang 'em, was at twenty a penny!  
And the threepence he'd got by grottoing was  
spent in plums, and sixty for a child is too many.  
And the Cholera man came and whitewash'd us  
all and, drat him, made a seize of our hog,-  
It's no use to send the Crier to cry him about,  
he's such a blunderin drunken old dog;  
The last time he was fetched to find a lost child,  
he was guzzling with his bell at the Crown,  
And went and cried a boy instead of a girl, for a  
distracted Mother and Father about Town.  
Billy- where are you, Billy, I say? come, Billy,  
come home, to your best of Mothers!  
I'm scared when I think of them Cabroleys, they  
drive so, they'd run over their own Sisters and Brothers.  
Or may be he's stole by some chimbly sweeping  
wretch, to stick fast in narrow flues and what not,  
And be poked up behind with a picked pointed  
pole, when the soot has ketch'd, and the chimbly's red hot.  
Oh I'd give the whole wide world, if the world  
was mine, to clap my two longin eyes on his face,  
For he's my darlin of darlins, and if he don't soon  
come back, you'll see me drop stone dead on the place.  
I only wish I'd got him safe in these two Motherly  
arms, and wouldn't I hug him and kiss him!  
Lauk! I never knew what a precious he was-  
but a child don't not feel like a child till you miss him.  
Why, there he is! Punch and Judy hunting, the  
young wretch, it's that Billy as sartin as sin!  
But let me get him home, with a good grip of his hair,  
and I'm blest if he shall have a whole bone in his skin!

Thomas Hood

## The Mary (A Sea-Side Sketch)

Lov'st thou not, Alice, with the early tide  
To see the hardy Fisher hoist his mast,  
And stretch his sail towards the ocean wide,—  
Like God's own beadsman going forth to cast  
His net into the deep, which doth provide  
Enormous bounties, hidden in its vast  
Bosom like Charity's, for all who seek  
And take its gracious boon thankful and meek?

The sea is bright with morning,—but the dark  
Seems still to linger on his broad black sail,  
For it is early hoisted, like a mark  
For the low sun to shoot at with his pale  
And level beams: All round the shadowy bark  
The green wave glimmers, and the gentle gale  
Swells in her canvas, till the waters show  
The keel's new speed, and whiten at the bow.

Then look abaft—(for thou canst understand  
That phrase)—and there he sitteth at the stern,  
Grasping the tiller in his broad brown hand,  
The hardy Fisherman. Thou may'st discern  
Ten fathoms off the wrinkles in the tann'd  
And honest countenance that he will turn  
To look upon us, with a quiet gaze—  
As we are passing on our several ways.

So, some ten days ago, on such a morn,  
The Mary, like a seamew, sought her spoil  
Amongst the finny race: 'twas when the corn  
Woo'd the sharp sickle, and the golden toil  
Summon'd all rustic hands to fill the horn  
Of Ceres to the brim, that brave turmoil  
Was at the prime, and Woodgate went to reap  
His harvest too, upon the broad blue deep.

His mast was up, his anchor heaved aboard,  
His mainsail stretching in the first gray gleams  
Of morning, for the wind. Ben's eye was stored

With fishes—fishes swam in all his dreams,  
And all the goodly east seem'd but a hoard  
Of silvery fishes, that in shoals and streams  
Groped into the deep dusk that fill'd the sky,  
For him to catch in meshes of his eye.

For Ben had the true sailor's sanguine heart,  
And saw the future with a boy's brave thought,  
No doubts, nor faint misgivings had a part  
In his bright visions—ay, before he caught  
His fish, he sold them in the scaly mart,  
And summ'd the net proceeds. This should have brought  
Despair upon him when his hopes were foil'd,  
But though one crop was marr'd, again he toil'd;

And sow'd his seed afresh.—Many foul blights  
Perish'd his hard-won gains—yet he had plann'd  
No schemes of too extravagant delights—  
No goodly houses on the Goodwin sand—  
But a small humble home, and loving nights,  
Such as his honest heart and earnest hand  
Might fairly purchase. Were these hopes too airy?  
Such as they were, they rested on thee, Mary.

She was the prize of many a toilsome year,  
And hardwon wages, on the perilous sea—  
Of savings ever since the shipboy's tear  
Was shed for home, that lay beyond the lee;—  
She was purveyor for his other dear  
Mary, and for the infant yet to be  
Fruit of their married loves. These made him dote  
Upon the homely beauties of his boat,

Whose pitch-black hull roll'd darkly on the wave,  
No gayer than one single stripe of blue  
Could make her swarthy sides. She seem'd a slave,  
A negro among boats—that only knew  
Hardship and rugged toil—no pennons brave  
Flaunted upon the mast—but oft a few  
Dark dripping jackets flutter'd to the air,  
Ensigns of hardihood and toilsome care.

And when she ventured for the deep, she spread  
A tawny sail against the sunbright sky,  
Dark as a cloud that journeys overhead—  
But then those tawny wings were stretch'd to fly  
Across the wide sea desert for the bread  
Of babes and mothers—many an anxious eye  
Dwelt on her course, and many a fervent pray'r  
Invoked the Heavens to protect and spare.

Where is she now? The secrets of the deep  
Are dark and hidden from the human ken;  
Only the sea-bird saw the surges sweep  
Over the bark of the devoted Ben,—  
Meanwhile a widow sobs and orphans weep,  
And sighs are heard from weatherbeaten men,  
Dark sunburnt men, uncouth and rude and hairy,  
While loungers idly ask, 'Where is the Mary?'

Thomas Hood

# The Pauper's Christmas Carol

Full of drink and full of meat,  
On our SAVIOUR'S natal day,  
CHARITY'S perennial treat;  
Thus I heard a Pauper say:—  
'Ought not I to dance and sing  
Thus supplied with famous cheer?  
Heigho!  
I hardly know—  
Christmas comes but once a year.

'After labor's long turmoil,  
Sorry fare and frequent fast,  
Two-and-fifty weeks of toil,  
Pudding-time is come at last!  
But are raisins high or low,  
Flour and suet cheap or dear?  
Heigho!  
I hardly know—  
Christmas comes but once a year.

'Fed upon the coarsest fare  
Three hundred days and sixty-four,  
But for one on viands rare,  
Just as if I wasn't poor!  
Ought not I to bless my stars,  
Warden, clerk, and overseer?  
Heigho!  
I hardly know—  
Christmas comes but once a year.

'Treated like a welcome guest,  
One of Nature's social chain,  
Seated, tended on, and press'd—  
But when shall I be press'd again,  
Twice to pudding, thrice to beef,  
A dozen times to ale and beer?  
Heigho!  
I hardly know—  
Christmas comes but once a year.

'Come to-morrow how it will;  
Diet scant and usage rough,  
Hunger once has had its fill,  
Thirst for once has had enough,  
But shall I ever dine again?  
Or see another feast appear?  
Heigho!  
I only know—  
Christmas comes but once a year!

'Frozen cares begin to melt,  
Hopes revive and spirits flow—  
Feeling as I have not felt  
Since a dozen months ago—  
Glad enough to sing a song—  
To-morrow shall I volunteer?  
Heigho!  
I hardly know—  
Christmas comes but once a year.

'Bright and blessed is the time,  
Sorrows end and joys begin,  
While the bells with merry chime  
Ring the Day of Plenty in!  
But the happy tide to hail,  
With a sigh or with or a tear,  
Heigho!  
I hardly know—  
Christmas comes but once a year!'

Thomas Hood

# The Plea Of The Midsummer Fairies

## I

'Twas in that mellow season of the year  
When the hot sun singes the yellow leaves  
Till they be gold,—and with a broader sphere  
The Moon looks down on Ceres and her sheaves;  
When more abundantly the spider weaves,  
And the cold wind breathes from a chillier clime;—  
That forth I fared, on one of those still eves,  
Touch'd with the dewy sadness of the time,  
To think how the bright months had spent their prime,

## II

So that, wherever I address'd my way,  
I seem'd to track the melancholy feet  
Of him that is the Father of Decay,  
And spoils at once the sour weed and the sweet;—  
Wherefore regretfully I made retreat  
To some unwasted regions of my brain,  
Charm'd with the light of summer and the heat,  
And bade that bounteous season bloom again,  
And sprout fresh flowers in mine own domain.

## III

It was a shady and sequester'd scene,  
Like those famed gardens of Boccaccio,  
Planted with his own laurels evergreen,  
And roses that for endless summer blow;  
And there were fountain springs to overflow  
Their marble basins,—and cool green arcades  
Of tall o'erarching sycamores, to throw  
Athwart the dappled path their dancing shades,—  
With timid coney's cropping the green blades.



#### IV

And there were crystal pools, peopled with fish,  
Argent and gold; and some of Tyrian skin,  
Some crimson-barr'd;—and ever at a wish  
They rose obsequious till the wave grew thin  
As glass upon their backs, and then dived in,  
Quenching their ardent scales in watery gloom;  
Whilst others with fresh hues row'd forth to win  
My changeable regard,—for so we doom  
Things born of thought to vanish or to bloom.

#### V

And there were many birds of many dyes,  
From tree to tree still faring to and fro,  
And stately peacocks with their splendid eyes,  
And gorgeous pheasants with their golden glow,  
Like Iris just bedabbled in her bow,  
Beside some vocalists, without a name,  
That oft on fairy errands come and go,  
With accents magical;—and all were tame,  
And peckled at my hand where'er I came.

#### VI

And for my sylvan company, in lieu  
Of Pampinea with her lively peers,  
Sate Queen Titania with her pretty crew,  
All in their liveries quaint, with elfin gears,  
For she was gracious to my childish years,  
And made me free of her enchanted round;  
Wherefore this dreamy scene she still endears,  
And plants her court upon a verdant mound,  
Fenced with umbrageous woods and groves profound.

#### VII

'Ah me,' she cries, 'was ever moonlight seen

So clear and tender for our midnight trips?  
Go some one forth, and with a trump convene  
My lieges all!—Away the goblin skips  
A pace or two apart, and deftly strips  
The ruddy skin from a sweet rose's cheek,  
Then blows the shuddering leaf between his lips,  
Making it utter forth a shrill small shriek,  
Like a fray'd bird in the gray owlet's beak.

## VIII

And lo! upon my fix'd delighted ken  
Appear'd the loyal Fays.—Some by degrees  
Crept from the primrose buds that open'd then,  
Ana some from bell-shaped blossoms like the bees,  
Some from the dewy meads, and rushy leas,  
Flew up like chafers when the rustics pass;  
Some from the rivers, others from tall trees  
Dropp'd, like shed blossoms, silent to the grass,  
Spirits and elfins small, of every class.

## IX

Peri and Pixy, and quaint Puck the Antic,  
Brought Robin Goodfellow, that merry swain;  
And stealthy Mab, queen of old realms romantic,  
Came too, from distance, in her tiny wain,  
Fresh dripping from a cloud—some bloomy rain,  
Then circling the bright Moon, had wash'd her car,  
And still bedew'd it with a various stain:  
Lastly came Ariel, shooting from a star,  
Who bears all fairy embassies afar.

## X

But Oberon, that night elsewhere exiled,  
Was absent, whether some distemper'd spleen  
Kept him and his fair mate unreconciled,  
Or warfare with the Gnome (whose race had been

Sometime obnoxious), kept him from his queen,  
And made her now peruse the starry skies  
Prophetical, with such an absent mien;  
Howbeit, the tears stole often to her eyes,  
And oft the Moon was incensed with her sighs—

## XI

Which made the elves sport drearily, and soon  
Their hushing dances languish'd to a stand,  
Like midnight leaves, when, as the Zephyrs swoon,  
All on their drooping stems they sink unfann'd,—  
So into silence droop'd the fairy band,  
To see their empress dear so pale and still,  
Crowding her softly round on either hand,  
As pale as frosty snowdrops, and as chill,  
To whom the sceptred dame reveals her ill.

## XII

'Alas,' quoth she, 'ye know our fairy lives  
Are leased upon the fickle faith of men;  
Not measured out against Fate's mortal knives,  
Like human gosamers,—we perish when  
We fade and are forgot in worldly kens—  
Though poesy has thus prolong'd our date,  
Thanks be to the sweet Bard's auspicious pen  
That rescued us so long!—howbeit of late  
I feel some dark misgivings of our fate.'

## XIII

'And this dull day my melancholy sleep  
Hath been so thronged with images of woe,  
That even now I cannot choose but weep  
To think this was some sad prophetic show  
Of future horror to befall us so,  
Of mortal wreck and uttermost distress,  
Yea, our poor empire's fall and overthrow,

For this was my long vision's dreadful stress,  
And when I waked my trouble was not less.'

XIV

'Whenever to the clouds I tried to seek,  
Such leaden weight dragg'd these Icarian wings,  
My faithless wand was wavering and weak,  
And slimy toads had trespass'd in our rings—  
The birds refused to sing for me—all things  
Disown'd their old allegiance to our spells;  
The rude bees prick'd me with their rebel stings;  
And, when I pass'd, the valley-lily's bells  
Rang out, methought, most melancholy knells.'

XV

'And ever on the faint and flagging air  
A doleful spirit with a dreary note  
Cried in my fearful ear, 'Prepare! prepare!  
Which soon I knew came from a raven's throat,  
Perch'd on a cypress-bough not far remote,—  
A cursed bird, too crafty to be shot,  
That alway cometh with his soot-black coat  
To make hearts dreary:—for he is a blot  
Upon the book of life, as well ye wot!—'

XVI

'Wherefore some while I bribed him to be mute,  
With bitter acorns stuffing his foul maw,  
Which barely I appeased, when some fresh bruit  
Startled me all aheap!—and soon I saw  
The horridest shape that ever raised my awe,—  
A monstrous giant, very huge and tall,  
Such as in elder times, devoid of law,  
With wicked might grieved the primeval ball,  
And this was sure the deadliest of them all!'

## XVII

'Gaunt was he as a wolf of Languedoc,  
With bloody jaws, and frost upon his crown  
So from his barren poll one hoary lock  
Over his wrinkled front fell far adown,  
Well nigh to where his frosty brows did frown  
Like jagged icicles at cottage eaves;  
And for his coronal he wore some brown  
And bristled ears gather'd from Ceres' sheaves,  
Entwined with certain sere and russet leaves.'

## XVIII

'And lo! upon a mast rear'd far aloft,  
He bore a very bright and crescent blade,  
The which he waved so dreadfully, and oft,  
In meditative spite, that, sore dismay'd,  
I crept into an acorn-cup for shade;  
Meanwhile the horrid effigy went by:  
I trow his look was dreadful, for it made  
The trembling birds betake them to the sky,  
For every leaf was lifted by his sigh.'

## XIX

'And ever, as he sigh'd, his foggy breath  
Blurr'd out the landscape like a flight of smoke:  
Thence knew I this was either dreary Death  
Or Time, who leads all creatures to his stroke.  
Ah wretched me!'—Here, even as she spoke,  
The melancholy Shape came gliding in,  
And lean'd his back against an antique oak,  
Folding his wings, that were so fine and thin,  
They scarce were seen against the Dryad's skin.

## XX

Then what a fear seized all the little rout!  
Look how a flock of panick'd sheep will stare—  
And huddle close—and start—and wheel about,  
Watching the roaming mongrel here and there,—  
So did that sudden Apparition scare  
All close ahead those small affrighted things;  
Nor sought they now the safety of the air,  
As if some leaden spell withheld their wings;  
But who can fly that ancientest of Kings?

## XXI

Whom now the Queen, with a forestalling tear  
And previous sigh, beginneth to entreat,  
Bidding him spare, for love, her lieges dear:  
'Alas!' quoth she, 'is there no nodding wheat  
Ripe for thy crooked weapon, and more meet,—  
Or wither'd leaves to ravish from the tree,—  
Or crumbling battlements for thy defeat?  
Think but what vaunting monuments there be  
Builded in spite and mockery of thee.'

## XXII

'O fret away the fabric walls of Fame,  
And grind down marble Cæsars with the dust:  
Make tombs inscriptionless—raze each high name,  
And waste old armors of renown with rust:  
Do all of this, and thy revenge is just:  
Make such decays the trophies of thy prime,  
And check Ambition's overweening lust,  
That dares exterminating war with Time,—  
But we are guiltless of that lofty crime.'

## XXIII

'Frail feeble spirits!—the children of a dream!  
Leased on the sufferance of fickle men,

Like motes dependent on the sunny beam,  
Living but in the sun's indulgent ken,  
And when that light withdraws, withdrawing then;—  
So do we flutter in the glance of youth  
And fervid fancy,—and so perish when  
The eye of faith grows aged;—in sad truth,  
Feeling thy sway, O Time! though not thy tooth!

XXIV

'Where be those old divinities forlorn,  
That dwelt in trees, or haunted in a stream?  
Alas! their memories are dimm'd and torn,  
Like the remainder tatters of a dream:  
So will it fare with our poor thrones, I deem;—  
For us the same dark trench Oblivion delves,  
That holds the wastes of every human scheme.  
O spare us then,—and these our pretty elves,—  
We soon, alas! shall perish of ourselves!

XXV

Now as she ended, with a sigh, to name  
Those old Olympians, scatter'd by the whirl  
Of Fortune's giddy wheel and brought to shame,  
Methought a scornful and malignant curl  
Show'd on the lips of that malicious churl,  
To think what noble havocs he had made;  
So that I fear'd he all at once would hurl  
The harmless fairies into endless shade,—  
Howbeit he stopp'd awhile to whet his blade.

XXVI

Pity it was to hear the elfins' wail  
Rise up in concert from their mingled dread,  
Pity it was to see them, all so pale,  
Gaze on the grass as for a dying bed;—  
But Puck was seated on a spider's thread,  
That hung between two branches of a briar,

And 'gan to swing and gambol, heels o'er head,  
Like any Southwark tumbler on a wire,  
For him no present grief could long inspire.

XXVII

Meanwhile the Queen with many piteous drops,  
Falling like tiny sparks full fast and free,  
Bedews a pathway from her throne;—and stops  
Before the foot of her arch enemy,  
And with her little arms enfolds his knee,  
That shows more grisly from that fair embrace;  
But she will ne'er depart. 'Alas!' quoth she,  
'My painful fingers I will here enlase  
Till I have gain'd your pity for our race.'

XXVIII

'What have we ever done to earn this grudge,  
And hate—(if not too humble for thy hating?)—  
Look o'er our labors and our lives, and judge  
If there be any ills of our creating;  
For we are very kindly creatures, dating  
With nature's charities still sweet and bland:—  
O think this murder worthy of debating!'  
Herewith she makes a signal with her hand,  
To beckon some one from the Fairy band.

XXIX

Anon I saw one of those elfin things,  
Clad all in white like any chorister,  
Come fluttering forth on his melodious wings,  
That made soft music at each little stir,  
But something louder than a bee's demur  
Before he lights upon a bunch of broom,  
And thus 'gan he with Saturn to confer,—  
And O his voice was sweet, touch'd with the gloom  
Of that sad theme that argued of his doom!



XXX

Quoth he, 'We make all melodies our care,  
That no false discords may offend the Sun,  
Music's great master—tuning everywhere  
All pastoral sounds and melodies, each one  
Duly to place and season, so that none  
May harshly interfere. We rouse at morn  
The shrill sweet lark; and when the day is done,  
Hush silent pauses for the bird forlorn,  
That singeth with her breast against a thorn.'

XXXI

'We gather in loud choirs the twittering race,  
That make a chorus with their single note;  
And tend on new-fledged birds in every place,  
That duly they may get their tunes by rote;  
And oft, like echoes, answering remote,  
We hide in thickets from the feather'd throng,  
And strain in rivalship each throbbing throat,  
Singing in shrill responses all day long,  
Whilst the glad truant listens to our song.'

XXXII

'Wherefore, great King of Years, as thou dost love  
The raining music from a morning cloud,  
When vanish'd larks are carolling above,  
To wake Apollo with their pipings loud;—  
If ever thou hast heard in leafy shroud  
The sweet and plaintive Sappho of the dell,  
Show thy sweet mercy on this little crowd,  
And we will muffle up the sheepfold bell  
Whene'er thou listenest to Philomel.'

XXXIII

Then Saturn thus;—'Sweet is the merry lark,  
That carols in man's ear so clear and strong;  
And youth must love to listen in the dark  
That tuneful elegy of Tereus' wrong;  
But I have heard that ancient strain too long,  
For sweet is sweet but when a little strange,  
And I grow weary for some newer song;  
For wherefore had I wings, unless to range  
Through all things mutable, from change to change?'

XXXIV

'But would'st thou hear the melodies of Time,  
Listen when sleep and drowsy darkness roll  
Over hush'd cities, and the midnight chime  
Sounds from their hundred clocks, and deep bells toll  
Like a last knell over the dead world's soul,  
Saying, 'Time shall be final of all things,  
Whose late, last voice must elegize the whole,'—  
O then I clap aloft my brave broad wings,  
And make the wide air tremble while it rings!'

XXXV

Then next a fair Eve-Fay made meek address,  
Saying, 'We be the handmaids of the Spring;  
In sign whereof, May, the quaint broideress,  
Hath wrought her samplers on our gauzy wing.  
We tend upon buds birth and blossoming,  
And count the leafy tributes that they owe—  
As, so much to the earth—so much to fling  
In showers to the brook—so much to go  
In whirlwinds to the clouds that made them grow.'

XXXVI

'The pastoral cowslips are our little pets,  
And daisy stars, whose firmament is green;  
Pansies, and those veil'd nuns, meek violets,

Sighing to that warm world from which they screen;  
And golden daffodils, pluck'd for May's Queen;  
And lonely harebells, quaking on the heath;  
And Hyacinth, long since a fair youth seen,  
Whose tuneful voice, turn'd fragrance in his breath,  
Kiss'd by sad Zephyr, guilty of his death.'

XXXVII

'The widow'd primrose weeping to the moon  
And saffron crocus in whose chalice bright  
A cool libation hoarded for the noon  
Is kept—and she that purifies the light,  
The virgin lily, faithful to her white,  
Whereon Eve wept in Eden for her shame;  
And the most dainty rose, Aurora's spright,  
Our every godchild, by whatever name—  
Spares us our lives, for we did nurse the same!'

XXXVIII

Then that old Mower stamp'd his heel, and struck  
His hurtful scythe against the harmless ground,  
Saying, 'Ye foolish imps, when am I stuck  
With gaudy buds, or like a wooer crown'd  
With flow'ry chaplets, save when they are found  
Withered?—Whenever have I pluck'd a rose,  
Except to scatter its vain leaves around?  
For so all gloss of beauty I oppose,  
And bring decay on every flow'r that blows.'

XXXIX

'Or when am I so wroth as when I view  
The wanton pride of Summer;—how she decks  
The birthday world with blossoms ever-new,  
As if Time had not lived, and heap'd great wrecks  
Of years on years?—O then I bravely vex  
And catch the gay Months in their gaudy plight,

And slay them with the wreaths about their necks,  
Like foolish heifers in the holy rite,  
And raise great trophies to my ancient might.'

XL

Then saith another, 'We are kindly things,  
And like her offspring nestle with the dove,—  
Witness these hearts embroidered on our wings,  
To show our constant patronage of love:—  
We sit at even, in sweet bow'rs above  
Lovers, and shake rich odors on the air,  
To mingle with their sighs; and still remove  
The startling owl, and bid the bat forbear  
Their privacy, and haunt some other where.'

XLI

'And we are near the mother when she sits  
Beside her infant in its wicker bed;  
And we are in the fairy scene that flits  
Across its tender brain: sweet dreams we shed,  
And whilst the tender little soul is fled,  
Away, to sport with our young elves, the while  
We touch the dimpled cheek with roses red,  
And tickle the soft lips until they smile,  
So that their careful parents they beguile.'

XLII

'O then, if ever thou hast breathed a vow  
At Love's dear portal, or at pale moon-rise  
Crush'd the dear curl on a regardful brow,  
That did not frown thee from thy honey prize—  
If ever thy sweet son sat on thy thighs,  
And wooed thee from thy careful thoughts within  
To watch the harmless beauty of his eyes,  
Or glad thy fingers on his smooth soft skin,  
For Love's dear sake, let us thy pity win!'

XLIII

Then Saturn fiercely thus:—'What joy have I  
In tender babes, that have devour'd mine own,  
Whenever to the light I heard them cry,  
Till foolish Rhea cheated me with stone?  
Whereon, till now, is my great hunger shown,  
In monstrous dint of my enormous tooth;  
And—but the peopled world is too full grown  
For hunger's edge—I would consume all youth  
At one great meal, without delay or ruth!'

XLIV

'For I am well nigh crazed and wild to hear  
How boastful fathers taunt me with their breed,  
Saying, 'We shall not die nor disappear,  
But, in these other selves, ourselves succeed  
Ev'n as ripe flowers pass into their seed  
Only to be renew'd from prime to prime,'  
All of which boastings I am forced to read,  
Besides a thousand challenges to Time,  
Which bragging lovers have compiled in rhyme.'

XLV

'Wherefore, when they are sweetly met o' nights,  
There will I steal and with my hurried hand  
Startle them suddenly from their delights  
Before the next encounter hath been plann'd,  
Ravishing hours in little minutes spann'd;  
But when they say farewell, and grieve apart,  
Then like a leaden statue I will stand,  
Meanwhile their many tears encrust my dart,  
And with a ragged edge cut heart from heart.'

XLVI

Then next a merry Woodsman, clad in green,  
Step vanward from his mates, that idly stood  
Each at his proper ease, as they had been  
Nursed in the liberty of old Shérwood,  
And wore the livery of Robin Hood,  
Who wont in forest shades to dine and sup,—  
So came this chief right frankly, and made good  
His haunch against his axe, and thus spoke up,  
Doffing his cap, which was an acorn's cup:—

#### XLVII

'We be small foresters and gay, who tend  
On trees, and all their furniture of green,  
Training the young boughs airily to bend,  
And show blue snatches of the sky between;—  
Or knit more close intricacies, to screen  
Birds' crafty dwellings, as may hide them best,  
But most the timid blackbird's—she that, seen,  
Will bear black poisonous berries to her nest,  
Lest man should cage the darlings of her breast.'

#### XLVIII

'We bend each tree in proper attitude,  
And founting willows train in silvery falls;  
We frame all shady roofs and arches rude,  
And verdant aisles leading to Dryads' halls,  
Or deep recesses where the Echo calls;—  
We shape all plummy trees against the sky,  
And carve tall elms' Corinthian capitals,—  
When sometimes, as our tiny hatchets ply,  
Men say, the tapping woodpecker is nigh.'

#### XLIX

'Sometimes we scoop the squirrel's hollow cell,  
And sometimes carve quaint letters on trees' rind,

That haply some lone musing wight may spell  
Dainty Aminta,—Gentle Rosalind,—  
Or chastest Laura,—sweetly call'd to mind  
In sylvan solitudes, ere he lies down;—  
And sometimes we enrich gray stems with twined  
And vagrant ivy,—or rich moss, whose brown  
Burns into gold as the warm sun goes down.'

L

'And, lastly, for mirth's sake and Christmas cheer,  
We bear the seedling berries, for increase,  
To graft the Druid oaks, from year to year,  
Careful that mistletoe may never cease;—  
Wherefore, if thou dost prize the shady peace  
Of sombre forests, or to see light break  
Through sylvan cloisters, and in spring release  
Thy spirit amongst leaves from careful ake,  
Spare us our lives for the Green Dryad's sake.'

LI

Then Saturn, with a frown:—'Go forth, and fell  
Oak for your coffins, and thenceforth lay by  
Your axes for the rust, and bid farewell  
To all sweet birds, and the blue peeps of sky  
Through tangled branches, for ye shall not spy  
The next green generation of the tree;  
But hence with the dead leaves, whene'er they fly,—  
Which in the bleak air I would rather see,  
Than flights of the most tuneful birds that be.'

LII

'For I dislike all prime, and verdant pets,  
Ivy except, that on the aged wall  
Prays with its worm-like roots, and daily frets  
The crumbled tower it seems to league withal,  
King-like, worn down by its own coronal:—

Neither in forest haunts love I to won,  
Before the golden plumage 'gins to fall,  
And leaves the brown bleak limbs with few leaves on,  
Or bare—like Nature in her skeleton.'

LIII

'For then sit I amongst the crooked boughs,  
Wooing dull Memory with kindred sighs;  
And there in rustling nuptials we espouse,  
Smit by the sadness in each other's eyes;—  
But Hope must have green bowers and blue skies,  
And must be courted with the gauds of Spring;  
Whilst Youth leans god-like on her lap, and cries,  
'What shall we always do, but love and sing?'—  
And Time is reckon'd a discarded thing.'

LIV

Here in my dream it made me fret to see  
How Puck, the antic, all this dreary while  
Had blithely jested with calamity,  
With mis-timed mirth mocking the doleful style  
Of his sad comrades, till it raised my bile  
To see him so reflect their grief aside,  
Turning their solemn looks to have a smile—  
Like a straight stick shown crooked in the tide;—  
But soon a novel advocate I spied.

LV

Quoth he—'We teach all natures to fulfil  
Their fore-appointed crafts, and instincts meet,—  
The bee's sweet alchemy,—the spider's skill,—  
The pismire's care to garner up his wheat,—  
And rustic masonry to swallows fleet,—  
The lapwing's cunning to preserve her nest,—  
But most, that lesser pelican, the sweet  
And shrilly ruddock, with its bleeding breast,



Its tender pity of poor babes distress.'

LVI

'Sometimes we cast our shapes, and in sleek skins  
Delve with the timid mole, that aptly delves  
From our example; so the spider spins,  
And eke the silk-worm, pattern'd by ourselves:  
Sometimes we travail on the summer shelves  
Of early bees, and busy toils commence,  
Watch'd of wise men, that know not we are elves,  
But gaze and marvel at our stretch of sense,  
And praise our human-like intelligence.'

LVII

'Wherefore, by thy delight in that old tale,  
And plaintive dirges the late robins sing,  
What time the leaves are scatter'd by the gale,  
Mindful of that old forest burying;—  
As thou dost love to watch each tiny thing,  
For whom our craft most curiously contrives,  
If thou hast caught a bee upon the wing,  
To take his honey-bag,—spare us our lives,  
And we will pay the ransom in full hives.'

LVIII

'Now by my glass,' quoth Time, 'ye do offend  
In teaching the brown bees that careful lore,  
And frugal ants, whose millions would have end,  
But they lay up for need a timely store,  
And travail with the seasons evermore;  
Whereas Great Mammoth long hath pass'd away,  
And none but I can tell what hide he wore;  
Whilst purblind men, the creatures of a day,  
In riddling wonder his great bones survey.'

LIX

Then came an elf, right beauteous to behold,  
Whose coat was like a brooklet that the sun  
Hath all embroider'd with its crooked gold,  
It was so quaintly wrought and overrun  
With spangled trceries,—most meet for one  
That was a warden of the pearly streams;—  
And as he stept out of the shadows dun,  
His jewels sparkled in the pale moon's gleams,  
And shot into the air their pointed beams.

LX

Quoth he,—'We bear the gold and silver keys  
Of bubbling springs and fountains, that below  
Course thro' the veiny earth,—which when they freeze  
Into hard crysolites, we bid to flow,  
Creeping like subtle snakes, when, as they go,  
We guide their windings to melodious falls,  
At whose soft murmurings, so sweet and low,  
Poets have tuned their smoothest madrigals,  
To sing to ladies in their banquet-halls.'

LXI

'And when the hot sun with his steadfast heat  
Parches the river god,—whose dusty urn  
Drips miserly, till soon his crystal feet  
Against his pebbly floor wax faint and burn  
And languid fish, unpoised, grow sick and yearn,—  
Then scoop we hollows in some sandy nook,  
And little channels dig, wherein we turn  
The thread-worn rivulet, that all forsook  
The Naiad-lily, pining for her brook.'

LXII

'Wherefore, by thy delight in cool green meads,  
With living sapphires daintily inlaid,—

In all soft songs of waters and their reeds,—  
And all reflections in a streamlet made,  
Haply of thy own love, that, disarray'd,  
Kills the fair lily with a livelier white,—  
By silver trouts upspringing from green shade,  
And winking stars reduplicate at night,  
Spare us, poor ministers to such delight.'

LXIII

Howbeit his pleading and his gentle looks  
Moved not the spiteful Shade:—Quoth he, 'Your taste  
Shoots wide of mine, for I despise the brooks  
And slavish rivulets that run to waste  
In noontide sweats, or, like poor vassals, haste  
To swell the vast dominion of the sea,  
In whose great presence I am held disgraced,  
And neighbor'd with a king that rivals me  
In ancient might and hoary majesty.'

LXIV

'Whereas I ruled in Chaos, and still keep  
The awful secrets of that ancient dearth,  
Before the briny fountains of the deep  
Brimm'd up the hollow cavities of earth;—  
I saw each trickling Sea-God at his birth,  
Each pearly Naiad with her oozy locks,  
And infant Titans of enormous girth,  
Whose huge young feet yet stumbled on the rocks,  
Stunning the early world with frequent shocks.'

LXV

'Where now is Titan, with his cumbrous brood,  
That scared the world?—By this sharp scythe they fell,  
And half the sky was curdled with their blood:  
So have all primal giants sigh'd farewell.  
No wardens now by sedgy fountains dwell,

Nor pearly Naiads. All their days are done  
That strove with Time, untimely, to excel;  
Wherefore I razed their progenies, and none  
But my great shadow intercepts the sun!

LXVI

Then saith the timid Fay—'Oh, mighty Time!  
Well hast thou wrought the cruel Titans' fall,  
For they were stain'd with many a bloody crime:  
Great giants work great wrongs,—but we are small,  
For love goes lowly;—but Oppression's tall,  
And with surpassing strides goes foremost still  
Where love indeed can hardly reach at all;  
Like a poor dwarf o'erburthen'd with good will,  
That labors to efface the tracks of ill.—'

LXVII.

'Man even strives with Man, but we eschew  
The guilty feud, and all fierce strifes abhor;  
Nay, we are gentle as the sweet heaven's dew,  
Beside the red and horrid drops of war,  
Weeping the cruel hates men battle for,  
Which worldly bosoms nourish in our spite:  
For in the gentle breast we ne'er withdraw,  
But only when all love hath taken flight,  
And youth's warm gracious heart is hardened quite.'

LXVIII

'So are our gentle natures intertwined  
With sweet humanities, and closely knit  
In kindly sympathy with human kind.  
Witness how we befriend, with elfin wit,  
All hopeless maids and lovers,—nor omit  
Magical succors unto hearts forlorn:—  
We charm man's life, and do not perish it;—  
So judge us by the helps we showed this morn,

To one who held his wretched days in scorn.'

LXIX

"'Twas nigh sweet Amwell;—for the Queen had task'd  
Our skill to-day amidst the silver Lea,  
Whereon the noontide sun had not yet bask'd,  
Wherefore some patient man we thought to see,  
Planted in moss-grown rushes to the knee,  
Beside the cloudy margin cold and dim;—  
Howbeit no patient fisherman was he  
That cast his sudden shadow from the brim,  
Making us leave our toils to gaze on him.'

LXX

'His face was ashy pale, and leaden care  
Had sunk the levell'd arches of his brow,  
Once bridges for his joyous thoughts to fare  
Over those melancholy springs and slow,  
That from his piteous eyes began to flow,  
And fell anon into the chilly stream;  
Which, as his mimick'd image show'd below,  
Wrinkled his face with many a needless seam,  
Making grief sadder in its own esteem.'

LXXI

'And lo! upon the air we saw him stretch  
His passionate arms; and, in a wayward strain,  
He 'gan to elegize that fellow wretch  
That with mute gestures answer'd him again,  
Saying, 'Poor slave, how long wilt thou remain  
Life's sad weak captive in a prison strong,  
Hoping with tears to rust away thy chain,  
In bitter servitude to worldly wrong?—  
Thou wear'st that mortal livery too long!'

LXXII

'This, with more spleenful speeches and some tears,  
When he had spent upon the imaged wave,  
Speedily I convened my elfin peers  
Under the lily-cups, that we might save  
This woeful mortal from a wilful grave  
By shrewd diversions of his mind's regret,  
Seeing he was mere Melancholy's slave,  
That sank wherever a dark cloud he met,  
And straight was tangled in her secret net.'

LXXIII

'Therefore, as still he watch'd the water's flow,  
Daintily we transform'd, and with bright fins  
Came glancing through the gloom; some from below  
Rose like dim fancies when a dream begins,  
Snatching the light upon their purple skins;  
Then under the broad leaves made slow retire:  
One like a golden galley bravely wins  
Its radiant course,—another glows like fire,—  
Making that wayward man our pranks admire.'

LXXIV

'And so he banish'd thought, and quite forgot  
All contemplation of that wretched face;  
And so we wiled him from that lonely spot  
Along the river's brink; till, by heaven's grace,  
He met a gentle haunter of the place,  
Full of sweet wisdom gather'd from the brooks,  
Who there discuss'd his melancholy case  
With wholesome texts learned from kind nature's books,  
Meanwhile he newly trimm'd his lines and hooks.'

LXXV

Herewith the Fairy ceased. Quoth Ariel now—

'Let me remember how I saved a man,  
Whose fatal noose was fastened on a bough,  
Intended to abridge his sad life's span;  
For haply I was by when he began  
His stern soliloquy in life dispraise,  
And overheard his melancholy plan,  
How he had made a vow to end his days,  
And therefore follow'd him in all his ways.'

LXXVI

'Through brake and tangled copse, for much he loathed  
All populous haunts, and roam'd in forests rude,  
To hide himself from man. But I had clothed  
My delicate limbs with plumes, and still pursued,  
Where only foxes and wild cats intrude,  
Till we were come beside an ancient tree  
Late blasted by a storm. Here he renew'd  
His loud complaints,—choosing that spot to be  
The scene of his last horrid tragedy.'

LXXVII

'It was a wild and melancholy glen,  
Made gloomy by tall firs and cypress dark,  
Whose roots, like any bones of buried men,  
Push'd through the rotten sod for fear's remark;  
A hundred horrid stems, jagged and stark,  
Wrestled with crooked arms in hideous fray,  
Besides sleek ashes with their dappled bark,  
Like crafty serpents climbing for a prey,  
With many blasted oaks moss-grown and gray.'

LXXVIII

'But here upon his final desperate clause  
Suddenly I pronounced so sweet a strain,  
Like a pang'd nightingale, it made him pause,  
Till half the frenzy of his grief was slain,

The sad remainder oozing from his brain  
In timely ecstasies of healing tears,  
Which through his ardent eyes began to drain;—  
Meanwhile the deadly Fates unclosed their shears:—  
So pity me and all my fated peers!

LXXIX

Thus Ariel ended, and was some time hush'd:  
When with the hoary shape a fresh tongue pleads,  
And red as rose the gentle Fairy blush'd  
To read the records of her own good deeds:—  
'It chanced,' quoth she, 'in seeking through the meads  
For honied cowslips, sweetest in the morn,  
Whilst yet the buds were hung with dewy beads.'  
And Echo answered to the huntsman's horn,  
We found a babe left in the swaths forlorn.

LXXX

'A little, sorrowful, deserted thing,  
Begot of love, and yet no love begetting;  
Guiltless of shame, and yet for shame to wring;  
And too soon banish'd from a mother's petting,  
To churlish nurture and the wide world's fretting,  
For alien pity and unnatural care;—  
Alas! to see how the cold dew kept wetting  
His childish coats, and dabbled all his hair,  
Like gossamers across his forehead fair.'

LXXXI

'His pretty pouting mouth, witless of speech,  
Lay half-way open like a rose-lipp'd shell;  
And his young cheek was softer than a peach,  
Whereon his tears, for roundness, could not dwell,  
But quickly roll'd themselves to pearls, and fell,  
Some on the grass, and some against his hand,  
Or haply wander'd to the dimpled well,



Which love beside his mouth had sweetly plann'd,  
Yet not for tears, but mirth and smilings bland.'

LXXXII

'Pity it was to see those frequent tears  
Falling regardless from his friendless eyes;  
There was such beauty in those twin blue spheres,  
As any mother's heart might leap to prize;  
Blue were they, like the zenith of the skies  
Softened betwixt two clouds, both clear and mild;—  
Just touched with thought, and yet not over wise,  
They show'd the gentle spirit of a child,  
Not yet by care or any craft defiled.'

LXXXIII

'Pity it was to see the ardent sun  
Scorching his helpless limbs—it shone so warm;  
For kindly shade or shelter he had none,  
Nor mother's gentle breast, come fair or storm.  
Meanwhile I bade my pitying mates transform  
Like grasshoppers, and then, with shrilly cries,  
All round the infant noisily we swarm,  
Haply some passing rustic to advise—  
Whilst providential Heaven our care espies.'

LXXXIV

'And sends full soon a tender-hearted hind,  
Who, wond'ring at our loud unusual note,  
Strays curiously aside, and so doth find  
The orphan child laid in the grass remote,  
And laps the foundling in his russet coat,  
Who thence was nurtured in his kindly cot:—  
But how he prosper'd let proud London quote,  
How wise, how rich, and how renown'd he got,  
And chief of all her citizens, I wot.'

LXXXV

'Witness his goodly vessels on the Thames,  
Whose holds were fraught with costly merchandise,—  
Jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames,  
And gorgeous silks that Samarcand supplies:  
Witness that Royal Bourse he bade arise,  
The mart of merchants from the East and West:  
Whose slender summit, pointing to the skies,  
Still bears, in token of his grateful breast,  
The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest—'

LXXXVI

'The tender grasshopper, his chosen crest,  
That all the summer, with a tuneful wing,  
Makes merry chirpings in its grassy nest,  
Inspired with dew to leap and sing:—  
So let us also live, eternal King!  
Partakers of the green and pleasant earth:—  
Pity it is to slay the meanest thing,  
That, like a mote, shines in the smile of mirth:—  
Enough there is of joy's decrease and dearth!'

LXXXVII

'Enough of pleasure, and delight, and beauty,  
Perish'd and gone, and hasting to decay;—  
Enough to sadden even thee, whose duty  
Or spite it is to havoc and to slay:  
Too many a lovely race razed quite away,  
Hath left large gaps in life and human loving;—  
Here then begin thy cruel war to stay,  
And spare fresh sighs, and tears, and groans, reproving  
Thy desolating hand for our removing.'

LXXXVIII

Now here I heard a shrill and sudden cry,  
And, looking up, I saw the antic Puck  
Grappling with Time, who clutch'd him like a fly,  
Victim of his own sport,—the jester's luck!  
He, whilst his fellows grieved, poor wight, had stuck  
His freakish gauds upon the Ancient's brow,  
And now his ear, and now his beard, would pluck;  
Whereas the angry churl had snatched him now,  
Crying, 'Thou impish mischief, who art thou?'

LXXXIX

'Alas!' quoth Puck, 'a little random elf,  
Born in the sport of nature, like a weed,  
For simple sweet enjoyment of myself,  
But for no other purpose, worth, or need;  
And yet withal of a most happy breed;  
And there is Robin Goodfellow besides,  
My partner dear in many a prankish deed  
To make dame Laughter hold her jolly sides,  
Like merry mummers twain on holy tides.'

XC

'Tis we that bob the angler's idle cork,  
Till e'en the patient man breathes half a curse;  
We steal the morsel from the gossip's fork,  
And curdling looks with secret straws disperse,  
Or stop the sneezing chanter at mid verse:  
And when an infant's beauty prospers ill,  
We change, some mothers say, the child at nurse:  
But any graver purpose to fulfil,  
We have not wit enough, and scarce the will.'

XCI

'We never let the canker melancholy  
To gather on our faces like a rust,  
But glass our features with some change of folly,

Taking life's fabled miseries on trust,  
But only sorrowing when sorrow must:  
We ruminatè no sage's solemn cud,  
But own ourselves a pinch of lively dust  
To frisk upon a wind,—whereas the flood  
Of tears would turn us into heavy mud.'

XCII

'Beshrew those sad interpreters of nature,  
Who gloze her lively universal law,  
As if she had not form'd our cheerful feature  
To be so tickled with the slightest straw!  
So let them vex their mumbling mouths, and draw  
The corners downward, like a wat'ry moon,  
And deal in gusty sighs and rainy flaw—  
We will not woo foul weather all too soon,  
Or nurse November on the lap of June.'

XCIII

'For ours are winging sprites, like any bird,  
That shun all stagnant settlements of grief;  
And even in our rest our hearts are stirr'd,  
Like insects settled on a dancing leaf:—  
This is our small philosophy in brief,  
Which thus to teach hath set me all agape:  
But dost thou relish it? O hoary chief!  
Unclasp thy crooked fingers from my nape,  
And I will show thee many a pleasant scrape.'

XCIV

Then Saturn thus:—shaking his crooked blade  
O'erhead, which made aloft a lightning flash  
In all the fairies' eyes, dismally fray'd!  
His ensuing voice came like the thunder crash—  
Meanwhile the bolt shatters some pine or ash—  
'Thou feeble, wanton, foolish, fickle thing!

Whom nought can frighten, sadden, or abash,—  
To hope my solemn countenance to wring  
To idiot smiles!—but I will prune thy wing!

#### XCV

'Lo! this most awful handle of my scythe  
Stood once a May-pole, with a flowery crown,  
Which rustics danced around, and maidens blithe,  
To wanton pipings;—but I pluck'd it down,  
And robed the May Queen in a churchyard gown,  
Turning her buds to rosemary and rue;  
And all their merry minstrelsy did drown,  
And laid each lusty leaper in the dew;—  
So thou shalt fare—and every jovial crew!

#### XCVI

Here he lets go the struggling imp, to clutch.  
His mortal engine with each grisly hand,  
Which frights the elfin progeny so much,  
They huddle in a heap, and trembling stand  
All round Titania, like the queen bee's band,  
With sighs and tears and very shrieks of woe!—  
Meanwhile, some moving argument I plann'd,  
To make the stern Shade merciful,—when lo!  
He drops his fatal scythe without a blow!

#### XCVII

For, just at need, a timely Apparition  
Steps in between, to bear the awful brunt;  
Making him change his horrible position,  
To marvel at this comer, brave and blunt,  
That dares Time's irresistible affront,  
Whose strokes have scarr'd even the gods of old;—  
Whereas this seem'd a mortal, at mere hunt  
For coney, lighted by the moonshine cold,  
Or stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

### XCVIII

Who, turning to the small assembled fays,  
Doffs to the lily queen his courteous cap,  
And holds her beauty for a while in gaze,  
With bright eyes kindling at this pleasant hap;  
And thence upon the fair moon's silver map,  
As if in question of this magic chance,  
Laid like a dream upon the green earth's lap;  
And then upon old Saturn turns askance,  
Exclaiming, with a glad and kindly glance:—

### XCIX

'Oh, these be Fancy's revelers by night!  
Stealthy companions of the downy moth—  
Diana's motes, that flit in her pale light,  
Shunners of sunbeams in diurnal sloth;—  
These be the feasters on night's silver cloth;—  
The gnat with shrilly trump is their convener,  
Forth from their flowery chambers, nothing loth,  
With lulling tunes to charm the air serener,  
Or dance upon the grass to make it greener.'

### C

'These be the pretty genii of the flow'rs,  
Daintily fed with honey and pure dew—  
Midsummer's phantoms in her dreaming hours,  
King Oberon, and all his merry crew,  
The darling puppets of romance's view;  
Fairies, and sprites, and goblin elves we call them,  
Famous for patronage of lovers true;—  
No harm they act, neither shall harm befall them,  
So do not thus with crabbed frowns appal them.'

### CI

O what a cry was Saturn's then!—it made  
The fairies quake. 'What care I for their pranks,  
However they may lovers choose to aid,  
Or dance their roundelays on flow'ry banks?—  
Long must they dance before they earn my thanks,—  
So step aside, to some far safer spot,  
Whilst with my hungry scythe I mow their ranks,  
And leave them in the sun, like weeds, to rot,  
And with the next day's sun to be forgot.'

## CII

Anon, he raised afresh his weapon keen;  
But still the gracious Shade disarm'd his aim,  
Stepping with brave alacrity between,  
And made his sore arm powerless and tame.  
His be perpetual glory, for the shame  
Of hoary Saturn in that grand defeat!—  
But I must tell how here Titania, came  
With all her kneeling lieges, to entreat  
His kindly succor, in sad tones, but sweet.

## CIII

Saying, 'Thou seest a wretched queen before thee,  
The fading power of a failing land,  
Who for a kingdom kneeleth to implore thee,  
Now menaced by this tyrant's spoiling hand;  
No one but thee can hopefully withstand  
That crooked blade, he longeth so to lift.  
I pray thee blind him with his own vile sand,  
Which only times all ruins by its drift,  
Or prune his eagle wings that are so swift.'

## CIV

'Or take him by that sole and grizzled tuft,  
That hangs upon his bald and barren crown;

And we will sing to see him so rebuff'd,  
And lend our little mights to pull him down,  
And make brave sport of his malicious frown,  
For all his boastful mockery o'er men.  
For thou wast born, I know, for this renown,  
By my most magical and inward ken,  
That readeth ev'n at Fate's forestalling pen.'

#### CV

'Nay, by the golden lustre of thine eye,  
And by thy brow's most fair and ample span,  
Thought's glorious palace, framed for fancies high,  
And by thy cheek thus passionately wan,  
I know the signs of an immortal man,—  
Nature's chief darling, and illustrious mate,  
Destined to foil old Death's oblivious plan,  
And shine untarnish'd by the fogs of Fate,  
Time's famous rival till the final date!'

#### CVI

'O shield us then from this usurping Time,  
And we will visit thee in moonlight dreams;  
And teach thee tunes, to wed unto thy rhyme,  
And dance about thee in all midnight gleams,  
Giving thee glimpses of our magic schemes,  
Such as no mortal's eye hath ever seen;  
And, for thy love to us in our extremes,  
Will ever keep thy chaplet fresh and green,  
Such as no poet's wreath hath ever been!'

#### CVII

'And we'll distil thee aromatic dews,  
To charm thy sense, when there shall be no flow'rs;  
And flavor'd syrups in thy drinks infuse,  
And teach the nightingale to haunt thy bow'rs,  
And with our games divert thy weariest hours,



With all that elfin wits can e'er devise.  
And, this churl dead, there'll be no hasting hours  
To rob thee of thy joys, as now joy flies':—  
Here she was stopp'd by Saturn's furious cries.]

### CVIII

Whom, therefore, the kind Shade rebukes anew,  
Saying, 'Thou haggard Sin, go forth, and scoop  
Thy hollow coffin in some churchyard yew,  
Or make th' autumnal flow'rs turn pale, and droop;  
Or fell the bearded corn, till gleaners stoop  
Under fat sheaves,—or blast the piny grove;—  
But here thou shall not harm this pretty group,  
Whose lives are not so frail and feebly wove,  
But leased on Nature's loveliness and love.'

### CIX

"Tis these that free the small entangled fly,  
Caught in the venom'd spider's crafty snare;—  
These be the petty surgeons that apply  
The healing balsams to the wounded hare,  
Bedded in bloody fern, no creature's care!—  
These be providers for the orphan brood,  
Whose tender mother hath been slain in air,  
Quitting with gaping bill her darling's food,  
Hard by the verge of her domestic wood.'

### CX

"Tis these befriend the timid trembling stag,  
When, with a bursting heart beset with fears,  
He feels his saving speed begin to flag;  
For then they quench the fatal taint with tears,  
And prompt fresh shifts in his alarum'd ears,  
So piteously they view all bloody morts;  
Or if the gunner, with his arms, appears,

Like noisy pyes and jays, with harsh reports,  
They warn the wild fowl of his deadly sports.'

CXI

'For these are kindly ministers of nature,  
To soothe all covert hurts and dumb distress;  
Pretty they be, and very small of stature,—  
For mercy still consorts with littleness;—  
Wherefore the sum of good is still the less,  
And mischief grossest in this world of wrong;—  
So do these charitable dwarfs redress  
The tenfold ravages of giants strong,  
To whom great malice and great might belong.'

CXII

'Likewise to them are Poets much beholden  
For secret favors in the midnight glooms;  
Brave Spenser quaff'd out of their goblets golden,  
And saw their tables spread of prompt mushrooms,  
And heard their horns of honeysuckle blooms  
Sounding upon the air most soothing soft,  
Like humming bees busy about the brooms,—  
And glanced this fair queen's witchery full oft,  
And in her magic wain soar'd far aloft.'

CXIII

'Nay I myself, though mortal, once was nursed  
By fairy gossips, friendly at my birth,  
And in my childish ear glib Mab rehearsed  
Her breezy travels round our planet's girth,  
Telling me wonders of the moon and earth;  
My gramarye at her grave lap I conn'd,  
Where Puck hath been convened to make me mirth;  
I have had from Queen Titania tokens fond,  
And toy'd with Oberon's permitted wand.'

CXIV

'With figs and plums and Persian dates they fed me,  
And delicate cates after my sunset meal,  
And took me by my childish hand, and led me  
By craggy rocks crested with keeps of steel,  
Whose awful bases deep dark woods conceal,  
Staining some dead lake with their verdant dyes.  
And when the West sparkled at Phoebus' wheel,  
With fairy euphrasy they purged mine eyes,  
To let me see their cities in the skies.'

CXV

"'Twas they first school'd my young imagination  
To take its flights like any new-fledged bird,  
And show'd the span of winged meditation  
Stretch'd wider than things grossly seen or heard.  
With sweet swift Ariel how I soar'd and stirr'd  
The fragrant blooms of spiritual bow'rs!  
'Twas they endear'd what I have still preferr'd,  
Nature's blest attributes and balmy pow'rs,  
Her hills and vales and brooks, sweet birds and flow'rs.'

CXVI

'Wherefore with all true loyalty and duty  
Will I regard them in my honoring rhyme,  
With love for love, and homages to beauty,  
And magic thoughts gather'd in night's cool clime,  
With studious verse trancing the dragon Time,  
Strong as old Merlin's necromantic spells;  
So these dear monarchs of the summer's prime  
Shall live unstartled by his dreadful yells,  
Till shrill larks warn them to their flowery cells.'

CXVII

Look how a poison'd man turns livid black,  
Drugg'd with a cup of deadly hellebore,  
That sets his horrid features all at rack,—  
So seem'd these words into the ear to pour  
Of ghastly Saturn, answering with a roar  
Of mortal pain and spite and utmost rage,  
Wherewith his grisly arm he raised once more,  
And bade the cluster'd sinews all engage,  
As if at one fell stroke to wreck an age.

#### CXVIII

Whereas the blade flash'd on the dinted ground,  
Down through his steadfast foe, yet made no scar  
On that immortal Shade, or death-like wound;  
But Time was long benumb'd, and stood ajar,  
And then with baffled rage took flight afar,  
To weep his hurt in some Cimmerian gloom,  
Or meaner fames (like mine) to mock and mar,  
Or sharp his scythe for royal strokes of doom,  
Whetting its edge on some old Cæsar's tomb.

#### CXIX

Howbeit he vanish'd in the forest shade,  
Distantly heard as if some grumbling pard,  
And, like Nymph Echo, to a sound decay'd;—  
Meanwhile the fays cluster'd the gracious Bard,  
The darling centre of their dear regard:  
Besides of sundry dances on the green,  
Never was mortal man so brightly starr'd,  
Or won such pretty homages, I ween.  
'Nod to him, Elves!' cries the melodious queen.

#### CXX

'Nod to him, Elves, and flutter round about him,  
And quite enclose him with your pretty crowd,  
And touch him lovingly, for that, without him,

The silkworm now had spun our dreary shroud;—  
But he hath all dispersed Death's tearful cloud,  
And Time's dread effigy scared quite away:  
Bow to him then, as though to me ye bow'd,  
And his dear wishes prosper and obey  
Wherever love and wit can find a way!

CXXI

"Noint him with fairy dews of magic savors,  
Shaken from orient buds still pearly wet,  
Roses and spicy pinks,—and, of all favors,  
Plant in his walks the purple violet,  
And meadow-sweet under the hedges set,  
To mingle breaths with dainty eglantine  
And honeysuckles sweet,—nor yet forget  
Some pastoral flowery chaplets to entwine,  
To vie the thoughts about his brow benign!"

CXXII

'Let no wild things astonish him or fear him,  
But tell them all how mild he is of heart,  
Till e'en the timid hares go frankly near him,  
And eke the dappled does, yet never start;  
Nor shall their fawns into the thickets dart,  
Nor wrens forsake their nests among the leaves,  
Nor speckled thrushes flutter far apart;—  
But bid the sacred swallow haunt his eaves,  
To guard his roof from lightning and from thieves.'

CXXIII

'Or when he goes the nimble squirrel's visitor,  
Let the brown hermit bring his hoarded nuts,  
For, tell him, this is Nature's kind Inquisitor,—  
Though man keeps cautious doors that conscience shuts,  
For conscious wrong all curious quest rebuts,—  
Nor yet shall bees uncase their jealous stings,

However he may watch their straw-built huts;—  
So let him learn the crafts of all small things,  
Which he will hint most aptly when he sings.'

CXXIV

Here she leaves off, and with a graceful hand  
Waves thrice three splendid circles round his head;  
Which, though deserted by the radiant wand,  
Wears still the glory which her waving shed,  
Such as erst crown'd the old Apostle's head,  
To show the thoughts there harbor'd were divine,  
And on immortal contemplations fed:—  
Goodly it was to see that glory shine  
Around a brow so lofty and benign!—

CXXV

Goodly it was to see the elfin brood  
Contend for kisses of his gentle hand,  
That had their mortal enemy withstood,  
And stay'd their lives, fast ebbing with the sand.  
Long while this strife engaged the pretty band;  
But now bold Chanticleer, from farm to farm,  
Challenged the dawn creeping o'er eastern land,  
And well the fairies knew that shrill alarm,  
Which sounds the knell of every elfish charm.

CXXVI

And soon the rolling mist, that 'gan arise  
From plashy mead and undiscover'd stream,  
Earth's morning incense to the early skies,  
Crept o'er the failing landscape of my dream.  
Soon faded then the Phantom of my theme—  
A shapeless shade, that fancy disavowed,  
And shrank to nothing in the mist extreme,  
Then flew Titania,—and her little crowd,  
Like flocking linnets, vanished in a cloud.

Thomas Hood

## The Poet's Portion

What is a mine—a treasury—a dower—  
A magic talisman of mighty power?  
A poet's wide possession of the earth.  
He has th' enjoyment of a flower's birth  
Before its budding—ere the first red streaks,—  
And Winter cannot rob him of their cheeks.  
Look—if his dawn be not as other men's!  
Twenty bright flushes—ere another kens  
The first of sunlight is abroad—he sees  
Its golden 'lection of the topmost trees,  
And opes the splendid fissures of the morn.  
When do his fruits delay, when doth his corn  
Linger for harvesting? Before the leaf  
Is commonly abroad, in his piled sheaf  
The flagging poppies lose their ancient flame.  
No sweet there is, no pleasure I can name,  
But he will sip it first—before the lees.  
'Tis his to taste rich honey,—ere the bees  
Are busy with the brooms. He may forestall  
June's rosy advent for his coronal;  
Before th' expectant buds upon the bough,  
Twining his thoughts to bloom upon his brow.  
Oh! blest to see the flower in its seed,  
Before its leafy presence; for indeed  
Leaves are but wings on which the summer flies,  
And each thing perishable fades and dies,  
Escap'd in thought; but his rich thinkings be  
Like overflows of immortality:  
So that what there is steep'd shall perish never,  
But live and bloom, and be a joy forever.

Thomas Hood



# The Sea Of Death

—Methought I saw  
Life swiftly treading over endless space;  
And, at her foot-print, but a bygone pace,  
The ocean-past, which, with increasing wave,  
Swallow'd her steps like a pursuing grave.  
Sad were my thoughts that anchor'd silently  
On the dead waters of that passionless sea,  
Unstirr'd by any touch of living breath:  
Silence hung over it, and drowsy Death,  
Like a gorged sea-bird, slept with folded wings  
On crowded carcasses—sad passive things  
That wore the thin gray surface, like a veil  
Over the calmness of their features pale.  
And there were spring-faced cherubs that did sleep  
Like water-lilies on that motionless deep,  
How beautiful! with bright unruffled hair  
On sleek unfretted brows, and eyes that were  
Buried in marble tombs, a pale eclipse!  
And smile-bedimpled cheeks, and pleasant lips,  
Meekly apart, as if the soul intense  
Spake out in dreams of its own innocence:  
And so they lay in loveliness, and kept  
The birth-night of their peace, that Life e'en wept  
With very envy of their happy fronts;  
For there were neighbor brows scarr'd by the brunts  
Of strife and sorrowing—where Care had set  
His crooked autograph, and marr'd the jet  
Of glassy locks, with hollow eyes forlorn,  
And lips that curl'd in bitterness and scorn—  
Wretched,—as they had breathed of this world's pain,  
And so bequeathed it to the world again,  
Through the beholder's heart in heavy sighs.  
So lay they garmented in torpid light,  
Under the pall of a transparent night,  
Like solemn apparitions lull'd sublime  
To everlasting rest,—and with them Time  
Slept, as he sleeps upon the silent face  
Of a dark dial in a sunless place.



# The Song Of The Shirt

The Song of the Shirt

With fingers weary and worn,  
With eyelids heavy and red,  
A woman sat, in unwomanly rags,  
Plying her needle and thread--  
Stitch! stitch! stitch!  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch  
She sang the "Song of the Shirt."

"Work! work! work!  
While the cock is crowing aloof!  
And work — work — work,  
Till the stars shine through the roof!  
It's Oh! to be a slave  
Along with the barbarous Turk,  
Where woman has never a soul to save,  
If this is Christian work!

"Work — work — work  
Till the brain begins to swim;  
Work — work — work  
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!  
Seam, and gusset, and band,  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,  
And sew them on in a dream!

"Oh, Men, with Sisters dear!  
Oh, Men, with Mothers and Wives!  
It is not linen you're wearing out,  
But human creatures' lives!  
Stitch — stitch — stitch,  
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,  
Sewing at once with a double thread,  
A Shroud as well as a Shirt.

But why do I talk of Death?

That Phantom of grisly bone,  
I hardly fear its terrible shape,  
It seems so like my own —  
It seems so like my own,  
Because of the fasts I keep;  
Oh, God! that bread should be so dear,  
And flesh and blood so cheap!

"Work — work — work!  
My Labour never flags;  
And what are its wages? A bed of straw,  
A crust of bread — and rags.  
That shatter'd roof — and this naked floor —  
A table — a broken chair —  
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank  
For sometimes falling there!

"Work — work — work!  
From weary chime to chime,  
Work — work — work!  
As prisoners work for crime!  
Band, and gusset, and seam,  
Seam, and gusset, and band,  
Till the heart is sick, and the brain benumb'd,  
As well as the weary hand.

"Work — work — work,  
In the dull December light,  
And work — work — work,  
When the weather is warm and bright —  
While underneath the eaves  
The brooding swallows cling  
As if to show me their sunny backs  
And twit me with the spring.

Oh! but to breathe the breath  
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet —  
With the sky above my head,  
And the grass beneath my feet  
For only one short hour  
To feel as I used to feel,  
Before I knew the woes of want

And the walk that costs a meal!

Oh! but for one short hour!

A respite however brief!

No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,

But only time for Grief!

A little weeping would ease my heart,

But in their briny bed

My tears must stop, for every drop

Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,

With eyelids heavy and red,

A woman sat in unwomanly rags,

Plying her needle and thread —

Stitch! stitch! stitch!

In poverty, hunger, and dirt,

And still with a voice of dolorous pitch, —

Would that its tone could reach the Rich! —

She sang this "Song of the Shirt!"

Thomas Hood

# The Stars Are With The Voyager

The stars are with the voyager  
Wherever he may sail;  
The moon is constant to her time;  
The sun will never fail;  
But follow, follow round the world,  
The green earth and the sea,  
So love is with the lover's heart,  
Wherever he may be.  
Wherever he may be, the stars  
Must daily lose their light;  
The moon will veil her in the shade;  
The sun will set at night.  
The sun may set, but constant love  
Will shine when he's away;  
So that dull night is never night,  
And day is brighter day.

Thomas Hood

# The Sun Was Slumbering In The West

The sun was slumbering in the West,  
My daily labors past;  
On Anna's soft and gentle breast  
My head reclined at last;  
The darkness closed around, so dear  
To fond congenial souls,  
And thus she murmur'd at my ear,  
"My love, we're out of coals!

"That Mister Bond has call'd again,  
Insisting on his rent;  
And all the Todds are coming up  
To see us, out of Kent --  
I quite forgot to tell you John  
Has had a tipsy fall --  
I'm sure there's something going on  
With that vile Mary Hall!

"Miss Bell has bought the sweetest silk,  
And I have bought the rest --  
Of course, if we go out of town,  
Southend will be the best.  
I really think the Jones's house  
Would be the thing for us;  
I think I told you Mrs. Pope  
Had parted with her hus --

"Cook , by the way, came up today,  
To bid me suit myself --  
And what d'ye think? The rats have gnaw'd  
The victuals on the shelf,  
And, lord! there's such a letter come,  
Inviting you to fight!  
Of course you don't intend to go --  
God bless you, dear, good night!"

Thomas Hood

# The Two Peacocks Of Bedfont

I

Alas! That breathing Vanity should go  
Where Pride is buried,—like its very ghost,  
Uprisen from the naked bones below,  
In novel flesh, clad in the silent boast  
Of gaudy silk that flutters to and fro,  
Shedding its chilling superstition most  
On young and ignorant natures—as it wont  
To haunt the peaceful churchyard of Bedfont!

II

Each Sabbath morning, at the hour of prayer,  
Behold two maidens, up the quiet green  
Shining, far distant, in the summer air  
That flaunts their dewy robes and breathes between  
Their downy plumes,—sailing as if they were  
Two far-off ships,—until they brush between  
The churchyard's humble walls, and watch and wait  
On either side of the wide open'd gate,

III

And there they stand—with haughty necks before  
God's holy house, that points towards the skies—  
Frowning reluctant duty from the poor,  
And tempting homage from unthoughtful eyes:  
And Youth looks lingering from the temple door,  
Breathing its wishes in unfruitful sighs,  
With pouting lips,—forgetful of the grace,  
Of health, and smiles, on the heart-conscious face;—

IV

Because that Wealth, which has no bliss beside,



May wear the happiness of rich attire;  
And those two sisters, in their silly pride,  
May change the soul's warm glances for the fire  
Of lifeless diamonds;—and for health denied,—  
With art, that blushes at itself, inspire  
Their languid cheeks—and flourish in a glory  
That has no life in life, nor after-story.

## V

The aged priest goes shaking his gray hair  
In meekest censuring, and turns his eye  
Earthward in grief, and heavenward in pray'r,  
And sighs, and clasps his hands, and passes by,  
Good-hearted man! what sullen soul would wear  
Thy sorrow for a garb, and constantly  
Put on thy censure, that might win the praise  
Of one so gray in goodness and in days?

## VI

Also the solemn clerk partakes the shame  
Of this ungodly shine of human pride,  
And sadly blends his reverence and blame  
In one grave bow, and passes with a stride  
Impatient:—many a red-hooded dame  
Turns her pain'd head, but not her glance, aside  
From wanton dress, and marvels o'er again,  
That heaven hath no wet judgments for the vain.

## VII

'I have a lily in the bloom at home,'  
Quoth one, 'and by the blessed Sabbath day  
I'll pluck my lily in its pride, and come  
And read a lesson upon vain array;—  
And when stiff silks are rustling up, and some  
Give place, I'll shake it in proud eyes and say—  
Making my reverence,—'Ladies, an you please,

King Solomon's not half so fine as these,"

VIII

Then her meek partner, who has nearly run  
His earthly course,—'Nay, Goody, let your text  
Grow in the garden.—We have only one—  
Who knows that these dim eyes may see the next?  
Summer will come again, and summer sun,  
And lilies too,—but I were sorely vexed  
To mar my garden, and cut short the blow  
Of the last lily I may live to grow,'

IX

'The last!' quoth she, 'and though the last it were—  
Lo! those two wantons, where they stand so proud  
With waving plumes, and jewels in their hair,  
And painted cheeks, like Dragons to be bow'd  
And curtsy'd to!—last Sabbath after pray'r,  
I heard the little Tomkins ask aloud  
If they were angels—but I made him know  
God's bright ones better, with a bitter blow!'

X.

So speaking, they pursue the pebbly walk  
That leads to the white porch the Sunday throng,  
Hand-coupled urchins in restrain'd talk,  
And anxious pedagogue that chastens wrong,  
And posied churchwarden with solemn stalk,  
And gold-bedizen'd beadle flames along,  
And gentle peasant clad in buff and green,  
Like a meek cowslip in the spring serene;

XI

And blushing maiden—modestly array'd

In spotless white,—still conscious of the glass;  
And she, the lonely widow, that hath made  
A sable covenant with grief,—alas!  
She veils her tears under the deep, deep shade,  
While the poor kindly-hearted, as they pass,  
Bend to unclouded childhood, and caress  
Her boy,—so rosy!—and so fatherless!

## XII

Thus, as good Christians ought, they all draw near  
The fair white temple, to the timely call  
Of pleasant bells that tremble in the ear.—  
Now the last frock, and scarlet hood, and shawl  
Fade into dusk, in the dim atmosphere  
Of the low porch, and heav'n has won them all,  
—Saying those two, that turn aside and pass,  
In velvet blossom, where all flesh is grass.

## XIII

Ah me! to see their silken manors trail'd  
In purple luxuries—with restless gold,—  
Flaunting the grass where widowhood has wail'd  
In blotted black,—over the heapy mould  
Panting wave-wantonly! They never quail'd  
How the warm vanity abused the cold;  
Nor saw the solemn faces of the gone  
Sadly uplooking through transparent stone:

## XIV

But swept their dwellings with unquiet light,  
Shocking the awful presence of the dead;  
Where gracious natures would their eyes benight,  
Nor wear their being with a lip too red,  
Nor move too rudely in the summer bright  
Of sun, but put staid sorrow in their tread,  
Meting it into steps, with inward breath,

In very pity to bereaved death.

XV

Now in the church, time-sober'd minds resign  
To solemn pray'r, and the loud chaunted hymn,—  
With glowing picturings of joys divine  
Painting the mist-light where the roof is dim;  
But youth looks upward to the window shine,  
Warming with rose and purple and the swim  
Of gold, as if thought-tinted by the stains  
Of gorgeous light through many-color'd panes;

XVI

Soiling the virgin snow wherein God hath  
Enrobed his angels,—and with absent eyes  
Hearing of Heav'n, and its directed path,  
Thoughtful of slippers—and the glorious skies  
Clouding with satin,—till the preacher's wrath  
Consumes his pity, and he glows and cries  
With a deep voice that trembles in its might,  
And earnest eyes grow eloquent in light:

XVII

'Oh, that the vacant eye would learn to look  
On very beauty, and the heart embrace  
True loveliness, and from this holy book  
Drink the warm-breathing tenderness and grace  
Of love indeed! Oh, that the young soul took  
Its virgin passion from the glorious face  
Of fair religion, and address'd its strife,  
To win the riches of eternal life!'

XVIII

'Doth the vain heart love glory that is none,

And the poor excellence of vain attire?  
Oh go, and drown your eyes against the sun,  
The visible ruler of the starry quire,  
Till boiling gold in giddy eddies run,  
Dazzling the brain with orbs of living fire;  
And the faint soul down-darkens into night,  
And dies a burning martyrdom to light.'

XIX

Oh go, and gaze,—when the low winds of ev'n  
Breathe hymns, and Nature's many forests nod  
Their gold-crown'd heads; and the rich blooms of heav'n  
Sun-ripen'd give their blushes up to God;  
And mountain-rocks and cloudy steeps are riv'n  
By founts of fire, as smitten by the rod  
Of heavenly Moses,—that your thirsty sense  
May quench its longings of magnificence!

XX

'Yet suns shall perish—stars shall fade away—  
Day into darkness—darkness into death—  
Death into silence; the warm light of day,  
The blooms of summer, the rich glowing breath  
Of even—all shall wither and decay,  
Like the frail furniture of dreams beneath  
The touch of morn—or bubbles of rich dyes  
That break and vanish in the aching eyes.'

XXI

They hear, soul-blushing, and repentant shed  
Unwholesome thoughts in wholesome tears, and pour  
Their sin to earth,—and with low drooping head  
Receive the solemn blessing, and implore  
Its grace—then soberly with chasten'd tread,  
They meekly press towards the gusty door  
With humbled eyes that go to graze upon

The lowly grass—like him of Babylon.

XXII

The lowly grass!—O water-constant mind!  
Fast-ebbing holiness!—soon-fading grace  
Of serious thought, as if the gushing wind  
Through the low porch had wash'd it from the face  
For ever!—How they lift their eyes to find  
Old vanities!—Pride wins the very place  
Of meekness, like a bird, and flutters now  
With idle wings on the curl-conscious brow!

XXIII

And lo! with eager looks they seek the way  
Of old temptation at the lowly gate;  
To feast on feathers, and on vain array,  
And painted cheeks, and the rich glistening state  
Of jewel-sprinkled locks,—But where are they,  
The graceless haughty ones that used to wait  
With lofty neck, and nods, and stiffen'd eye?—  
None challenge the old homage bending by.

XXIV

In vain they look for the ungracious bloom  
Of rich apparel where it glow'd before,—  
For Vanity has faded all to gloom,  
And lofty Pride has stiffen'd to the core,  
For impious Life to tremble at its doom,—  
Set for a warning token evermore,  
Whereon, as now, the giddy and the wise  
Shall gaze with lifted hands and wond'ring eyes.

XXV

The aged priest goes on each Sabbath morn,

But shakes not sorrow under his gray hair;  
The solemn clerk goes lavender'd and shorn  
Nor stoops his back to the ungodly pair;—  
And ancient lips that pucker'd up in scorn,  
Go smoothly breathing to the house of pray'r;  
And in the garden-plot, from day to day,  
The lily blooms its long white life away.

XXVI

And where two haughty maidens used to be,  
In pride of plume, where plummy Death had trod,  
Trailing their gorgeous velvets wantonly,  
Most unmeet pall, over the holy sod;  
There, gentle stranger, thou may'st only see  
Two sombre Peacocks.  
Age, with sapient nod  
Marking the spot, still tarries to declare  
How they once lived, and wherefore they are there.

Thomas Hood

# The Two Swans (A Fairy Tale)

## I

Immortal Imogen, crown'd queen above  
The lilies of thy sex, vouchsafe to hear  
A fairy dream in honor of true love—  
True above ills, and frailty, and all fear,—  
Perchance a shadow of his own career  
Whose youth was darkly prison'd and long-twined  
By serpent-sorrow, till white Love drew near,  
And sweetly sang him free, and round his mind  
A bright horizon threw, wherein no grief may wind.

## II

I saw a tower builded on a lake,  
Mock'd by its inverse shadow, dark and deep—  
That seem'd a still intenser night to make,  
Wherein the quiet waters sank to sleep,—  
And, whatso'er was prison'd in that keep,  
A monstrous Snake was warden:—round and round  
In sable ringlets I beheld him creep  
Blackest amid black shadows to the ground,  
Whilst his enormous head, the topmost turret crown'd.

## III

From whence he shot fierce light against the stars,  
Making the pale moon paler with affright;  
And with his ruby eye out-threaten'd Mars—  
That blaz'd in the mid-heavens, hot and bright—  
Nor slept, nor wink'd, but with a steadfast spite  
Watch'd their wan looks and tremblings in the skies;  
And that he might not slumber in the night,  
The curtain-lids were pluck'd from his large eyes,  
So he might never drowse, but watch his secret prize.



#### IV

Prince or princess in dismal durance pent,  
Victims of old Enchantment's love or hate,  
Their lives must all in painful sighs be spent,  
Watching the lonely waters soon and late,  
And clouds that pass and leave them to their fate,  
Or company their grief with heavy tears:—  
Meanwhile that Hope can spy no golden gate  
For sweet escapement, but in darksome fears  
They weep and pine away as if immortal years.

#### V

No gentle bird with gold upon its wing  
Will perch upon the grate—the gentle bird  
Is safe in leafy dell, and will not bring  
Freedom's sweet key-note and commission-word  
Learn'd of a fairy's lips, for pity stirr'd—  
Lest while he trembling sings, untimely guest!  
Watch'd by that cruel Snake and darkly heard,  
He leave a widow on her lonely nest,  
To press in silent grief the darlings of her breast.

#### VI

No gallant knight, adventurous, in his bark,  
Will seek the fruitful perils of the place,  
To rouse with dipping oar the waters dark  
That bear that serpent image on their face.  
And Love, brave Love! though he attempt the base,  
Nerved to his loyal death, he may not win  
His captive lady from the strict embrace  
Of that foul Serpent, clasping her within  
His sable folds—like Eve enthrall'd by the old Sin.

#### VII

But there is none—no knight in panoply,

Nor Love, intrench'd in his strong steely coat:  
No little speck—no sail—no helper nigh,  
No sign—no whispering—no plash of boat:—  
The distant shores show dimly and remote,  
Made of a deeper mist,—serene and gray,—  
And slow and mute the cloudy shadows float  
Over the gloomy wave, and pass away,  
Chased by the silver beams that on their marges play.

## VIII

And bright and silvery the willows sleep  
Over the shady verge—no mad winds tease  
Their hoary heads; but quietly they weep  
Their sprinkling leaves—half fountains and half trees:  
Their lilies be—and fairer than all these,  
A solitary Swan her breast of snow  
Launches against the wave that seems to freeze  
Into a chaste reflection, still below  
Twin shadow of herself wherever she may go.

## IX

And forth she paddles in the very noon  
Of solemn midnight like an elfin thing,  
Charm'd into being by the argent moon—  
Whose silver light for love of her fair wing  
Goes with her in the shade, still worshipping  
Her dainty plumage:—all around her grew  
A radiant circlet, like a fairy ring;  
And all behind, a tiny little clue  
Of light, to guide her back across the waters blue.

## X

And sure she is no meaner than a fay,  
Redeem'd from sleepy death, for beauty's sake,  
By old ordainment:—silent as she lay,  
Touched by a moonlight wand I saw her wake,

And cut her leafy slough, and so forsake  
The verdant prison of her lily peers,  
That slept amidst the stars upon the lake—  
A breathing shape—restored to human fears,  
And new-born love and grief—self-conscious of her tears.

XI

And now she clasps her wings around her heart,  
And near that lonely isle begins to glide,  
Pale as her fears, and oft-times with a start  
Turns her impatient head from side to side  
In universal terrors—all too wide  
To watch; and often to that marble keep  
Upturns her pearly eyes, as if she spied  
Some foe, and crouches in the shadows steep  
That in the gloomy wave go diving fathoms deep.

XII

And well she may, to spy that fearful thing  
All down the dusky walls in circlets wound;  
Alas! for what rare prize, with many a ring  
Girding the marble casket round and round?  
His folded tail, lost in the gloom profound,  
Terribly darkeneth the rocky base;  
But on the top his monstrous head is crown'd  
With prickly spears, and on his doubtful face  
Gleam his unwearied eyes, red watchers of the place.

XIII

Alas! of the hot fires that nightly fall,  
No one will scorch him in those orbs of spite,  
So he may never see beneath the wall  
That timid little creature, all too bright,  
That stretches her fair neck, slender and white,  
Invoking the pale moon, and vainly tries  
Her throbbing throat, as if to charm the night  
With song—but, hush—it perishes in sighs,

And there will be no dirge sad-swelling, though she dies!

XIV

She droops—she sinks—she leans upon the lake,  
Fainting again into a lifeless flower;  
But soon the chilly springs anoint and wake  
Her spirit from its death, and with new power  
She sheds her stifled sorrows in a shower  
Of tender song, timed to her falling tears—  
That wins the shady summit of that tower,  
And, trembling all the sweeter for its fears,  
Fills with imploring moan that cruel monster's ears.

XV

And, lo! the scaly beast is all deprest,  
Subdued like Argus by the might of sound—  
What time Apollo his sweet lute addrest  
To magic converse with the air, and bound  
The many monster eyes, all slumber-drown'd:—  
So on the turret-top that watchful Snake  
Pillows his giant head, and lists profound,  
As if his wrathful spite would never wake,  
Charm'd into sudden sleep for Love and Beauty's sake!

XVI

His prickly crest lies prone upon his crown,  
And thirsty lip from lip disparted flies,  
To drink that dainty flood of music down—  
His scaly throat is big with pent-up sighs—  
And whilst his hollow ear entranced lies,  
His looks for envy of the charmed sense  
Are fain to listen, till his steadfast eyes,  
Stung into pain by their own impotence,  
Distil enormous tears into the lake immense.

XVII

Oh, tuneful Swan! oh, melancholy bird!  
Sweet was that midnight miracle of song,  
Rich with ripe sorrow, needful of no word  
To tell of pain, and love, and love's deep wrong—  
Hinting a piteous tale—perchance how long  
Thy unknown tears were mingled with the lake,  
What time disguised thy leafy mates among—  
And no eye knew what human love and ache  
Dwelt in those dewy leaves, and heart so nigh to break.

XVIII

Therefore no poet will ungently touch  
The water-lily, on whose eyelids dew  
Trembles like tears; but ever hold it such  
As human pain may wander through and through,  
Turning the pale leaf paler in its hue—  
Wherein life dwells, transfigured, not entomb'd,  
By magic spells. Alas! who ever knew  
Sorrow in all its shapes, leafy and plumed,  
Or in gross husks of brutes eternally inhumed?

XIX

And now the winged song has scaled the height  
Of that dark dwelling, builded for despair,  
And soon a little casement flashing bright  
Widens self-open'd into the cool air—  
That music like a bird may enter there  
And soothe the captive in his stony cage;  
For there is nought of grief, or painful care,  
But plaintive song may happily engage  
From sense of its own ill, and tenderly assuage.

XX

And forth into the light, small and remote,  
A creature, like the fair son of a king,

Draws to the lattice in his jewell'd coat  
Against the silver moonlight glistening,  
And leans upon his white hand listening  
To that sweet music that with tenderer tone  
Salutes him, wondering what kindly thing  
Is come to soothe him with so tuneful moan,  
Singing beneath the walls as if for him alone!

XXI

And while he listens, the mysterious song,  
Woven with timid particles of speech.  
Twines into passionate words that grieve along  
The melancholy notes, and softly teach  
The secrets of true love,—that trembling reach  
His earnest ear, and through the shadows dun  
He missions like replies, and each to each  
Their silver voices mingle into one,  
Like blended streams that make one music as they run.

XXII

'Ah! Love, my hope is swooning in my heart,—'  
'Ay, sweet, my cage is strong and hung full high—'  
'Alas! our lips are held so far apart,  
Thy words come faint,—they have so far to fly!—'  
'If I may only shun that serpent-eye,—'  
'Ah me! that serpent-eye doth never sleep;—'  
'Then, nearer thee, Love's martyr, I will die!—'  
'Alas, alas! that word has made me weep!  
For pity's sake remain safe in thy marble keep!'

XXIII

'My marble keep! it is my marble tomb—'  
'Nay, sweet! but thou hast there thy living breath—'  
'Aye to expend in sighs for this hard doom;—'  
'But I will come to thee and sing beneath,'  
'And nightly so beguile this serpent wreath;—'

'Nay, I will find a path from these despairs.'  
'Ah, needs then thou must tread the back of death,  
Making his stony ribs thy stony stairs.—  
Behold his ruby eye, how fearfully it glares!'

#### XXIV

Full sudden at these words, the princely youth  
Leaps on the scaly back that slumbers, still  
Unconscious of his foot, yet not for ruth,  
But numb'd to dulness by the fairy skill  
Of that sweet music (all more wild and shrill  
For intense fear) that charm'd him as he lay—  
Meanwhile the lover nerves his desperate will,  
Held some short throbs by natural dismay,  
Then down the serpent-track begins his darksome way.

#### XXV

Now dimly seen—now toiling out of sight,  
Eclipsed and cover'd by the envious wall;  
Now fair and spangled in the sudden light,  
And clinging with wide arms for fear of fall;  
Now dark and shelter'd by a kindly pall  
Of dusky shadow from his wakeful foe;  
Slowly he winds adown—dimly and small,  
Watch'd by the gentle Swan that sings below,  
Her hope increasing, still, the larger he doth grow.

#### XXVI

But nine times nine the serpent folds embrace  
The marble walls about—which he must tread  
Before his anxious foot may touch the base:  
Long in the dreary path, and must be sped!  
But Love, that holds the mastery of dread,  
Braces his spirit, and with constant toil  
He wins his way, and now, with arms outspread,  
Impatient plunges from the last long coil;

So may all gentle Love ungentle Malice foil!

XXVII

The song is hush'd, the charm is all complete,  
And two fair Swans are swimming on the lake:  
But scarce their tender bills have time to meet,  
When fiercely drops adown that cruel Snake—  
His steely scales a fearful rustling make,  
Like autumn leaves that tremble and foretell  
The sable storm;—the plummy lovers quake—  
And feel the troubled waters pant and swell,  
Heaved by the giant bulk of their pursuer fell.

XXVIII

His jaws, wide yawning like the gates of Death,  
Hiss horrible pursuit—his red eyes glare  
The waters into blood—his eager breath  
Grows hot upon their plumes:—now, minstrel fair!  
She drops her ring into the waves, and there  
It widens all around, a fairy ring  
Wrought of the silver light—the fearful pair  
Swim in the very midst, and pant and cling  
The closer for their fears, and tremble wing to wing.

XXIX

Bending their course over the pale gray lake,  
Against the pallid East, wherein light play'd  
In tender flushes, still the baffled Snake  
Circled them round continually, and bay'd  
Hoarsely and loud, forbidden to invade  
The sanctuary ring—his sable mail  
Roll'd darkly through the flood, and writhed and made  
A shining track over the waters pale,  
Lash'd into boiling foam by his enormous tail.



XXX

And so they sail'd into the distance dim,  
Into the very distance—small and white,  
Like snowy blossoms of the spring that swim  
Over the brooklets—follow'd by the spite  
Of that huge Serpent, that with wild affright  
Worried them on their course, and sore annoy,  
Till on the grassy marge I saw them 'light,  
And change, anon, a gentle girl and boy,  
Lock'd in embrace of sweet unutterable joy!

XXXI

Then came the Morn, and with her pearly showers  
Wept on them, like a mother, in whose eyes  
Tears are no grief; and from his rosy bowers  
The Oriental sun began to rise,  
Chasing the darksome shadows from the skies;  
Wherewith that sable Serpent far away  
Fled, like a part of night—delicious sighs  
From waking blossoms purified the day,  
And little birds were singing sweetly from each spray.

Thomas Hood

# The Water Lady

Alas, the moon should ever beam  
To show what man should never see!—  
I saw a maiden on a stream,  
And fair was she!  
I staid awhile, to see her throw  
Her tresses black, that all beset  
The fair horizon of her brow  
With clouds of jet.  
I staid a little while to view  
Her cheek, that wore in place of red  
The bloom of water, tender blue,  
Daintily spread.  
I staid to watch, a little space,  
Her parted lips if she would sing;  
The waters closed above her face  
With many a ring.  
And still I staid a little more,  
Alas! she never comes again!  
I throw my flowers from the shore,  
And watch in vain.  
I know my life will fade away,  
I know that I must vainly pine,  
For I am made of mortal clay,  
But she's divine!

Thomas Hood

# The Workhouse Clock

An Allegory

There's a murmur in the air,  
And noise in every street—  
The murmur of many tongues,  
The noise of numerous feet—  
While round the Workhouse door  
The Laboring Classes flock,  
For why? the Overseer of the Poor  
Is setting the Workhouse Clock.

Who does not hear the tramp  
Of thousands speeding along  
Of either sex and various stamp,  
Sickly, cripple, or strong,  
Walking, limping, creeping  
From court and alley, and lane,  
But all in one direction sweeping  
Like rivers that seek the main?

Who does not see them sally  
From mill, and garret, and room,  
In lane, and court and alley,  
From homes in poverty's lowest valley,  
Furnished with shuttle and loom—  
Poor slaves of Civilization's galley—  
And in the road and footways rally,  
As if for the Day of Doom?  
Some, of hardly human form,  
Stunted, crooked, and crippled by toil;  
Dingy with smoke and dust and oil,  
And smirch'd besides with vicious soil,  
Clustering, mustering, all in a swarm.

Father, mother, and careful child,  
Looking as if it had never smiled—  
The Sempstress, lean, and weary, and wan,  
With only the ghosts of garments on—

The Weaver, her sallow neighbor,  
The grim and sooty Artisan;  
Every soul—child, woman, or man,  
Who lives—or dies—by labor.

Stirr'd by an overwhelming zeal,  
And social impulse, a terrible throng!  
Leaving shuttle, and needle, and wheel,  
Furnace, and grindstone, spindle, and reel,  
Thread, and yarn, and iron, and steel—  
Yea, rest and the yet untasted meal—  
Gushing, rushing, crushing along,  
A very torrent of Man!  
Urged by the sighs of sorrow and wrong,  
Grown at last to a hurricane strong,  
Stop its course who can!  
Stop who can its onward course  
And irresistible moral force;  
O vain and idle dream!  
For surely as men are all akin,  
Whether of fair or sable skin,  
According to Nature's scheme,  
That Human Movement contains within  
A Blood-Power stronger than Steam.

Onward, onward, with hasty feet,  
They swarm—and westward still—  
Masses born to drink and eat,  
But starving amidst Whitechapel's meat,  
And famishing down Cornhill!  
Through the Poultry—but still unfed—  
Christian Charity, hang your head!  
Hungry—passing the Street of Bread;  
Thirsty—the street of Milk;  
Ragged—beside the Ludgate Mart,  
So gorgeous, through Mechanic-Art,  
With cotton, and wool, and silk!

At last, before that door  
That bears so many a knock  
Ere ever it opens to Sick or Poor,  
Like sheep they huddle and flock—

And would that all the Good and Wise  
Could see the Million of hollow eyes,  
With a gleam deriv'd from Hope and the skies,  
Upturn'd to the Workhouse Clock!

Oh that the Parish Powers,  
Who regulate Labor's hours,  
The daily amount of human trial,  
Weariness, pain, and self-denial,  
Would turn from the artificial dial  
That striketh ten or eleven,  
And go, for once, by that older one  
That stands in the light of Nature's sun,  
And takes its time from Heaven!

Thomas Hood

# The World Is With Me

The world is with me, and its many cares,  
Its woes--its wants--the anxious hopes and fears  
That wait on all terrestrial affairs--  
The shades of former and of future years--  
Forboding fancies and prophetic tears,  
Quelling a spirit that was once elate.  
Heavens! what a wilderness the world appears,  
Where youth, and mirth, and health are out of date;  
But no--a laugh of innocence and joy  
Resounds, like music of the fairy race,  
And, gladly turning from the world's annoy,  
I gaze upon a little radiant face,  
And bless, internally, the merry boy  
Who "makes a son-shine in a shady place."

Thomas Hood

# There Is Dew For The Flow'Ret

There is dew for the flow'ret  
And honey for the bee,  
And bowers for the wild bird,  
And love for you and me.  
There are tears for the many  
And pleasures for the few;  
But let the world pass on, dear,  
There's love for me and you.  
There is care that will not leave us,  
And pain that will not flee;  
But on our hearth unalter'd  
Sits Love—'tween you and me.  
Our love it ne'er was reckon'd,  
Yet good it is and true,  
It's half the world to me, dear,  
It's all the world to you.

Thomas Hood

# Tim Turpin

Tim Turpin he was gravel-blind,  
And ne'er had seen the skies :  
For Nature, when his head was made,  
Forgot to dot his eyes.

So, like a Christmas pedagogue,  
Poor Tim was forced to do -  
Look out for pupils; for he had  
A vacancy for two.

There's some have specs to help their sight  
Of objects dim and small :  
But Tim had specks within his eyes,  
And could not see at all.

Now Tim he wooed a servant maid,  
And took her to his arms;  
For he, like Pyramus, had cast  
A wall-eye on her charms.

By day she led him up and down.  
Where'er he wished to jog,  
A happy wife, altho' she led  
The life of any dog.

But just when Tim had lived a month  
In honey with his wife,  
A surgeon ope'd his Milton eyes,  
Like oysters, with a knife.

But when his eyes were opened thus,  
He wished them dark again :  
For when he looked upon his wife,  
He saw her very plain.

Her face was bad, her figure worse,  
He couldn't bear to eat :  
For she was anything but like  
A grace before his meat.



Now Tim he was a feeling man :  
For when his sight was thick  
It made him feel for everything -  
But that was with a stick.

So, with a cudgel in his hand  
It was not light or slim -  
He knocked at his wife's head until  
It opened unto him.

And when the corpse was stiff and cold,  
He took his slaughtered spouse,  
And laid her in a heap with all  
The ashes of her house.

But like a wicked murderer,  
He lived in constant fear  
From day to day, and so he cut  
His throat from ear to ear.

The neighbours fetched a doctor in :  
Said he, "This wound I dread  
Can hardly be sewed up -  
his life Is hanging on a thread."

But when another week was gone,  
He gave him stronger hope -  
Instead of hanging on a thread,  
Of hanging on a rope.

Ah ! when he hid his bloody work  
In ashes round about,  
How little he supposed the truth  
Would soon be sifted out.

But when the parish dustman came,  
His rubbish to withdraw,  
He found more dust within the heap  
Than he contracted for !

A dozen men to try the fact

Were sworn that very day ;  
But though they all were jurors, yet  
No conjurors were they.

Said Tim unto those jurymen,  
You need not waste your breath,  
For I confess myself at once  
The author of her death.

And, oh ! when I reflect upon  
The blood that I have spilt,  
Just like a button is my soul,  
Inscribed with double guilt !

Then turning round his head again,  
He saw before his eyes,  
A great judge, and a little judge,  
The judges of a-size !

The great judge took his judgment cap,  
And put it on his head,  
And sentenced Tim by law to hang  
Till he was three times dead.

So he was tried, and he was hung  
(Fit punishment for such)  
On Horsham-drop, and none can say  
It was a drop too much.

Thomas Hood

## Time Of Roses

It was not in the Winter  
Our loving lot was cast;  
It was the time of roses—  
We pluck'd them as we pass'd!

That churlish season never frown'd  
On early lovers yet:  
O no—the world was newly crown'd  
With flowers when first we met!

'Twas twilight, and I bade you go,  
But still you held me fast;  
It was the time of roses—  
We pluck'd them as we pass'd!

Thomas Hood

# Time, Hope And Memory

I heard a gentle maiden, in the spring,  
Set her sweet sighs to music, and thus sing:  
'Fly through the world, and I will follow thee,  
Only for looks that may turn back on me;  
'Only for roses that your chance may throw—  
Though withered—Twill wear them on my brow,  
To be a thoughtful fragrance to my brain,—  
Warm'd with such love, that they will bloom again.'  
'Thy love before thee, I must tread behind,  
Kissing thy foot-prints, though to me unkind;  
But trust not all her fondness, though it seem,  
Lest thy true love should rest on a false dream.'  
'Her face is smiling, and her voice is sweet;  
But smiles betray, and music sings deceit;  
And words speak false;—yet, if they welcome prove,  
I'll be their echo, and repeat their love.'  
'Only if waken'd to sad truth, at last,  
The bitterness to come, and sweetness past;  
When thou art vexed, then turn again, and see  
Thou hast loved Hope, but Memory loved thee.'

Thomas Hood

## To A Child Embracing His Mother

Love thy mother, little one!  
Kiss and clasp her neck again,—  
Hereafter she may have a son  
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.  
Love thy mother, little one!  
Gaze upon her living eyes,  
And mirror back her love for thee,—  
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs  
To meet them when they cannot see.  
Gaze upon her living eyes!  
Press her lips the while they glow  
With love that they have often told,—  
Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,  
And kiss them till thine own are cold.  
Press her lips the while they glow!  
Oh, revere her raven hair!  
Although it be not silver-gray;  
Too early Death, led on by Care,  
May snatch save one dear lock away.  
Oh, revere her raven hair!  
Pray for her at eve and morn,  
That Heaven may long the stroke defer,—  
For thou mayst live the hour forlorn  
When thou wilt ask to die with her.  
Pray for her at eve and morn!

Thomas Hood

# To A Cold Beauty

Lady, wouldst thou heiress be  
To Winters cold and cruel part?  
When he sets the rivers free,  
Thou dost still lock up thy heart;—  
Thou that shouldst outlast the snow,  
But in the whiteness of thy brow?  
Scorn and cold neglect are made  
For winter gloom and winter wind,  
But thou wilt wrong the summer air,  
Breathing it to words unkind,—  
Breath which only should belong  
To love, to sunlight, and to song!  
When the little buds unclose.  
Red, and white, and pied, and blue,  
And that virgin flow'r, the rose,  
Opes her heart to hold the dew,  
Wilt thou lock thy bosom up  
With no jewel in its cup?  
Let not cold December sit  
Thus in Love's peculiar throne:  
Brooklets are not prison'd now,  
But crystal frosts are all agone,  
And that which hangs upon the spray,  
It is no snow, but flow'r of May!

Thomas Hood

## To A False Friend

Our hands have met, but not our hearts;  
Our hands will never meet again.  
Friends, if we have ever been,  
Friends we cannot now remain:  
I only know I loved you once,  
I only know I loved in vain;  
Our hands have met, but not our hearts;  
Our hands will never meet again!  
Then farewell to heart and hand!  
I would our hands had never met:  
Even the outward form of love  
Must be resign'd with some regret.  
Friends, we still might seem to be,  
If I my wrong could e'er forget;  
Our hands have join'd but not our hearts:  
I would our hands had never met!

Thomas Hood

# To A Sleeping Child

I

Oh, 'tis a touching thing, to make one weep,—  
A tender infant with its curtain'd eye,  
Breathing as it would neither live nor die  
With that unchanging countenance of sleep!  
As if its silent dream, serene and deep,  
Had lined its slumber with a still blue sky  
So that the passive cheeks unconscious lie  
With no more life than roses—just to keep  
The blushes warm, and the mild, odorous breath.  
O blossom boy! so calm is thy repose.  
So sweet a compromise of life and death,  
'Tis pity those fair buds should e'er uncloset  
For memory to stain their inward leaf,  
Tinging thy dreams with unacquainted grief.

II

Thine eyelids slept so beautifully, I deem'd  
No eyes could wake so beautiful as they:  
Thy rosy cheeks in such still slumbers lay,  
I loved their peacefulness, nor ever dream'd  
Of dimples:—for those parted lips so seem'd,  
I never thought a smile could sweetlier play,  
Nor that so graceful life could chase away  
Thy graceful death,—till those blue eyes upheam'd.  
Now slumber lies in dimpled eddies drown'd  
And roses bloom more rosily for joy,  
And odorous silence ripens into sound,  
And fingers move to sound.—All-beautiful boy!  
How thou dost waken into smiles, and prove,  
If not more lovely thou art more like Love!

Thomas Hood



## To An Absentee

O'er hill, and dale, and distant sea,  
Through all the miles that stretch between,  
My thought must fly to rest on thee,  
And would, though worlds should intervene.  
Nay, thou art now so dear, methinks  
The farther we are forced apart,  
Affection's firm elastic links  
But bind the closer round the heart.  
For now we sever each from each,  
I learned what I have lost in thee;  
Alas, that nothing else could teach  
How great indeed my love should be!  
Farewell! I did not know thy worth;  
But thou art gone, and now 'tis prized:  
So angels walk'd unknown on earth,  
But when they flew were recognized!

Thomas Hood

## To An Enthusiast

Young ardent soul, graced with fair Nature's truth,  
Spring warmth of heart, and fervency of mind,  
And still a large late love of all thy kind.  
Spite of the world's cold practice and Time's tooth,—  
For all these gifts, I know not, in fair sooth,  
Whether to give thee joy, or bid thee blind  
Thine eyes with tears,—that thou hast not resign'd  
The passionate fire and freshness of thy youth:  
For as the current of thy life shall flow,  
Gilded by shine of sun or shadow-stain'd,  
Through flow'ry valley or unwholesome fen,  
Thrice blessed in thy joy, or in thy woe  
Thrice cursed of thy race,—thou art ordain'd  
To share beyond the lot of common men.

Thomas Hood

## To Fancy

Most delicate Ariel! submissive thing,  
Won by the mind's high magic to its hest—  
Invisible embassy, or secret guest,—  
Weighing the light air on a lighter wing;—  
Whether into the midnight moon, to bring  
Illuminate visions to the eye of rest,—  
Or rich romances from the florid West,—  
Or to the sea, for mystic whispering,—  
Still by thy charm'd allegiance to the will,  
The fruitful wishes prosper in the brain,  
As by the fingering of fairy skill,—  
Moonlight, and waters, and soft music's strain,  
Odors, and blooms, and my Miranda's smile,  
Making this dull world an enchanted isle.

Thomas Hood

# To Hope

Oh! take, young Seraph, take thy harp,  
And play to me so cheerily;  
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,  
And life wears on so wearily.  
Oh! take thy harp!  
Oh! sing as thou wert wont to do,  
When, all youth's sunny season long,  
I sat and listened to thy song,  
And yet 'twas ever, ever new,  
With magic in its heaven-tuned string—  
The future bliss thy constant theme.  
Oh! then each little woe took wing  
Away, like phantoms of a dream;  
As if each sound  
That flutter'd round,  
Had floated over Lethe's stream!  
By all those bright and happy hours  
We spent in life's sweet eastern bow'rs,  
Where thou wouldst sit and smile, and show,  
Ere buds were come, where flowers would blow,  
And oft anticipate the rise  
Of life's warm sun that scaled the skies;  
By many a story of love and glory,  
And friendships promised oft to me;  
By all the faith I lent to thee,—  
Oh! take, young Seraph, take thy harp,  
And play to me so cheerily;  
For grief is dark, and care is sharp,  
And life wears on so wearily.  
Oh! take thy harp!  
Perchance the strings will sound less clear,  
That long have lain neglected by  
In sorrow's misty atmosphere;  
It ne'er may speak as it hath spoken  
Such joyous notes so brisk and high;  
But are its golden chords all broken?  
Are there not some, though weak and low,  
To play a lullaby to woe?  
But thou canst sing of love no more,

For Celia show'd that dream was vain;  
And many a fancied bliss is o'er,  
That comes not e'en in dreams again.  
Alas! alas!  
How pleasures pass,  
And leave thee now no subject, save  
The peace and bliss beyond the grave!  
Then be thy flight among the skies:  
Take, then, oh! take the skylark's wing,  
And leave dull earth, and heavenward rise  
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing  
On skylark's wing!  
Another life-spring there adorns  
Another youth—without the dread  
Of cruel care, whose crown of thorns  
Is here for manhood's aching head.  
Oh! there are realms of welcome day,  
A world where tears are wiped away!  
Then be thy flight among the skies:  
Take, then, oh! take the skylark's wing,  
And leave dull earth, and heavenward rise  
O'er all its tearful clouds, and sing  
On skylark's wing!

Thomas Hood

## Verses Written In An Album

Far above the hollow  
Tempest, and its moan,  
Singeth bright Apollo  
In his golden zone,—  
Cloud doth never shade him,  
Nor a storm invade him,  
On his joyous throne.  
So when I behold me  
In an orb as bright,  
How thy soul doth fold me  
In its throne of light!  
Sorrow never paineth,  
Nor a care attaineth  
To that blessed height.

Thomas Hood

## Welcome, Dear Heart, And A Most Kind Good-Morrow

Welcome, dear Heart, and a most kind good-morrow;  
The day is gloomy, but our looks shall shine:—  
Flowers I have none to give thee, but I borrow  
Their sweetness in a verse to speak for thine.  
Here are red roses, gather'd at thy cheeks,—  
The white were all too happy to look white:  
For love the rose, for faith the lily speaks;  
It withers in false hands, but here 'tis bright!  
Dost love sweet Hyacinth? Its scented leaf  
Curls manifold,—all love's delights blow double:  
'Tis said this flow'ret is inscribed with grief,—  
But let that hint of a forgotten trouble.  
I pluck'd the Primrose at night's dewy noon;  
Like Hope, it show'd its blossoms in the night;—  
'Twas, like Endymion, watching for the Moon!  
And here are Sun-flowers, amorous of light!  
These golden Buttercups are April's seal,—  
The Daisy-stars her constellations be:  
These grew so lowly, I was forced to kneel,  
Therefore I pluck no Daisies but for thee!  
Here's Daisies for the morn, Primrose for gloom  
Pansies and Roses for the noontide hours:—  
A wight once made a dial of their bloom,—  
So may thy life be measured out by flowers!

Thomas Hood