



NOTES.

No. I. DEAN ALFORD (1810-1871). The poems of the late Dean Alford are characterised by refinement and depth of feeling.

No. iv. WILLIAM ALLINGHAM. This sonnet first appeared in a little book edited by Mrs. Isa Knox Craig, published in 1863, and entitled *Poems: An Offering to Lancashire*. Mr. Allingham's several volumes are all noteworthy for the same keenness of vision as regards the aspects of nature: and I may draw special attention to his charming sonnet-transcripts from nature which have lately, at intervals, appeared in *The Athenæum*. n.

Nos. v.-vii. MATTHEW ARNOLD. These sonnets adequately represent the work of Mr. Arnold in this direction. They are to be found in the volumes entitled *Poems: Narrative and Elegiac*, and *Poems: Dramatic and Lyric*, published by Macmillan & Co. Familiar portions of the familiar work of one of the leading poets of our time, they thus call for no special comment. n

Nos. viii.-xi. ALFRED AUSTIN. Mr. Alfred Austin has written some fine sonnets, his preferred form evidently being the Shakespearian. Mr. Austin's work is mostly purely lyric and dramatic, though he shows such unmistakable faculty for sonnet-writing that he might well publish a short volume of poetic work in this form, and thus enter more directly into the lists with acknowledged masters of the craft. His earlier volumes are entitled *The Human Tragedy*, *The Tower of Babel*, *Interludes*, *The Golden Age*, and *The Season* (Blackwood & Sons); and his later, n

9 *Savonarola, Soliloquies in Song, and At the Gate of the Convent* (Macmillan & Co.)—the last-named published in 1885. One of Mr. Austin's pleasantest characteristics as a poet is his intense love of nature, more especially of nature in her spring aspects: also, I may add, a very ardent love of Country and pride therein. The four sonnets I have selected seem to me among the best, but here is another excellent one representing Mr. Austin in his last-named characteristic: it is one of three addressed to England.

TO ENGLAND.

(Written in Mid-Channel.)

Now upon English soil I soon shall stand,
 Homeward from climes that fancy deems more fair;
 And well I know that there will greet me there
 No soft foam fawning upon smiling strand,
 No scent of orange-groves, no zephyrs bland;
 But Amazonian March, with breast half bare
 And sleety arrows whistling through the air,
 Will be my welcome from that burly land.
 Yet he who boasts his birth-place yonder lies
 Owns in his heart a mood akin to scorn
 For sensuous slopes that bask 'neath Southern skies,
 Teeming with wine and prodigal of corn,
 And, gazing through the mist with misty eyes,
 Blesses the brave bleak land where he was born.

Since the above note was written the following fine sonnet has appeared in *The Athenæum*:-

v. fine
 ✓ When acorns fall, and swallows troop for flight,
 And hope matured slow mellows to regret,
 And Autumn, pressed by Winter for his debt,
 Drops leaf on leaf till she be beggared quite;
 Should then the crescent moon's unselfish light
 Gleam up the sky just as the sun doth set,
 Her brightening gaze, though day and dark have met
 Prolongs the gloaming and retards the night.
 So, fair young life, new risen upon mine
 Just as it owns the edict of decay
 And Fancy's fires should pale and pass away,
 My menaced glory takes a glow from thine,
 And, in the deepening sundown of my day,
 Thou with thy dawn delayest my decline.

BENJAMIN D'ISRAELI, EARL OF BEACONSFIELD. Lord Beaconsfield, even his most ardent admirers would admit, gave no evidence that he was possessed of the creative faculty in verse; an ardent imagination he undoubtedly had. He wrote, so far as I am aware, only two sonnets, one of which—that on Wellington—certainly deserves a place in any sonnet-anthology. I do not insert it in the body of this book, however, as its composition was fortuitous, and as its author has no broader claim to appear among genuine poets. There is a certain applicability to himself, in Lord Beaconsfield's words addressed to Wellington, for even the most bigoted opponent of the great statesman would hardly deny his possession of "a continuous state of ordered impulse;" or his "serenity" when all were 'troubled.'

WELLINGTON.

Not only that thy puissant arm could bind
 The tyrant of a world; and, conquering Fate,
 Enfranchise Europe, do I deem thee great;
 But that in all thy actions I do find
 Exact propriety: no gusts of mind
 Fitful and wild, but that continuous state
 Of ordered impulse mariners await
 In some benignant and enriching wind,—
 The breath ordained of Nature. Thy calm mien
 Recalls old Rome, as much as thy high deed;
 Duty thine only idol, and serene
 When all are troubled; in the utmost need
 Prescient; thy country's servant ever seen,
 Yet sovereign of thyself, whate'er may speed.

No. xii. H. T. MACKENZIE BELL. From *Old Year Leaves: A Volume of Collected Verse* (1883). Mr. Mackenzie Bell is also the author of an interesting biography of Charles Whitehead (*q.v.*) published in 1885 (Fisher Unwin) under the title *A Forgotten Genius*. 71

No. xiii. LOUISA S. BEVINGTON (GÜGGENBERGER). From *Poems and Sonnets* (Stock, 1882). Probably Miss Bevington's—to call her by the name she is publicly known by—highest poetic accomplishment is the piece in lyrical measures entitled "In the Valley of Remorse," printed in the same volume. 91

n. No. xiv. S. L. BLANCHARD (1804-1845). From *Lyric Offerings*, 1828. The poems of this writer have a certain delicacy of sentiment rather than any robust qualities. "Wishes and Youth" is one of his strongest.

n. No. xv. MATHILDE BLIND. Miss Blind, well known through her admirable translation of Strauss, her edition of Shelley's Poems in Baron Tauchnitz's series, her genuinely romantic novel, *Tarantella*, her interesting monograph of "George Eliot" and her highly sympathetic study of Madame Roland, both in the *Eminent Women* series, and various miscellaneous writings, has not published much in verse, but what she has given to the public is of no ordinary quality. Her slight first volume, entitled *St. Oran: and other Poems*, had a deserved success on its appearance two or three years ago, and at once gave her high rank as a poet. This year (1886) she published a narrative poem entitled *The Heather on Fire*, an eloquent protest against the wrongs inflicted on the crofters of the West Highlands.

(No. xv.) This very beautiful sonnet has an interesting history. I have heard that, shortly after the death of the late Bishop of Manchester, it was reprinted without the author's knowledge and sent in the name of 1000 operatives to Mrs. Fraser, the much-esteemed Bishop's widow. It is the lot of few authors to have so genuine, unsolicited, and unexpected a compliment paid to them, in this case all the more remarkable from the fact of Miss Blind having been quite unknown to those who at once paid this compliment to poetry and showed a fine and noble sympathy.

No. xvi. is interesting, as the author's first sonnet. It certainly does not read like a tentative effort.

n. Nos. xviii.-xxii. WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT. These sonnets are excerpted from the third edition of that remarkable volume, *The Love Sonnets of Proteus*. They have more of the Shakespearian ring than perhaps any sonnets of our time. That "Proteus" can at times touch a very high note indeed will be understood by anyone who reads the sonorous and majestic sonnet on "The Sublime" (xxii.). Structurally they cannot be considered satisfactory.

No. xxiii. WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES (1762-1850). The sonnets of the Rev. W. L. Bowles are now more interesting historically than intrinsically. Graceful, with an air of plaintive

melancholy, as they are, they would be practically entirely forgotten were it not for the influence they undoubtedly exercised over Coleridge. It must, of course, be borne in mind that they appeared at a time when a new and natural note was as welcome as the humblest bird-strain in a delayed Spring. Nor was Coleridge alone in admiring Bowles' sonnets, for they were undoubtedly widely read and appreciated. The fount of his poetic genius, however, soon ran dry, and he is now read more by the student or the critic than by the general poetry-loving public. Among the best of his sonnets are the two not very impressive pieces on "Parted Love," beginning "How shall I meet thee, Summer, wont to fill," and "There is strange music in the stirring wind."

No. xxiv. E. H. BRODIE. From a volume containing many excellent and a few noteworthy sonnets. *Sonnets. By E. H. Brodie.* (G. Bell & Sons) 1835. n.

No. xxv. OLIVER MADOX BROWN (1855-1874). No sonnet-
anthology would be complete without this sombre example; not only because of its manifest intrinsic merit, but also on account of the author's unique position among creative minds. The son of Mr. Ford Madox Brown, the eminent artist (whose mural paintings in the New Town Hall at Manchester, now nearing completion, will one day be the goal of many art-lovers), Oliver seemed to have been destined by nature to fill ably the positions of a poet, a novelist, and an artist. One can almost imagine any greatness for the manhood of that writer who, as a boy, achieved such marvellous success. Dying at the early age of nineteen, he was an even more "marvellous boy" than Chatterton, in so much that he was essentially a less morbid development. He had, of course, innumerable advantages which his more unfortunate predecessor had not: among them his father's household, comfortable circumstances, and the friendship of men like Rossetti. *The Black Swan*, with all its demerits, remains a story of tragic power and beauty, perhaps to be read and valued in the future as we now read and value *Wuthering Heights*. It is from the MS. of this romance that the sonnet I have quoted is taken, that is, indirectly, for it occurs in print in the *Memoir and Literary Remains of O.M.B.*, edited by William M. Rossetti and Dr. F. Hueffer. Those who only know (if, indeed, they can thus be said to know) this brilliant and precocious genius n.

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by *Gabriel Denver*, as *The Black Swan* was called in its mutilated published form, should not fail to peruse the two fascinating volumes edited by Mr. W. M. Rossetti and Dr. Hueffer. Here, in addition to the original version of *The Black Swan*, are *The Duale Bluth*, *Hebditch's Legacy*, and other deeply interesting fragments. Considerable personal information will also be found in Mr. John H. Ingram's interesting monograph, published in 1883, by Elliot Stock. There exist two other sonnets by Brown. One was written for a picture by Miss Spartali (Mrs. Stillman); but although it has one noticeably fine line—the third—its chief interest lies in the fact that it was written in the author's fourteenth year, and was one of several of contemporaneous compositions destroyed by Brown in a moment of irritation or dissatisfaction. It survived the fate of its brethren owing to its having been inscribed on the frame of Miss Spartali's picture. The first three lines run—

at 14!

“Leaning against the window, rapt in thought,
Of what sweet past do thy soft brown eyes dream,
That so expressionlessly sweet they seem?”

His third remaining sonnet, more recently come to light, was first printed in Mr. Ingram's *Biographical Sketch*—and has not, so far as I know, appeared elsewhere. It has no title, but I fancy that “The Past World” would be an applicable one:—

THE PAST WORLD.

Made indistinguishable 'mid the boughs,
With saddened weary ever-restless eyes
The weird Chameleon of the Past World lies,—
Like some old wretched man whom God allows
To linger on: still joyless life endows
His wasted frame, and memory never dies
Within him, and his only sympathies
Withered with his last comrade's last carouse.
Methinks great Dante knew thee not of old,—
Else some fierce glutton all insatiate
Compelled within some cage for food to wait
He must have made thee, and his verse have told
How thou in vain thy ravening tried'st to sate
On flylike souls of triflers overbold.

Concerning this sonnet, Mr. Ingram, after referring to its “virility of thought” and “picturesque originality,”

subsequently to printing it adds:—"There is something truly grandiose and weird in the idea enunciated by the first eight lines of this sonnet. The likening of a surviving member of the past world's inhabitants to an old reveller who has outlived all his joys, his comrades, and his sympathies, is not only very striking, but is very unlike what would have been looked for in the work of a boy." For myself, I must say that the sonnet seems to me eminently unsatisfactory in so far that there is a confusion of metaphor and simile in the octave, each demanding full realisation on the part of the reader, and each essentially distinct, irrelative. The first three lines present us with a striking and imaginative metaphor, but immediately we have to change our mental focus and see in this "chameleon" an old debauchee, brooding over past orgies with boon companions as evil as himself. Then again in the striking last lines of the sestet there is a return to the "chameleon" metaphor. Otherwise the poem is certainly an imaginative one, and doubly impressive as being the work of one so young.

I may here take occasion to print a sonnet by another youthful poet, Mr. Robert Lawrence Binyon: entitled "The Past, Asleep." It was written in the author's sixteenth year, and if it has not the imaginative intensity of Oliver Madox Brown's "Past World," it has greater consistency, and exhibits more marked maturity of conception:—

THE PAST, ASLEEP.

When I look back upon my naked past,
 In its hushed slumber like a sleeping snake,
 I shudder—lest the weary coil should wake,
 And wound me with its subtle pain, and cast
 Its barbed stings in my face. It hath me fast;
 I cannot from this secret chain outbreak;
 Nor would I; for its burden doth not ache,
 Save when I gaze too near, then shrink, aghast.

Nay, it hath beauty, when it lies in peace,
 But bitter is the poison of its fangs,
 And the barbed arrows wound, as wounds a knife.
 Yet sweeter far to bear the pricks and pangs,
 Than with a deaf heart let those coils increase,
 Till at the last they crush me, and my life.

In connection with Oliver Madox Brown I may quote a couple of fine sonnets by two among the many who expressed in verse their grief or regret: with several others they are to be found in Mr. Ingram's memoir. The first is by Oliver's father, Mr. Ford Madox Brown—one who is not only a great artist but a cultivated student of English literature, and one who has on several occasions proved his ability to use the pen as well as the brush.

O. M. B.

(Died November 1874.)

As one who strives from some fast steamer's side
To note amid the backward spinning foam
And keep in view some separate wreath therefrom,
That cheats him even the while he views it glide
(Merging in other foam-tracks stretching wide),
So strive we to keep clear that day our home
First saw you riven—a memory thence to roam,
A shattered blossom on the eternal tide!

O broken promises that showed so fair!
O morning sun of wit set in despair!
O brows made smooth as with the Muse's chrism!
O Oliver! ourselves Death's cataclysm
Must soon o'ertake—but not in vain—not where
Some vestige of your thought outspans the abysm!
(April 1883.) "F. M. B."

The other sonnet is by Mr. Theodore Watts. Mr. Watts and Rossetti had spent the night previous to Oliver Brown's funeral in Rossetti's studio in talk upon the sad mystery of the young novelist's early death, and on the drive back from "the place of sleep" the following sonnet was composed by Mr. Watts, while Rossetti thought out the one on Brown which is to be found in his *Ballads and Sonnets*:—

IN A GRAVEYARD.

(12th November, 1874.)

Farewell to thee and to our dreams farewell—
Dreams of high deeds and golden days of thine,
Where once again should Arts' twin powers combine—
The painter's wizard-wand, the poet's spell!

Though Death strikes free, careless of heaven and hell—
 Careless of Man—of Love's most lovely shrine—
 Yet must Man speak—must ask of heaven a sign—
 That this wild world is God's and all is well.

Last night we mourned thee, cursing eyeless Death,
 Who, sparing sons of Baal and Ashtoreth,
 Must needs slay thee, with all the world to slay;—
 But round this grave the winds of winter say
 "On earth what hath the poet? An alien breath,
 Night holds the keys that ope the doors of Day."

Nos. xxvi.-xxx. ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1809-1861). The poetry of Mrs. Browning is too widely familiar for any comment to be called for. Only those who have made a study of contemporary poetry, especially that written by women, realise how strong her influence has been. These beautiful "Portuguese Sonnets" are among the finest of their kind in the language, revealing as they do the loving heart of a true woman as well as the plastic power of a poet. The sonnets of Shakespeare, those of Mrs. Browning, and those of Rossetti must have an especial interest because of their intense personality.

Nos. xxxi.-xxxii. ROBERT BROWNING. Mr. Browning has written few poems in this form; probably he could count on the fingers of one hand all he would ever care to see in any anthology. No. xxxi. is to be found in the Browning Society's Papers, Part v.; also in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, where, I think, it first appeared. No. xxxii. is among a collection of statements in prose and verse, setting forth the separate writers' reasons for the faith that is in them, collected by Mr. Andrew Reid under the title, *Why I am a Liberal*, and published by Messrs. Cassell & Co. It is well known that not only did Landor never write a sonnet, but that he expressed his determination never to do so. But he came very near to inconsistency when he addressed to Robert Browning this beautiful fourteen line poem in blank verse.

TO ROBERT BROWNING.

There is delight in singing, tho' none hear
 Beside the singer; and there is delight
 In praising, tho' the praiser sit alone
 And see the prais'd far off him, far above.

Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,
 Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
 Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
 No man hath walkt along our roads with step
 So active, so enquiring eye, or tongue
 So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
 Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
 Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
 Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
 The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

W. S. LANDOR in *Works* (1876), vol. viii. p. 152.

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 Nos. xxxiii.-xxxiv. ROBERT BUCHANAN. These sonnets are from the section of *The Book of Orm* entitled "Coruisken Sonnets." Of all Mr. Buchanan's poetic productions *The Book of Orm* is certainly the most individual, and is in some ways the most remarkable. It has unmistakable faults, but its beauties are equally unmistakable—and it certainly never has been done justice to. There is no living poet who has a keener eye for nature than has Mr. Buchanan—in this he is a true northerner. In dealing with natural aspects he is never or seldom the mere literary man, but the poet working from knowledge and familiarity as well as with insight. He has, however, written very few good sonnets as sonnets.

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 No. xxxv. SIR S. EGERTON BRYDGES (1762-1837). This sonnet, like those of Bowles, owes much of its reputation to the warm praise it received from certain eminent contemporaries of its author, including Wordsworth and Coleridge. It has, of course, genuine merit, though this is not one of those instances where we are likely to be induced to consider the Alexandrine at the close an unexpected charm (an Alexandrine also ends the octave). The somewhat pompous author never, however, wrote anything better, though that he had some faculty for his art will be evident to anyone who glances through his *Poems* (1807).

No. xxxvi. LORD BYRON (1788-1824). The genius of Byron was not one from which we might have expected good sonnet-work. He is greater in mass than in detail, in outlines than in delicate side-touches—in a word, he is like a sculptor who hews a Titan out of a huge block, one whom we would never expect to be able, or to care, to delicately carve a cameo. That Byron could write sonnets, and that he could

even write an exceptionally fine one, is evident from that which I have quoted. No. xxxvi. is an essentially noble sonnet in the Miltonic mould, recalling indeed Milton's famous sonnet on the Piedmontese massacre, and having some affinity to Wordsworth's equally noble sonnet on Toussaint (No. cclx.). It is hardly necessary to call to the reader's remembrance that Bonnivard, Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon," was, on account of his daring patriotism, interned in the first half of the 17th century in the dungeons of the Castle of Chillon, on the Lake of Geneva, by the tyrannical orders of the Duke of Savoy. He was ultimately released—not through the mercy of his enemy—but not until after long years of wretchedness, wherein his feet are said to have left traces on the worn stones of his prison-floor.

Nos. xxxvii-xxxviii. HALL CAINE. It is with pleasure I print these fine sonnets. There is no writer of the younger generation who has come more rapidly to the fore than Mr. Hall Caine, though as a poet he has not yet sought the opinion of the public. These sonnets appeared in *The Athenæum*, and are interesting not only from their intrinsic merit, but as evidence that Mr. Caine can himself compose a sonnet as well as write about sonnets and sonneteering. I have already, in the introductory note, referred to his valuable *Sonnets of Three Centuries* (Stock, 1882). Since then Mr. Caine has further confirmed his reputation by his *Recollections of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, and by his successful romances, *The Shadow of a Crime* and *A Son of Hagar*. n.

No. xxxix. WILLIAM M. W. CALL. This impressive, if structurally unsatisfactory sonnet, is from Mr. Call's *Golden Histories* (Smith, Elder & Co., 1871). Mr. Call has written much, but has not succeeded in attracting wide notice. He has certainly, however, written no other sonnet so fine as this. Glancing at it again, I find that the lines— n.

"I watch'd the great red sun, in clouds, go down,
An Orient King, that 'mid his bronzed slaves
Dies, leaning on his sceptre, with his crown"—

suggests an equally fine image, which I must quote from memory, not having Charles Wells' *Joseph and his Brethren* at hand. Wells, in his fine dramatic poem, is picturing the sun setting seaward, viewed from a cliff-bound coast:—

"And like
A God gigantic, habited in gold,
Stepping from off a mount into the sea."

No. xl. JOHN CLARE (1793-1864). Clare's sonnets are irregular in structure, and in a sense they are only fourteen-line poems. They might as well as not be better, or worse, for being two or three lines shorter or longer. There is no *inevitableness* about them: one feels that the choice of vehicle has been purely arbitrary,—in a word, that they have not that essential characteristic—adequacy of sonnet-motive. Like all his work, however, they are characterised by the same winsome affection for and knowledge of the nature amidst which he spent his life. Clare's poetry is often like a sunny and windy day bursting through the gloom of late winter.

No. xl. The last word is printed by Clare "drest," but as Mr. Main has pointed out, and corrected in his *Treasury*, this is an obvious misprint for "deckt."

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Nos. xli.-xlii. HERBERT E. CLARKE. "The Assiguation" is from Mr. Clarke's latest volume, *Storm Drift*; and "King of Kings" from its predecessor, *Songs in Exile* (Marcus Ward, 1879). Mr. Clarke has written several excellent sonnets.

Nos. xliii.-xlvii. HARTLEY COLERIDGE (1796-1849). Hartley Coleridge now ranks among the foremost sonneteers in our language: as in the case of Charles Tennyson-Turner, his reputation rests solely on his sonnet-work. Notwithstanding the reverent admiration he had for his more famous father, Hartley's work betrays much more the influence of Wordsworth than of S. T. Coleridge. In this a wise instinct indubitably guided him. His father was not a sonneteer. There is a firmness of handling, a quiet autumnal tenderness and loveliness about Hartley's sonnets that endows them with an endless charm for all who care for poetic beauty. Students should consult the notes in Mr. Main's *Treasury* and the interesting *ana* in Mr. Caine's *Sonnets of Three Centuries*. Of the sonnets I have quoted, the first is specially noteworthy. A friend has recorded the interesting fact that Hartley Coleridge's sonnets were all written impulsively, and never occupied more than ten minutes in composition. Probably, however, they were carefully revised at the author's leisure. A sonnet is not like a lyric proper—best in its very spontaneity and unguardedness.

The impulse should be as keen, but the shaping power of the artist should come more into play. A sonnet is also the least likely of any poetic vehicle to be spoiled by discriminative revision; in nine cases out of ten it is greatly improved thereby.

No. xlviii. SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834). There is no one of Coleridge's sonnets which can be pronounced distinctly satisfactory. The one I have given seems to me on the whole the best. The famous one on Schiller's *Robbers* has been much overrated—though Coleridge himself had a high opinion of it. Wordsworth showed his critical faculty when, on receipt of Dyce's *Sonnet-Anthology*, he referred to the insertion of "The Robbers" as a mistake, on the ground of "rant." I print it here:—

TO THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROBBERS."

Schiller! that hour I would have wished to die,
 If through the shuddering midnight I had sent,
 From the dark dungeon of the tower time-rent,
 That fearful voice, a famished father's cry;
 Lest in some after moment aught more mean
 Might stamp me mortal. A triumphant shout
 Black Horror screamed, and all her goblin rout
 Diminished shrunk from the more withering scene.
 Ah! bard tremendous in sublimity!
 Could I behold thee in thy loftier mood,
 Wandering at eve with finely frenzied eye
 Beneath some vast old tempest-swinging wood,
 Awhile with mute awe gazing I would brood,
 Then weep aloud in a wild ecstasy.

There are probably few readers of mature taste who would not consider Wordsworth's epithet "rant" as literally applicable. One learns with a sense of uncomfortable wonder that Coleridge himself—this supreme master of metrical music—considered the last six lines "strong and fiery!"

What a difference between this Schiller sonnet and the beautiful poem in fourteen lines entitled "Work without Hope." If these lines had only been adequately set in sonnet-mould, the result would have been a place for this poetic gem among the finest sonnets in the language.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE.

All Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair—
The bees are stirring—birds are on the wing—
And Winter slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrightened, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

92. No. xlix. SARA COLERIDGE (1803-1852). This sonnet is from the author's fairy-romance, *Phantasmion*, published in 1837. As, so far as I recollect, it has found a place in no previous anthology, nor even been referred to in appendices, I presume it has altogether escaped my brother-editors' notice.

Sara Coleridge had not less genius than her brother Hartley, but she had nothing like the same gift of expression. She resembled her famous father in her tendency to lyric music, while Hartley's genius was distinctly inclined to express itself in more monumental forms. This sonnet of hers loses much by separation from the context, but not so much as to render its appearance here inappropriate.

m. No. I. DINAH MARIA CRAIK. The author of *John Halifax, Gentleman*, has written much true poetry, and especially many charming lyrics—e.g. "Philip my King," "Rothsay Bay," etc.—though but few sonnets. (*Thirty Years: Poems Old and New*. Macmillan & Co., 1881.)

M. Nos. II.-liv. DE VERE, SIR AUBREY (1788-1846). From *Sonnets: By the late Sir Aubrey de Vere, Bart.* (Pickering, 1875.)

The sonnets of Sir Aubrey de Vere are not nearly so widely known as they deserve to be. The high estimation in which Wordsworth (who was not given to over-estimate the poetic powers of his contemporaries) held them has been fully endorsed of late by the few who have made a special study of this fascinating section of poetic literature.

The same author's *Mary Tudor* is a noticeable dramatic production, but it is by his sonnets that his name will grow in reputation. The following passage is from the interesting memoir, prefacing the sonnets, by his distinguished son:—"The sonnet was with him to the last a favourite form of composition. This taste was fostered by the magnificent sonnets of Wordsworth, whose genius he had early hailed, and whose friendship he regarded as one of the chief honours of his later life. For his earlier sonnets he had found a model chiefly in the Italian poets, especially Petrarch and Filicaja. Like Filicaja also, who so well deserved the inscription graven on his tomb, '*Qui gloriam literarum honestavit*,' he valued the sonnet the more because its austere brevity, its severity, and its majestic completeness fit it especially for the loftier themes of song. . . . The great modern master of the sonnet, Wordsworth, pronounced those of Sir Aubrey de Vere to be among the most perfect of our age. Whether they illustrated nature, embodied thought, or expressed imaginative emotion, his severe judgment noted in them the artist's hand faithful to the best ancient models, and the truthful soul of a poet."

He was as true a man as he was poet. What finer tribute could be paid to anyone than the words uttered by a friend who bent above him as he lay upon his death-bed—"In that brow I see three things—Imagination, Reverence, and Honour."

Sir Aubrey de Vere's sonnets are divisible into sections, and I have endeavoured to select examples which are thoroughly representative.

No. liv. *The Children's Band*. The subject chosen by its author for this pathetic sonnet is one that has been little handled by writers. In all, some 30,000 children (varying in age from twelve to sixteen) from France—crying aloud on their march, "Rendez-vous, Seigneur Jésus, votre Croix sainte!"—and about 20,000 from Germany, followed the lead of the fanatic apostate monk Jacob, or, as he was more widely known, Job. Misery and fatigue, hunger and exposure, robbers and brutalities, caused the deaths of many hundreds of the poor children who had been the first to respond to the appeal for a new crusade made by Pope Innocent III. early in the 13th century. A great number reached Marseilles, and were there inveigled on board seven large ships by two scoundrels, Hugues Lefer and Guillaume Leporc; two of these vessels were wrecked, but the remaining five reached Egypt, where the unfortunate

children were sold into Saracenic slavery. The youthful martyrs were avenged by the new general crusade that shortly followed, inaugurated at the Council of Latran, convoked by Innocent III. (*Vide Collin de Plancy's Légendes des Croisades.*)

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Nos. lv.-lix. AUBREY DE VÈRE (the Younger). Mr. Aubrey de Vere is the third son of the last-named writer, and is a worthy inheritor of his father's genius. Mr. De Vere undoubtedly ranks among the foremost sonnetsteers of our time, and if he were to collect and print his sonnets in a volume by themselves they would most certainly gain wide appreciation. At present they are to be found in the volumes entitled *The Search after the Proserpine: and other Poems Classical and Meditative*, and in *Alexander the Great: and other Poems* (re-issue of the Poetical Works, vols. I. and III. Kegan Paul & Co., 1884).

lv. *The Sun God*. If this magnificent sonnet had more rhythmic strength, it would be worthy to rank among the very finest in the language.

lvii. A lovely sonnet, with several alterations from its original appearance (l. 1, *tranquil beauty*; l. 2, *lovely*, etc.; ll. 3, 4, *And the most penetrating eye can trace No sad distraction in her harmless air*; l. 6, *an unknown grace*; l. 7, *surrounds her like a crystal atmosphere*; l. 8, *and love*; l. 21, *in the upper ether wove*; l. 13, *transcendent power*).

No. lx. RICHARD WATSON DIXON. Mr. Hall Caine, a generous and discriminating critic, says: "Canon Dixon affords probably by far the most striking instance of a living poet deserving the highest recognition yet completely unrecognised."

Nos. lxi.-lxiii. SYDNEY DOBELL (1824-1874). These powerful sonnets cannot be read without admiration. "The Army Surgeon" is terrible in its literality; especially thrilling are the lines commencing with "And as a raw brood" (l. 7). "The Common Grave" is deservedly a favourite with all who appreciate imaginative and powerful poetry; but as a sonnet it is badly constructed—the rhyme arrangement is extremely irregular, nor to a sensitive ear is there pleasure in *cried—side*, or in *down—on*. "Home: in War Time"—this sonnet has all the power of unexpectedness—but the transition from the peaceful home-scene, and the wife's loving hope and yearning, to the frightful battlefield where

lie the decaying dead, though startlingly effective, is a cruelty to the reader having a powerful imagination: the word "carrión" in the last line is too horribly suggestive. Dobell can best be studied in the *Poetical Works, with Introductory Notice and Memoir* by John Nichol, M.A., Oxon, LL.D. 2 vols., 1875. n.

No. lxiv. AUSTIN DOBSON. Mr. Austin Dobson has written few sonnets, but "Don Quixote" well deserves a place in any anthology.

Nos. lxxv., lxxvi. THOMAS DOUBLEDAY (1790-1870). Mr. Doubleday's poetic work was mainly in the drama. His sonnets are to be found in a rather rare little volume, published anonymously, entitled *Sixty-five Sonnets: with Prefatory remarks on the Sonnet* (1818). n.

No. lxxvii.-lxxxi. EDWARD DOWDEN. Professor Dowden, widely known as an able critic and Shakespearian student, has not perhaps a very wide audience for his poetry. It is at any rate select; and it is with pleasure that I print these fine sonnets from his charming volume of *Poems*. Professor Dowden's recently published "Life of Shelley" has become the standard biography of that poet. n

No. lxxxii. JOHN CHARLES EARLE. *The Master's Field*—from which the sonnet is taken—is the only volume by Mr. Earle with which I am acquainted. It is not, I understand, his best book: but rather *One Hundred Sonnets*, or else *From Light to Light*. n.
n.

No. lxxxiii. EBENEZER ELLIOT (1781-1849). The "Corn-Law Rhymer" does not rank high among sonneteers. He was one of the most convinced opponents of the legitimate or Petrarchan sonnet, and a strong advocate for the Spenserian.

No. lxxxiv. JOSEPH ELLIS. From *Cæsar in Egypt: and other Poems*. By Joseph Ellis. 2nd Edition (Stewart & Co., Farringdon Street, 1882). n.

Nos. lxxxv.-lxxxvii. HENRY ELLISON. In 1833 there were published at Malta two eccentrically worded and still more eccentrically printed volumes of verse, entitled *Madmoments, or First Verseattempts by a Bornnatural*. To this strange heading was appended the following: "Addressed respect-

fully to the lightheaded of society at large; but intended more particularly for the use of that world's madhouse, London. By Henry Ellison, of Christchurch, Oxford." But the poems in these two volumes are very far from being incoherent or inartistically *outrés*. The printing and general arrangement are so out of the common that a certain artificial air of strangeness does certainly seem to characterise the poems; but the strangeness is only superficial. I have seen but one copy of this now scarce book—that in the British Museum Library, to which my attention was called by Dr. Garnett. Some years later the same author published his *Touches on the Harp of Nature*, and in 1884, *Poems of Real Life*—the last-named containing many of the sonnets which appeared in *Madmoments*. Perhaps no writer of genuine capacity has ever written so much or lived so long and attracted so little attention. I am glad to be able to give these three very fairly representative sonnets. Other fine examples will be found in Mr. Main's *CCC. English Sonnets*.

No. lxxviii.-ix. FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER (1814-1863). These two sonnets from *The Cherwell Water Lily: and other Poems*, 1840, adequately represent Father Faber's position as a sonnet-writer. Personally, I cannot but consider that his poetry has been over-praised, though undoubtedly some of his sonnets have both strength and beauty.

No. lxxviii. is the third of the series styled *On the Four Religious Heathens*, the other three being *Herodotus*, *Nicias*, and *Seneca*. It was Father Faber whom Wordsworth accredited with the possession of as true an eye to nature as he himself owned: "I have hardly ever known anyone but myself who had a true eye for nature" [how eminently Wordsworthian!]; "one that thoroughly understood her meanings and her teachings—except," here he interrupted himself, says the narrator—(Aubrey de Vere, in his *Recollections*)—"one person. There was a young clergyman called Frederick Faber, who resided at Ambleside. He had not only as good an eye for nature as I have, but even a better one, and sometimes pointed out to me on the mountains effects which, with all my great experience, I had never detected."

No. lxxx. HON. JULIAN FANE (1827-1870). The story of this brilliantly gifted writer has been adequately and most

sympathetically narrated by his biographer, Lord Lytton. His keen delight in Shakespeare's sonnets induced his acceptance of them as his standard in composition. To his mother, for whom he had a reverent love very beautiful in its tenderness and pride, he was wont to address a sonnet on each successive birthday; and it is one of those birthday-greetings which I have selected. For a pathetic account of the composition of his latest sonnets see *Julian Fane: A Memoir*. By Lord Lytton. 1871. M

No. lxxxI. WILLIAM FREELAND. Mr. Freeland has found time in the midst of a long and active journalistic career to devote himself ever and again to the production of poetry. I am glad to have this opportunity of drawing attention to his *Birth Song: and other Poems*, 1882, and also to his contributions to the recently issued volume of *The Glasgow Ballad Club*. Both books are published by Messrs. Maclehose, of Glasgow. The following is irregular in structure, but otherwise excellent: it is the second of two entitled "The New-Comers:"— M
M

What spirit is this that cometh from afar,
 Making the household tender with a cry—
 That blends the mystery of earth and sky—
 The blind mute motions of a new-lit star,
 The unlangued visions of a folded rose?
 A marvel is the rose from bud to bloom,
 The star a wonder and a splendour grows;
 But this sweet babe, that neither sees nor knows,
 Hath wrapt in it a genius and a doom
 More visionful of beauty than all flowers,
 More glowing wondrous than all singing spheres
 And though oft baffled by repelling powers,
 Growing and towering through the stormy hours,
 To perfect glory in God's year of years.

Nos. lxxxii, lxxxiii. RICHARD GARNETT. Mr. Garnett, a true poet and accomplished critic, and the leading English bibliographical authority living, has written few sonnets—but these few are good. The two I quote are sonnets of which Wordsworth or Rossetti might well have been proud to claim the authorship. The second is to be found in his pleasant volume, *Io in Egypt: and other Poems*. I append another excellent example:— M

GARIBALDI'S RETIREMENT.

Not that three armies thou didst overthrow ;
 Not that three cities oped their gates to thee,
 I praise thee, chief ; not for *this* royalty
 Decked with new crowns, *that* utterly laid low ;
 For nothing of all thou didst forsake, to go
 And tend thy vines amid the Etrurian Sea ;
 Not even that thou didst *this*—though History
 Retreat two thousand selfish years to show
 Another Cincinnatus ! Rather for this,
 The having lived such life, that even this deed
 Of stress heroic natural seems as is
 Calm night, when glorious day it doth succeed ;
 And we, forewarned by surest auguries,
 The amazing act with no amazement read.

No. lxxxiv. MARY C. GILLINGTON. Miss Gillington has written and published some poetry of very considerable promise, for the most part as yet marked by a certain immaturity. More completely than in the case of any living poet does the sea-passion dominate her verse.

M
M
Nos. lxxxv.-vii. EDMUND W. GOSSE. Mr. Gosse's volumes of verse are entitled *On Viol and Flute* and *New Poems*, and he has recently published a new collection called *Firdausi in Exile: and other Poems*. Mr. Gosse has written several excellent sonnets, all characterised by refined grace.

No. lxxxvi. Mr. Waddington, referring to "Alcyone," speaks of it as the first sonnet in dialogue written in English; but this is not quite the case, for William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, wrote one in this form about the beginning of the 17th century—and among others written in recent years I may refer to an interesting example by Mr. J. A. Symonds. I fancy also there is another example, but cannot recollect the particulars. I print "Alcyone" more as an interesting exotic, and for its own indubitable beauty, than as a sonnet proper—for of course it is no more the latter than are those octosyllabic 14-line poems of which Mr. Waddington and Mr. Lefroy have given us some interesting examples, or than those 7-8 syllabled "sonnets" of which several good specimens are to be found in the French compilation, *Le Livre des Sonnets*. (Paris, 1875.)

n.

No. lxxxvii. Compare with this the sonnet on *Æschylus* by Mr. Aubrey De Vere (*Search after Proserpine*, etc., p. 67):—

ÆSCHYLUS.

A sea-cliff carved into a bas-relief !
 Dark thoughts and sad, conceiv'd by brooding Nature ;
 Brought forth in storm :—dread shapes of Titan stature,
 Emblems of Fate, and Change, Revenge, and Grief,
 And Death, and Life ;—a caverned Hieroglyph
 Confronting still with thunder-blasted frieze
 All stress of years, and winds, and wasting seas :—
 The stranger nears it in his fragile skiff
 And hides his eyes. Few, few shall pass, great Bard,
 Thy dim sea-portals ! Entering, fewer yet
 Shall pierce thy mystic meanings, deep and hard ;
 But these shall owe to thee an endless debt ;
 The Eleusinian caverns they shall tread
 That wind beneath man's heart ; and wisdom learn with
 dread.

Nos. lxxxviii-ix. DAVID GRAY (1838-1861). The sad story of this young Scotch poet is now familiar. (*Vide*, especially, the Cambridge edition of his poems, 1862, with the memoir by James Hedderwick and Prefatory Notice by the late Lord Houghton—and Mr. Robert Buchanan's *David Gray: and other Essays*.) The sonnets in *The Luggie: and other Poems*, entitled "In the Shadows," are full of delicate fancy and a somewhat morbid sensibility, with a keen note of pain from a bitterly disappointed heart. The sonnets, as sonnets, are generally unsatisfactory.

lxxxix. This sonnet, Mr. Buchanan tells us, was addressed by Gray to him. It has distinct poetic quality, but is at the same time a good example of its author's weakness. Tennyson is echoed in the first two lines, and Keats in the fifth.

No. xc. THOMAS GORDON HAKE. I am glad to be able to give this sonnet by one who has written so much and such original poetry as Dr. Hake has done. Dr. Hake has written few sonnets. No. xc. is not from any of his volumes of verse, but is taken from *The Academy*, where it appeared in April 1884.

No. xci. ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM (1811-1833). Mr. Hallam deserves to be remembered for his own poetic utterances as well as because of his friendship with the present Laureate, and as having been the direct cause of *In Memoriam*, that most widely read of all English elegiac poems.

Nos. xcii.-xcv. EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON. Among the younger poets of our generation there is none who in the sonnet has surpassed Mr. Lee-Hamilton. This gentleman has published four volumes of verse, marked by curious inequalities along with striking dramatic force and high meditative faculty. His genius is measurely, not essentially lyrical:—in writing sonnets, his ear does not often fail him: in blank verse, or heroic couplets, only rarely; but in purely lyrical, and especially in ballad-writing, he is apt constantly to indulge in strangely dissonant lines. The four sonnets I have quoted are all fine; "Sea-shell Murmurs" is especially noteworthy for its original treatment of a *motif* worn almost threadbare, it being an application not unworthy, indeed, to rank along with the familiar corresponding passages in Landor and Wordsworth. The following, with its noble ethical lesson, in company with Nos. xciii., xciv., and xcvi., is from *Apollo and Marsyas*; and *other Poems* (Elliot Stock, 1884), while "Sea-shell Murmurs" is from *The New Medusa*; and *other Poems* (Stock, 1882).

THE PHANTOM SHIP.

We touch Life's shore as swimmers from a wreck
 Who shudder at the cheerless land they reach,
 And find their comrades gathered on the beach
 Watching a fading sail, a small white speck—
 The Phantom ship, upon whose ample deck
 There seemed awhile a homeward place for each;
 The crowd still wring their hands and still beseech,
 But see, it fades, in spite of prayer and beck.
 Let those who hope for brighter shores no more
 Not mourn, but turning inland, bravely seek
 What hidden wealth redeems the shapeless shore.
 The strong must build stout cabins for the weak;
 Must plan and stint; must sow and reap and store;
 For grain takes root though all seems bare and bleak.

Nos. xcvi.-xcvii. SIR WILLIAM ROWAN HAMILTON (1805-1865)
 As man, philosopher, and poet, Sir W. R. Hamilton was

distinctively deserving of sincerest admiration. I know no pleasanter biographical volumes than those in which the Rev. R. Percival Graves has so efficiently acted the parts of writer and editor. These two noble sonnets can be matched by others almost equally fine, though the late Astronomer-Royal of Ireland was far from being a voluminous writer, especially in verse. He was essentially a keenly-intellectual spiritually-minded man. In a letter from Mr. Aubrey de Vere to myself that gentleman writes: "Sir R. Hamilton's sonnets are indeed, as you remark, excellent, and I rejoice that you are making them better known than they have been hitherto. Wordsworth once remarked to me that he had known many men of high talents and several of real genius: but that Coleridge and Sir W. R. Hamilton were the only men he had met to whom he would apply the term *wonderful*." Sir W. R. Hamilton, it may be new to many readers to learn, is among the finest prose writers of this century: I may quote the following passage from his introductory address on Astronomy, shortly after his election to the chair, at Dublin University (1831):—

"But not more surely" (do I believe), "than that to the dwellers in the moon—if such there be—the sun habitually appears and habitually withdraws during such alternate intervals as we call fortnightly here: not sending to announce his approach those herald clouds of rosy hues which on earth appear before him, nor rising red himself after the gradual light of dawn, but springing forth at once from the bosom of night with more keen clear golden lustre than that which at mid-noon he sheds on the summit of some awful Alp; nor throned, as with us at evening, in many-coloured pavilion of cloud, nor followed by twilight's solemn hour; but keeping his meridian lustre to the last, and vanishing into sudden darkness."

For all particulars concerning the Life and Labours of Sir W. R. Hamilton, the reader should consult the two volumes (a mine of literary interest) by the Rev. R. Percival Graves (Dublin University Press Series, and Longman & Co., 1882).

Nos. xcvii.-xcix. LORD HANMER. Forty-five years ago Lord Hanmer, then Sir John Hanmer, Bart., published a thin quarto volume of sonnets. Few in number, there was not a poor one in the selection: all were excellent, and several exceptionally fine. Sonnets like "The Fiumara," or "The

Old Fisher," remain with one, as sometimes do circumstances of little import, touched for the moment into some unforgettable beauty. There is a suggestion of that sad northern painter, Josef Israels, in "The Old Fisher"—a pathos distinct from the more sombre, but humanly indifferent solemnity of most north Italian transcripts.

Thou art a fisher of Mazorbo ; lone,
 Drifting a usual shadow o'er the sea
 With thine old boat, that like a barkless tree
 Creaks in the wind, a pitchless dreary moan ;
 And there thy life and all thy thoughts have flown,
 Pouncing on crabs in shallows, till thy knee
 Crooked as theirs, now halts unsteadily,
 Going about to move the anchor stone ;
 And when the waves roll inwards from the east,
 Takest thy net, and for some few sardines
 Toil'st, in the morning's wild and chilly ray :
 Then dost thou go to where yon bell-tower leans,
 And in the sunshine sit, the poor man's feast,
 Else abstinent in thy poverty, all the day.

No. c. REV. ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER (1804-1875). No truer and probably no more eminent poet has been produced by Cornwall than the late Vicar of Morwenstow. His strength, however, does not lie in sonnets, though he wrote one or two excellent examples. His poetry, generally, is as fresh and bright as a sunny day on his own Cornish coasts.

No. ci. JOHN HOGBEN. Mr. Hogben has published little verse, and that only in magazines or weekly journals (*The Spectator*, etc.).

No. cii. EDMOND G. A. HOLMES. Mr. Holmes is the author of *Poems*, Series I. (H. S. King & Co., 1876), and *Poems*, Series II. (Kegan Paul, 1879). In both Series there are some strikingly descriptive sonnets, especially those grouped under the titles "Atlantic Sonnets" and "The Coast of Clare;" from the latter Series I may quote one:—

COAST OF CLARE.

Two walls of precipices black and steep,
 The storm-lashed ramparts of a naked land,
 Are parted here by leagues of lonely sand
 That make a bay ; and up it ever creep

Billowy ocean ripples half asleep,
 That cast a belt of foam along the strand,
 Seething and white, and wake in cadence grand
 The everlasting thunder of the deep.
 And there is never silence on that shore—
 Alike in storm and calm foam-fringes gird
 Its desolation, and the Atlantic's roar
 Makes mighty music. Though the sea be stirred
 By scarce a breath of breeze, yet evermore
 The sands are whitened, and the thunder heard.

Nos. ciii.-iv. THOMAS HOOD (1798-1845). These beautiful sonnets prove what an essentially true poet Hood was. His great fame as a humorist has overshadowed his claims to a high place among imaginative writers. How few of his contemporaries could have written that weird and impressive poem, "The Haunted House;" certainly none could have surpassed it. The sonnet on "Silence" here given is exceedingly beautiful, and should be compared with the following well-known sonnet by Edgar Poe :—

SILENCE.

There are some qualities, some incorporate things,
 That have a double life, which thus is made
 A type of that twin entity which springs
 From matter and light evinced in solid and shade.
 There is a two-fold Silence—sea and shore—
 Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
 Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
 Some human memories and tearful lore
 Render him terrorless; his name's "No More,"
 He is the corporate Silence; dread him not!
 No power hath he of evil in himself;
 But should some urgent fate (untimely lot)
 Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
 That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
 No foot of man), commend thyself to God!

RICHARD HENGIST HORNE (1803-1884). The late R. Hengist Horne passed away in a very faint adumbration of that high reputation he once enjoyed. From the early days of "the farthing Epic"—*Orion*—to the publication of the *Bible Tragedies*, is changes! No poet of this generation more lived his life than did "Orion:" he seems to have

dwelt in, or at any rate visited all the habitable (and several of the uninhabitable) parts of the globe. Among his friends he numbered most of the leading poets and writers of this century, and among his constant correspondents was the late Mrs. Browning. He had an eminently fine presence, though when I last saw him he was manifestly yielding under the assaults of age and prolonged activity. Of all his works, personally I consider the best to be *Cosmo de Medici: and other Poems*. Among the short poems is one called, if I remember aright, "The Slave," which, for glowing richness of colouring, seems to me to hold a very high place in modern verse. Horne was not a sonnet-writer: the following, with all its faults, is, so far as I know, the only sonnet by him deserving the name. It was written on December 26, 1879, and was inscribed to the same Mr. Ellis whose sonnet "Silence" I have quoted on page 74.

THE FRIEND OF FRIENDS.

(Inscribed to Joseph Ellis, author of "Cæsar in Egypt.")

Who is the Friend of Friends?—not one who smiles
 While you are prosperous,—purse-full, in fair fame,
 Flattering, "Come, be my household's altar-flame,
 When knowing you can bask on sunny isles:
 Not one who sayeth, "That brain's a mighty mould,"
 With base-coin'd hints about alloys in gold:
 Nor he who frankly tells you all your faults,
 But drops all merit into vampire vaults:—
 No: the true friend stands close 'midst circling storms,
 When you are poor,—lost,—wrestling thro' a cloud;
 With whom your ship rides high in freezing calms,
 Its banner, ghostly pale, to him still proud;
 Whose heart's Blest-Arab-spice dead hope embalms,
 The same, tho' you sate throned,—or waiting for your
 shroud.

No. cv. CHARLES A. HOUFE. A young writer, who, if he will eschew the crudities manifest in the little volume he recently published anonymously, will probably do good work. The sonnet quoted has the stamp of genuine poetry.

No. cvi. LORD HOUGHTON (18—1835). The late Lord Houghton had from his early youth close connection with literature, few names having been more familiar in the literary circles

of the last generation or two than that of "Monckton Milnes." His poetry is more graceful, refined, and scholarly, than imaginative or strongly emotional.

Nos. cvii.-viii. LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859). We owe Leigh Hunt's splendid Nile sonnet to a friendly competition between himself and two still greater poets, Keats and Shelley. It is strange that a *motif* so eminently suited to the highest poetic genius should have been treated in inverse ratio to the intellectual and poetic powers of the competitors, for undoubtedly Hunt's ranks first, Keats's second, and Shelley's last. I append, for comparison, the rival sonnets.

Month after month the gathering rains descend,
 Drenching yon secret Ethiopian dells,
 And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles
 Where frost and heat in strange embraces blend
 On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
 Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells
 By Nile's aerial urn; with rapid spells
 Urging those waters to their mighty end.
 O'er Egypt's land of memory floods are level
 And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest
 That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
 And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
 Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee
 Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

—PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Son of the old moon-mountains African!
 Stream of the Pyramid and Crocodile!
 We call thee fruitful, and that very while
 A desert fills our seeing's inward span:
 Nurse of swart nations since the world began,
 Art thou so fruitful? or dost thou beguile
 Those men to honour thee, who, worn with toil,
 Rest them a space 'twixt Cairo and Decan?
 O may dark fancies err? They surely do:
 'Tis ignorance that makes a barren waste
 Of all beyond itself. Thou dost bedew
 Green rushes like our rivers, and dost taste
 The pleasant sun-rise. Green isles hast thou too,
 And to the sea as happily doth haste.

—JOHN KEATS.

Strangely, it is also to a friendly competition that is due the composition of "The Grasshopper and Cricket." Mr. Cowden Clarke has told us in his *Recollections*, how, on December 30, 1816, he accompanied Keats on a visit to Leigh Hunt at the latter's cottage in the Vale of Health, Hampstead Heath, and how Hunt challenged Keats to write "then, there, and to time," a sonnet "On the Grasshopper and the Cricket." Keats gained the victory over his rival in point of time. Both are eminently characteristic, the one unmistakably by the author of *Endymion*, the other suffused with the genial sunshine pervading the temperament and the poetry of its writer. Here is Keats's:—

The poetry of earth is never dead :
 When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
 And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
 From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead :
 That is the grasshopper's—he takes the lead
 In summer luxury,—he has never done
 With his delights ; for when tired out with fun,
 He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
 The poetry of earth is ceasing never :
 On a lone winter evening, when the frost
 Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
 The cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
 And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
 The grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

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 No. cix. J. W. INCHBOLD. Mr. Inchbold has made the "sonnet" a special study, and has himself written many pleasant examples in a little volume entitled *Annus Amoris*, published in 1876 (H. S. King & Co.).

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 No. cx. JEAN INGELOW. This sonnet is from Miss Ingelow's *Collected Poems*, so widely popular.

No. cxi. EBENEZER JONES (1820-1860). This author wrote no more than two or three sonnets.

Nos. cxii.-cxvii. JOHN KEATS (1795-1821). Keats wrote fifty sonnets (or rather fifty-one, including that recently brought to the notice of Mr. Sydney Colvin), but only a little over a third of these rank as really fine. Everyone who knows Keats's poems is thoroughly familiar with the famous sonnet, "On First Looking into Chapman's *Homer*." A

special interest attaches to No. cxvii. It was Keats's last sonnet—indeed, his latest poem. On that last journey of his, when the vessel that was conveying him to Italy was beating about in the British Channel, he and his loyal friend Joseph Severn managed to land for a few hours on the coast of Devon. From the depth of weariness, bodily and spiritual, Keats rallied marvellously under the effects of the welcome change, and on his return to the ship he took up a volume of Shakespeare's *Poems*, and wrote in it this sonnet beginning "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art," returning the volume to Severn, to whom he had presented it a few days previously. It is among the most pathetic "last words" of poets. There is an alternative reading of the last line—

"And so live ever, or else swoon to death,"

but this lection is indubitably inferior.

No. cxviii. FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE. Mrs. Butler, more widely known by her familiar maiden name, is a genuine poet. Some of her sonnets—several of them very beautiful—are more satisfactory in structure than this one, but none surpasses it in dignity and solemn pathos.

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834). An undue place has frequently of late been claimed for Lamb as a poet. That he had a keenly poetic nature is certain, but this premiss is not enough for the deduction referred to. Mr. Main gives four of his sonnets in his *Treasury*, of which "Work" and "Leisure" are simply eminently characteristic of the man, and the other two pleasant poems. Mr. Caine gives "Work" and another ("A Timid Grace," etc.), whose chief interest lies in its evident relation to that well-loved sister who is one of the most pathetic figures in the history of literature. The following sonnet on "Innocence" is one that Lamb himself considered his best:—

We were two pretty babes ; the youngest she,
 The youngest and the loveliest far (I ween)
 And INNOCENCE her name ; the time has been
 We two did love each other's company ;
 Time was, we two had wept to have been apart,
 But when, by show of seeming good beguil'd,
 I left the garb and manners of a child,

And my first love, for man's society,
 Defiling with the world my virgin heart—
 My lov'd companion dropt a tear and fled,
 And hid in deepest shades her awful head,
 Beloved ! who shall tell me, where thou art
 In what delicious Eden to be found ?
 That I may seek thee, the wide world around.

Nos. cxx.-cxxi. ANDREW LANG. Mr. Andrew Lang has unmistakably "made his mark" in contemporary English poetry, though not by his sonnets, for these could be numbered on the fingers. What he *has* done in this direction has been exceptionally good. I can at the moment call to remembrance no two lines more rich in vowel-music than those in the octave of No. cxx.—

"The bones of Agamemnon are a show
 And ruined is his royal monument."

The striking sonnet on the death of Colonel Burnaby has not appeared heretofore in any volume ; it was published some time ago in the columns of *Punch*. Another of Mr. Lang's best sonnets I have not included in the body of this collection, simply because it has so often been reprinted that all sonnet-lovers know it well already ; but for those who may not have met with it heretofore I now print it:—

THE ODYSSEY.

As one that for a weary space has lain
 Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
 In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
 Where that Ægean isle forgets the main,
 And only the low lutes of love complain,
 And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
 As such an one were glad to know the brine
 Salt on his lips, and the large air again,
 So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
 Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
 Shriill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
 And through the music of the languid hours,
 They hear like ocean on a western beach
 The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

Nos. cxxii.-cxxxv. EDWARD CRACROFT LEFROY. It is with pleasure that I draw attention to these four sonnets, very fairly representative of the sonnet-work of the Rev. E. C. Lefroy. To Mr. Andrew Lang I am indebted for having brought Mr. Lefroy's work to my notice. This gentleman, whom delicate health has prevented pursuing further the clerical profession, may be considered the living poetical brother of Hartley Coleridge and Mr. Charles Tennyson-Turner: to the work of the latter his sonnets bear an especial affinity. They are simple in language, genuine in feeling, and poetic in expression, but they do not invariably fulfil the technical requirements of the legitimate sonnet. Of one thing it seems to me Mr. Lefroy has need to beware—that he does not lapse into the fatal Wordsworthian habit of rhyming upon everything he sees or thinks of: as yet his bark is sailing safely enough in that disastrous neighbourhood, but once caught in the current—and there is an end of "pure gems of white-heat thought carved delicately!" Mr. Lefroy in the first instance published his sonnets in four little pamphlets, variously priced at 3d. and 1s. each: they are separately entitled *Echoes from Theocritus*, *Cytisus and Galingale*, *Windows of the Church*, and *Sketches and Studies*. In 1885 he published, through Mr. Elliot Stock, a hundred sonnets under the title *Echoes from Theocritus; and other Sonnets*, being those of the foregoing pamphlets with some pruning and re-arrangement. It is a volume that no lover of sonnet literature should be without.

The four which I have printed are all from the larger section of this volume (*Miscellaneous Sonnets*), so I may quote two from the series of *Echoes from Theocritus* :—

CLEONICUS.

(Epigram IX.)

Let sailors watch the waning Pleiades,
 And keep the shore. This man, made over-bold
 By Godless pride, and too much greed of gold,
 Setting his gains before his health and ease,
 Ran up his sails to catch the whistling breeze:
 Whose corpse, ere now, the restless waves have rolled
 From deep to deep, while all his freight, unsold,
 Is tossed upon the tumult of the seas.

Such fate had one whose avaricious eyes
 Lured him to peril in a mad emprise.

Yea, from the Syrian coast to Thesos bound,
 He slipped his anchor with rich merchandise,
 While the wet stars were slipping from the skies,
 And with the drowning stars untimely drowned.

A SICILIAN NIGHT.

Come, stand we here within this cactus-brake,
 And let the leafy tangle cloak us round.
 It is the spot whereof the Seer spake—
 To nymph and faun a nightly trysting-ground.
 How still the scene! No zephyr stirs to shake
 The listening air. The trees are slumber-bound
 In soft repose. There's not a bird awake
 To witch the silence with a silver sound.

Now haply shall the vision trance our eyes,
 By heedless mortals all too rarely scanned,
 Of mystic maidens in immortal guise,
 Who mingle shadowy hand with shadowy hand,
 And moving o'er the lilies circle-wise,
 Beat out with naked feet a saraband.

m No. cxxvi. FREDERICK LOCKER. Mr. Locker's *London Lyrics* has been one of the most successful volumes of verse by any contemporary poet.

No. cxxvii. EARL OF LYTTON. Lord Lytton has written very few sonnets. This and the one on "Public Opinion" are probably the two best.

m No. cxxviii. ERIC MACKAY. This sonnet appears among the miscellaneous poems added to the new edition (Scott, 1886) of Mr. Mackay's *Love Letters of a Violinist*. The following is from the same volume:—

ECSTASY.

I cannot sing to thee as I would sing
 If I were quickened like the holy lark
 With fire from Heaven and sunlight on his wing,
 Who wakes the world with witcheries of the dark
 Renewed in rapture in the reddening air.
 A thing of splendour I do deem him then,

A feathered frenzy with an angel's throat,
 A something sweet that somewhere seems to float
 Twixt earth and sky, to be a sign to men.
 He fills me with such wonder and despair !
 I long to kiss thy locks, so golden bright,
 As he doth kiss the tresses of the sun.
 Oh ! bid me sing to thee, my chosen one,
 And do thou teach me, Love, to sing aright !

DAVID M. MAIN. Mr. Main, whose name is so familiar to every student of sonnet literature, is not only able to judge but to write a sonnet himself. The two following have heretofore appeared, though not in any anthology :—

TO CHAUCER.

Chaucer ! when in my breast, as autumn wanes,
 Sweet Hope begins to droop—fair flower that grew
 With the glad prime, and bloomed the summer
 through—
 Thou art my chiefest solace. It sustains
 My faltering faith, which coming fogs and rains
 Might else to their dull element subdue,
 That the rude season's spite can ne'er undo
 The spring perennial that in thee remains.
 Nor need I stir beyond the cricket's chime
 Here in this ingle-nook—the cuckoo's cry
 Hushed on the hill-side—meadows all forlorn—
 To breathe the freshness of an April morn
 Mated with thee, thy cheerful minstrelsy
 Feeding the vernal heart through winter's clime.

TO A FAVOURITE EVENING RETREAT, NEAR GLASGOW.

O loved wild hill-side, that hast been a power
 Not less than books, greater than preacher's art,
 To heal my wounded spirit, and my heart
 Retune to gentle thoughts, that hour on hour
 Must languish in the city, like a flower
 In wayside dust, while on the vulgar mart
 We squander for scant gold our better part
 From morn till eve, in frost, and sun, and shower !
 My soul breaks into singing as I haste,
 Day's labour ended, towards thy sylvan shrine

Of rustling beech, hawthorn, and eglantine ;
 And, wandering in thy shade, I dream of thee
 As of green pastures 'mid the desert waste,
 Wells of sweet water in the bitter sea.

Nos. cxxix.-cxxxiii. PHILIP BOURKE MARSTON. It is now some nine years ago since one winter evening, sitting with him before his studio fire, Rossetti asked me if I knew Philip Marston's poems. It so happened that I did, at which Rossetti seemed greatly pleased, adding, "I consider him beyond all question the strongest among our minor bards: and as for his sonnets they are nearly always excellent, and very often in the highest degree admirable. I have the most genuine admiration for him, both as man and poet." Subsequently more thorough familiarity with Mr. Marston's poetry has left upon me an abiding impression of a true poetic genius exercising itself within circumscribed limits. Mr. Marston's chief drawback—from the point of view of the general reader—is monotony of theme, though in his latest volume he has done much to obviate this objection. This, and his undoubted overshadowing by the genius of the greatest sonnet-writer of our day, are probably the reasons for his comparatively restricted reputation. Curiously enough, Mr. Marston is much better known and more widely read in America than here; indeed he is undoubtedly the most popular of all our younger men over-sea. Throughout all his poetry—for the most part very beautiful—there is exquisite sensitiveness to the delicate hues and gradations of colour in sky and on earth, all the more noteworthy from the fact of the author's misfortune of blindness. Had it not been for this "indifferent cruelty of cruel fate," Mr. Marston would almost certainly have gained a far wider reputation than has been his lot to obtain. No student of contemporary poetry should omit perusal of his three volumes, *Song-Tide*, *All in All*, and *Wind-Voices*.

Nos. cxxxiv.-cxxxv. WESTLAND MARSTON, LL.D. Many years have elapsed since *The Patrician's Daughter*, *Strathmore*, and other fine plays from the same hand were widely popular. But if the dramatic work of Dr. Marston is now seldom seen represented on the stage, that pure and wholesome writer has still a considerable chamber audience. His plays are the work not only of a man of the world

but of a poet and a philosopher, the latter in its true sense. He can best be read, now, in the *Selected Dramatic Work and Poems*, published a year or two ago in two vols., by Messrs. Chatto & Windus. M

FRANK MARZIALS. I regret that I became acquainted with Mr. Marzials' sonnets too late to include an example in the body of this book. I am pleased, however, to be able to quote one here:—

THE LAST METAMORPHOSIS OF MEPHISTOPHELES.

Candid he is, and courteous therewithal,—
Nor, as he once was wont, in the far prime,
Flashes his scorn to heaven;—nor as the mime
Of after-days, with antic bestial
Convenes the ape in man to carnival;—
Nor as the cynic of a later time
Jeers, that his laughter, like a jangled chime,
Rings through the abyss of our eternal fall.

But now, in courtliest tones of cultured grace,
He glories in the growth of good, his glance
Beaming benignant as he bids us trace
Good everywhere—till, as mere motes that dance
Athwart the sunbeams, all things evil and base
Glint golden in his genial tolerance.

No. cxxxvi. GEORGE MEREDITH. Mr. Meredith's fame—a steadily and rapidly increasing fame—as the most brilliant living master of fiction, has overshadowed his claims as a poet. Out of the hundreds who have read and delighted in *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, in *Evan Harrington*, in *Rhoda Fleming*, etc., there are probably only two or three here and there who before the recent issue of *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth* knew that Mr. Meredith had written verse at all. Yet two very noteworthy little volumes had previously—the first a long time before—seen the light. In the second, entitled *Modern Love: and other Poems*, there is a very remarkable sequence of sixteen-line poems comprised under the heading *Modern Love*. A sad enough story is told therein, with great skill, and much poetic beauty. I had always imagined them to have been sonnets on the model of the Italian ‘sonnet with a tail,’ M
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but Mr. Meredith tells me that they were not designed for that form. As, however, for all their structural drawbacks they are in other things essentially "caudated sonnets," I may quote the following fine examples:—

MODERN LOVE.

XVI.

In our old shipwreck'd days there was an hour
 When in the firelight steadily aglow,
 Join'd slackly, we beheld the chasm grow
 Among the clicking coals. Our library-bower
 That eve was left to us: and hush'd we sat
 As lovers to whom Time is whispering.
 From sudden-opened doors we heard them sing
 The nodding elders mix'd good wine with chat.
 Well knew we that Life's greatest pleasure lay
 With us, and of it was our talk. "Ah, yes!
 Love dies!" I said: I never thought it less.
 She yearn'd to me that sentence to unsay:
 Then when the fire domed blackening, I found
 Her cheek was salt against my kiss, and swift
 Up the sharp scale of sobs her heart did lift:
 Now am I haunted by that taste! that sound!

XXIX.

Am I failing? for no longer can I cast
 A glory round about this head of gold.
 Glory she wears, but springing from the mould—
 Not like the consecration of the Past!
 Is my soul beggar'd? Something more than earth
 I cry for still: I cannot be at peace
 In having Love upon a mortal lease.
 I cannot take the woman at her worth!
 Where is the ancient wreath wherewith I clothed
 Our human nakedness, and could endow
 With spiritual splendour a white brow
 That else had grinned at me the fact I loath'd?
 A kiss is but a kiss now! and no wave
 Of a great flood that whirls me to the sea.
 But, as you will! we'll sit contentedly,
 And eat our pot of honey on the grave.

XLIII.

Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like
 Its skeleton shadow on the broad-back'd wave !
 Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave ;
 Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike,
 And dart their hissing tongues far up the sand ;
 In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
 Of those ribb'd wind-streaks running into white.
 If I the death of love had deeply plann'd,
 I never could have made it half so sure,
 As by the unblest'd kisses which upbraid
 The full-waked sense ; or, failing that, degrade !
 'Tis morning : but no morning can restore
 What we have forfeited. I see no sin :
 The wrong is mixed. In tragic life, God wot,
 No villain need be ! Passions spin the plot :
 We are betray'd by what is false within.

XLIX.

He found her by the ocean's moaning verge,
 Nor any wicked change in her discern'd ;
 And she believed his old love had return'd ;
 Which was her exultation and her scourge.
 She took his hand, and walked with him, and seem'd
 The wife he sought, tho' shadowlike and dry.
 She had one terror, lest her heart should sigh,
 And tell her loudly she no longer dream'd.
 She dared not say, "This is my breast, look in."
 But there's a strength to help the desperate weak,
 That night he learned how silence best can speak
 The awful things when Pity pleads for Sin.
 About the middle of the night her call
 Was heard, and he came wondering to the bed.
 "Now kiss me, dear ! it may be now !" she said.
 Lethe had pass'd those lips, and he knew all.

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Thus piteously Love closed what he began
 The union of this ever diverse pair !
 These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
 Condemned to do the fitting of the bat.
 Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
 They wandered once ; clear as the dew on flowers,

But they fed not on the advancing hours ;
 Their hearts held craving for the buried day.
 Then each applied to each the fatal knife,
 Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.
 Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
 When hot for certainties in this our life !
 In tragic hints here see what evermore
 Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
 Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
 To throw that faint thin line upon the shore !

As to the single sonnet proper by Mr. Meredith which I have given in my selection, it is quite unnecessary to point to its imaginative power—its sense of vastness. It is from his *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*.

Nos. cxxxxii.-ix. ALICE MEYNELL. Mrs. Meynell, notwithstanding that she has only published one slight volume of verse, is generally acknowledged to be one of the sweetest singers among living poets. With the exception of "Renouncement" her sonnets are to be found in her volume *Preludes*, illustrated by her sister, Mrs. Butler (Elizabeth Thompson): several of them show a very marked affinity to the love sonnets of Mrs. Browning. In this class I know no nobler or more beautiful sonnet than "Renouncement," and I have so considered it ever since the day I first heard it, when Rossetti (who knew it by heart), repeating it to me, added that it was one of the three finest sonnets ever written by women. I add here another sonnet from *Preludes* :—

A DAY TO COME.

Your own fair youth, you care so little for it,
 Smiling towards Heaven, you would not stay the
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 Of time and change upon your happiest fancies.
 I keep your golden hour and will restore it.
 If ever, in time to come, you would explore it—
 Your old self whose thoughts went like last year's
 pangs,
 Look unto me : no mirror keeps its glances ;
 In my unfailling praises now I store it.

To keep all joys of yours from Time's estranging,
 I shall be then a treasury where your gay
 Happy and pensive past for ever is.
 I shall be then a garden charmed from changing,
 In which your June has never passed away.
 Walk there awhile among my memories.

No. cxl. COSMO MONKHOUSE. Mr. Monkhouse is the author of a volume of verse entitled *A Dream of Idleness: and other Poems*. Mr. Monkhouse has made a reputation for careful critical knowledge and sympathetic insight, both in art and poetic literature. h.

No. cxli.-cxlii. ERNEST MYERS. Mr. Myers is one of the few among our younger poets from whom work of high quality may be expected. He has published *Poems; The Defence of Rome and other Poems*; and recently a volume, which I have not seen, entitled *The Judgment of Prometheus: and other Poems*. There is, in the sonnets I have selected, a breadth which is specially noteworthy. No. cxliii. was prefixed by Mr. Mark Pattison to his "Parchment" edition of Milton's sonnets. Other fine sonnets by Mr. Myers are those on Pindar and Darwin, and that on Achilles, prefixed to the joint translation of the *Iliad*. h.
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No. cxliv.-cxlvi. FREDERICK W. H. MYERS. Mr. Frederick Myers is known as one of the most accomplished and fervid of living critics: his *Essays* are pleasant reading, combining polished elegance of style with wide knowledge and sympathetic insight. In 1882 he published a volume of tender and high-toned verse, entitled *The Renewal of Youth: and other Poems*; and it is from this volume Nos. cxlv. and cxlvi. are excerpted. h.

No. cxlvii. CARDINAL NEWMAN. All students of contemporary literature know what a master of prose is the celebrated author of the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*. That he is a poet as well is realised by all who have read his earnest and polished verse.

Nos. cxlviii.-cl. JOHN NICHOL, LL.D., etc. Professor Nichol, the distinguished son of a distinguished father, holds a high place in contemporary letters. Fortunate in obtaining at an early age the Regius Professorship of English Literature

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in Glasgow University, he was unfortunate in so far that his new labours entailed withdrawal from the highly cultivated sphere in which he was so well fitted to move, and also prevented his devoting himself as ardently to creative work as he would otherwise have done. His critical works, however, including his recent admirable *American Literature*, have won for him a deservedly high place. But here we are concerned with him as a poet. His classic drama, *Hannibal*, had an immediate and, as is now proved, no ephemeral success; and his reputation has further gained by *The Death of Themistocles: and other Poems*. In these volumes Professor Nichol owes nothing to any contemporary. He belongs to no school of poetry, save to that catholic school which would have each man do his work in the way most natural to him, and do it well. As a sonnet-writer, however, he is not at his best.

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Nos. cli.-clii. J. ASHCROFT NOBLE. Mr. Ashcroft Noble is the author of *The Pelican Papers: Reminiscences and Remains of a Dweller in the Wilderness* (1873). An accomplished literary critic, he has also written some fine verse. He, moreover, some two or three years ago, wrote the article in the *Contemporary Review* on the sonnet to which I have already referred in the Introductory Essay.

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No. cliii. EDWARD H. NOEL (18--1884). The late Mr. Edward Noel was one of those men who impress one more by their personality than by anything written. He was a man of true and liberal culture, with a temperament at once romantic and reserved, and with a nature so essentially noble and beautiful that no one could know him without gaining greatly thereby. His memory is a treasured possession with the fortunate few who had his friendship. Until after his death, few, if any, of his friends knew that he had written anything, though a year or two previous he did let fall some hint to me of his poetic work. After his death, Miss Noel published (Elliot Stock, 1884) his collected *Poems*. They are characterised by deep meditative beauty—not underivative as regards expression, it is true—and a sad yet not despairing melancholy, the result of the great loss Mr. Noel sustained in the death of his dearly loved wife, which occurred during his long residence in Greece.

No. cliv. HON. RODEN NOEL. The Hon. Roden Noel has made a wide reputation as a poet. He has, however, written few sonnets.

No. clv. FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE. Mr. Palgrave owes his reputation to his high critical faculty. His chief characteristic as a writer is refinement of taste, whether manifested in literature or in art. His *Golden Treasury of English Songs* and his *Children's Treasury of Lyrical Poetry* are charming compilations, as are his *Herrick* and *Shakespeare's Songs and Sonnets*. Quite recently he was elected to the Chair of Poetry at Oxford, vacant by the death of the late Principal Shairp. Some thirty years ago Mr. Palgrave published his *Idylls and Songs*, and in 1871 his *Lyrical Poems*. No. clv., however, is a hitherto unpublished sonnet: it was, as some will at once infer, written on the occasion of the tragic death of the author's late friend, Lord Frederick Cavendish. n. n.

No. clvi. SIR NOEL PATON, R.S.A., etc. It is many years since this celebrated artist published his second little volume of verse. Several of his sonnets are characterised by distinct grace of expression and poetic feeling, but the exceedingly fine one which I give seems to me the strongest. It was first printed in Mr. Hall Caine's *Anthology*, and is of much later date than any included in Sir Noel's two published volumes.

Nos. clvii.-clix. JOHN PAYNE. Mr. Payne has published *Intaglios*, *Lautrec*, *New Poems*, etc., and ranks high among the younger men. His sonnets have been much admired by many good judges. n.

Nos. clx.-clxiii. EMILY PFEIFFER. Mrs. Pfeiffer is among the most prolific of living poetesses. The fine sonnets I quote speak for themselves.

Nos. clxiv.-clxv. BRYAN WALLER PROCTOR (1790-1874). Barry Cornwall is known chiefly as a song-writer, but he wrote some good sonnets.

Nos. clxvi.-clxviii. MARK ANDRÉ RAFFALOVICH. Mr. Raffalovich's sonnets are among the best of those by our younger writers that markedly derive from Shakespeare's. He has allowed himself to be even more strongly influenced by the latter than did Julian Fane: he has not, however, the intellectual strength or reserve power of Mr. Wilfrid Blunt. He has published three highly interesting but unequal volumes of verse, the sonnets I have selected coming from the first, *Cyril and Lionel: and other Poems*. n.

n. HARDWICKE D. RAWNSLEY. My attention was drawn to the fine descriptive sonnets of Mr. Rawnsley, too late for the selection of one for appearance in the body of this book. I print one example here, excerpted from *Sonnets of the English Lakes* (Longmans).

THE LAKE MIRROR: IN AUTUMN.

We sailed from cape to cape, whose headlands grey
 Had blossomed branchy gold, and half in fear,
 Through liquid mirrors of the Autumn mere,
 We ventured in among the leafy sway
 Of watery woodland, and the russet spray
 Of fern and rosy briar, reflected clear,
 Still dancing by the prow as we drew near,
 To grow to stillness as we passed away.
 That day the glory of two worlds was ours,
 A depth and height of faint autumnal sky,
 A double pageant of the painted wood;
 Still, as we stole upon a summer flood,
 Marbled by snow the mountain-tops close by
 Spoke from warm depths of Winter's nearing hours.

No. clxix. ERNEST RHYS. Mr. Rhys is one of the latest recruits to the great army of literature. He has shown distinct literary judgment and capacity in his edition in the *Canterbury Poets* of Herbert, in his Introduction to a popular edition of the *Mort D'Arthur*, and in various magazine articles. Mr. Rhys is editor of the series of prose works, *The Camelot Classics*.

n. No. clxx. ERIC SUTHERLAND ROBERTSON. Mr. Eric Robertson is another of those who have not published their poems in book-form. Several of his sonnets have appeared in magazines, and a fine one called "A Vision of Pain," in Mr. Caine's *Sonnets of Three Centuries*. His sonnets, such as I have seen, are characterised by originality of conception, and generally they answer to that searching test, adequacy of motive. Mr. Robertson's practical interest in educational questions, in addition to arduous though miscellaneous literary labours, have hitherto stood in the way of his taking the place among the younger writers to which his high capabilities entitle him. A few years ago he published an interesting and useful little volume entitled *English Poets*. In the autumn of 1886 he was appointed to the

Chair of Literature and Philosophy at the University of the Punjab, Lahore. Professor Robertson is responsible for the scheme and General Editorship of the Series of Biographies entitled *Great Writers*.

Nos. clxxi.-clxxiii. A. MARY F. ROBINSON. There have been few instances of any young writer so rapidly coming into wide and strongly interested notice as that of Miss Mary Robinson. Her first little volume, *A Handful of Honey-suckle*, was plainly to a large extent derivative, but at the same time it showed so much native sweetness, so much delicacy of touch and occasional strength, that great things began to be prophesied of the young poetess. In due time appeared *The Crowned Hippolytus: and other Poems*, and Miss Robinson's position was confirmed, the volume exhibiting very marked increase of strength, though it was not without some markedly tentative efforts. Personally, I do not think this volume of verse has yet been done full justice to. In 1884 was published *The New Arcadia*, a book that deservedly attracted very considerable attention; though some of Miss Robinson's most discriminating friends doubted the advisability of her attempting the reform of the condition of the agricultural classes by means of poetic special pleading. There are, unfortunately, too many examples of the ruin of poetic and artistic genius through the tendency (so rapidly growing into unconscious or uncontrolled habit) to "preach." Since this anthology was first published, another volume of verse by Miss Robinson has appeared, under the title *An Italian Garden*. This writer has a keen eye for nature, has earnest sympathies and insight, and a very sweet and true lyric voice: if she will but be loyal to herself, she may yet take a very high place indeed. She has also written *Arden: A Romance*, and, among various biographical and historical studies, an admirable *Life of Emily Brontë* (*Eminent Women Series*). The sonnets I have selected are from her second volume of poems.

In the *New Arcadia* there are two fine sonnets entitled "Apprehension," which I have pleasure in quoting:—

I.

O foolish dream, to hope that such as I
 Who answer only to thine easiest moods,
 Should fill my heart, as o'er my heart there broods
 The perfect fulness of thy memory!

I fit across thy soul as white birds fly
 Across the untrodden desert solitudes :
 A moment's flash of wings ; fair interludes
 That leave unchanged the eternal sand and sky.

Even such to thee am I ; but thou to me
 As the embracing shore to the sobbing sea,
 Even as the sea itself to the storm-tossed rill.
 But who, but who shall give such rest to thee ?
 The deep mid-ocean waters perpetually
 Call to the land, and call unanswered still.

II.

As dreams the fasting nun of Paradise,
 And finds her gnawing hunger pass away
 In thinking of the happy bridal day
 That soon shall dawn upon her watching eyes,
 So, dreaming of your love, do I despise
 Harshness or death of friends, doubt, slow decay,
 Madness,—all dreads that fill me with dismay,
 And creep about me oft with fell surmise.

For you are true ; and all I hoped you are :
 O perfect answer to my calling heart !
 And very sweet my life is, having thee.
 Yet must I dread the dim end shrouded far ;
 Yet must I dream : should once the good planks start,
 How bottomless yawns beneath the boiling sea !

Nos. clxxiv.-clxxvi. W. CALDWELL ROSCOE (1823-1859). If Mr. W. Caldwell Roscoe had lived a few years longer he would almost certainly have ensured for himself an abiding reputation as a master of the sonnet. The few examples he left behind him, published and unpublished, are mostly very beautiful, one or two quite exceptionally so. (Vide *Poems and Essays by the late William Caldwell Roscoe, Edited, with a Prefatory Memoir, by his Brother-in-Law, Richard Holt Hutton.* 1860.)

No. clxxvi. This truly exquisite sonnet, so fine in conception, so lovely in expression, and so pathetic in its significance, has one serious flaw. That a man so scholarly and with so sensitive an ear could be guilty of the barbarism of *Apollian* is extraordinary. As regards the sixth word of the fifth line, it may be noted that both in the

versions of 1851 and 1860 it was printed "white." That it was "while" in the original is known from the fact that in the proof-sheet there is a marginal correction of it to "white." Mr. Main saw this proof-sheet, but concluded that the poet had made an unintentional slip. Both Mr. Main and Mr. Caine print "while," and this reading I have adopted also. "White" undoubtedly narrows the idea.

No. clxxv. This sonnet forms the epilogue to the fine tragedy *Violenzia* (1851), which is too little known.

No. clxxvii. W. STANLEY ROSCOE (1782-1843). From the *Poems* (1834). W. S. Roscoe, the son of Roscoe the historian, was father of William Caldwell Roscoe. M.

Nos. clxxviii.-clxxxii. CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI. As I have already had occasion to remark, Miss Rossetti ranks foremost among living poetesses. She and she alone could write such magic lyrics as "Dream-Land." Her sonnets bear but a small proportion to her purely lyrical poems. Some were written at a very early age: they are all or mostly very sombre, but are as impressive as they are beautiful. I know of no other woman who has written sonnets like "The World," or "Vanity of Vanities." There is a very marked affinity between much of Miss Rossetti's work and that of her brother Gabriel.

Nos. clxxxiii.-cxci. DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI (1828-1882). It has taken time for the growth of widespread admiration of the sonnet-work of this most imaginative of all the Victorian poets. There are already not a few among the best judges who consider him the greatest sonneteer of our language, his sonnets having "the fundamental brain-work" of Shakespeare's, the beauty of Mrs. Browning's the dignity and, occasionally, the sunlit transparency of Wordsworth's, with a more startling and impressive vehemence, a greater voluminousness of urgent music. But I need not repeat what I have already in substance said in the Introduction. Even in a limited selection his sonnets speak for themselves.

No. clxxxiii. This sonnet appears in the completed *House of Life* as "Soul's Beauty." It is specially suited to preface any selection of Rossetti's sonnets, from the eminently characteristic lines of its sestet. The picture for which "Sybilla Palmifera" was written is a very noble design.

No. clxxxiv. This is not only the most beautiful of all its author's sonnets, but one of the most beautiful in the language. It was written when Rossetti was only twenty-one, and first appeared in that now very scarce publication, *The Germ*, in 1850. There is no doubt that the generally known version is the finer, but the original is also so beautiful (notwithstanding such rhymes as "widening" and "in") that I may give it here:—

Water, for anguish of the solstice,—yea
 Over the vessel's mouth still widening
 Listlessly dipt to let the water in
 With slow vague gurgle. Blue, and deep away
 The heat lies silent at the brink of day.
 Now the hand trails upon the viol-string,
 That sobs; and the brown faces cease to sing,
 Mournful with complete pleasure. Her eyes stray
 In distance; through her lips the pipe doth creep
 And leaves them pouting; the green shadowed grass
 Is cool against her naked flesh. Let be:
 Say nothing now unto her lest she weep,
 Nor name this ever. Be it as it was,—
 Life touching lips with Immortality.

There is no more noteworthy instance of Rossetti's delicate judgment in revision than the substitution in the eleventh line of *side* for *flesh*, the artistic gain in the later reading being unmistakable; he felt that the exquisiteness of the picture was disturbed by a word not beautiful in itself and vulgarised by usage in a special sense.

No. cxcl. This sonnet is one of three grouped under the same title. What a magnificent suggestion of space—what a boundless horizon is opened up—in the six closing lines!

No. cxcii. The most terrible of sonnets, in its spiritual significance.

I may quote the last sonnet of this series, certainly one of the most noble sonnet-sequences in existence.

THE ONE HOPE.

When vain desire at last and vain regret
 Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
 What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
 And teach the unforgetful to forget?

Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,—
 Or may the soul at once in a green plain
 Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
 And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
 Between the scripted petals softly blown
 Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown—
 Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
 But only the one Hope's one name be there,—
 Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

Nos. cxcv. cxcvi. WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI. Mr. W. M. Rossetti, widely known as an accomplished critic, has published no volume of verse, although he has written a considerable quantity, especially in sonnet-form: "Democracy Downtrodden" is well known to all students of contemporary verse, and is generally acknowledged to be one of the finest Miltonic sonnets of our time.

No. cxcvii. THOMAS RUSSELL (1762-1788). The sonnet by this unfortunate young clergyman which was so greatly praised by Landor. Wordsworth, Bowles, and other authorities agreed in ranking it high, and this we may well do without endorsing Landor's statement—"A poem on Philoctetes by a Mr. Russell which would authorise him to join the shades of Sophocles and Euripides."

Nos. cxcviii. cci. WILLIAM BELL SCOTT. This accomplished poet, artist, and critic is not so widely known in his first-named capacity as he ought to be. Among men of letters themselves he holds a high and honoured place. He presents a curious contrast to his brother, the late David Scott, that most imaginative of all the artists whom Scotland has produced, often, and not without some reason, called the Scottish Blake. Mr. W. Bell Scott's work is keenly intellectual, but it is also characterised by great simplicity of expression. His *Poems by a Painter*, his *Poems and Ballads and Studies from Nature*, and his *Harvest Home* are treasured possessions with those who know how to own good books. He has written many very striking sonnets, and in making a fairly representative selection I have been forced to omit several which I would gladly have inserted: The intellectual vision of such a sonnet as "The Universe

Void," the meditative beauty of "The Old House," and the pathetic human note in "Parted Love" must appeal to everyone.

Nos. ccii.-cciii. WILLIAM SHARP. These sonnets have not appeared in any of the preceding editions of this book, and I only insert them now at the urgent request of friends. No. ccii. was first printed in Mr. Hall Caine's sonnet-anthology.

No. cciv. PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822). Shelley wrote even fewer sonnets than did Byron : but the few which Byron wrote he wrote well, and this cannot be said of Shelley. This imaginative and beautiful (though far from flawless) poem in fourteen lines is so divergent from all accepted rules that it can hardly be styled a sonnet. No writer now-a-days could venture to print a sonnet with such rhymes as *stone—frown, appear—despair*. As an imaginative poem it is, as is felt at once by every reader, very impressive. It is strange that Shelley, the most poetic of poets, should have been unable to write a good sonnet as a sonnet : but probably the restrictions of the form pressed upon him with a special heaviness. Chopin, the Shelley of musical composers, wrote his beautiful mazurkas : looked at strictly as mazurkas they are unsatisfactory. In both instances, however, uncontrollable genius overbalanced propriety of form.

Mr. Main prints the famous *West Wind* lyric as five sonnets. That these stanzas are not sonnets, however, need hardly be explained to anyone who knows them, and what a lyric is, and what a sonnet. It is true that they are divisible into five fourteen-line parts : but the result of disintegration is only to present several hopelessly irregular sonnets, and to tend to dissipate the lyric emotion aroused by the very first words of Shelley's exquisite poem. Moreover, that Shelley himself had no such idea is evident from the fact that the line which would be the fourteenth of the fourth "sonnet" ends with a comma, which occurs in the middle of a sentence—

"Tameless, and swift, and proud,"

V.

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is."

Mr. J. A. Symonds has adequately defined the metrical structure of this famous lyric as "interrupted *terza rima*."

- No. ccv. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SIMCOX. Mr. Simcox is the author of *Poems and Romances*.
- No. ccvi. ALEXANDER SMITH (1830-1867). Alexander Smith is probably read by five where a quarter of a century ago he was read by a hundred. His *Life-Drama* is now eminently an upper-shelf book. He wrote few sonnets; none very striking. No. ccvi. is his best, though too markedly derivative.
- No. ccvii. ROBERT SOUTHEY (1794-1843). Southey wrote very few sonnets. He had not, in general, the gift of expressing himself concisely.
- No. ccviii. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. This sonnet has not hitherto been printed, nor that which is quoted below; and I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Stevenson for permission to publish them in this anthology, though they were not sent to me for that purpose.

THE ARABESQUE (COMPLAINT OF AN ARTIST).

I made a fresco on the coronal,
 Amid the sounding silence and the void
 Of life's wind-spent and unfrequented hall.
 I drew the nothings that my soul enjoyed;
 The petty image of the enormous fact
 I fled; and when the sun soared over all
 And threw a brightness on the painted tract,
 Lo, the vain lines were reading on the wall!
 In vain we think; our life about us lies
 O'erscrawled with crooked writ; we toil in vain
 To hear the hymn of ancient harmonies
 That quire upon the mountain or the plain;
 And from the august silence of the skies
 Babble of speech returns to us again.

- Nos. ccix.-ccx. CHARLES STRONG (1785-1864). From *Sonnets*, by the Rev. Charles Strong, 1835. An accomplished man and accomplished writer.
- Nos. ccxi.-ccxv. ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE. It might naturally have been expected that, like Shelley, Mr. Swinburne would not have proved himself a good sonnet-writer. His high and eminently lyrical genius, however, has not prevented his achieving success in this form. No. ccxi. is

the fine dedicatory sonnet to Mr. Theodore Watts prefixed to *Tristram in Lyonesse: and other Poems*; those on Ford and Webster are from a striking series on the Elizabethan dramatists in the same volume, and are inscriptions in presentation copies of the old dramatists to Mr. Watts. From the same series are Nos. ccxiii. and ccxiv.—the latter, in my opinion, one of the poet's finest sonnet-utterances. Those who have not read Mr. Swinburne's later volumes, may be said to be absolutely ignorant of the real nature of his genius and his work. About half-a-dozen erotic poems, literary exercises of an imitative kind, gave him the reputation of a poet "without a conscience or an aim." This reputation clings to him still—if not in England, in America and the colonies, where English criticism of English writers permeates with a slowness that is altogether unaccountable. Posterity, however, having only the poet's work to judge from, finding there a few score lines of questionable erotics scattered through a vast mass of poetry, displaying (if one may speak from the purely artistic standpoint) only too much "conscience and aim," will be strangely puzzled on reading such contemporary criticisms of his poetry as may survive. To go no farther back than the last seven years of the poet's life—years spent much out of London, partly "beneath the trees of leafy Surrey," partly in Wiltshire, and partly in Guernsey and Sark—he has, during that time, written nothing but poetry dealing with the noblest aspirations, the most exalted enthusiasms, and the purest passions of men. Upon his views of the Irish question, as set forth in a much discussed political lyric of recent publication, I have nothing to say, save that they are not "new," as so many have supposed. He formulated them in the *Rappel* three years ago. They are views he has always shared with Mazzini, Karl Blind, and others among his friends.

Nos. ccxvi.-ccxxi. JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS. Mr. J. A. Symonds' wide reputation as a broad and sympathetic critic—indeed, as one of the two or three really eminent critics among us—and as a writer of beautiful and powerful prose, has overshadowed his claims to the place among the poets of the day which is his due. He has written a large number of sonnets, and one of his latest books—*Vagabunduli Libellus*—consists of poems in this form only. His sonnets are unequal, partly owing to his fondness for writing sonnet-sequences—a great mistake in nine cases out of ten. That Mr. Symonds is a true poet, a poet of generally high

standing, no one will be prepared to deny after perusal of his verse. The [author of that eminently critical, fascinating, picturesquely yet learnedly and carefully written *magnum opus*, *The History of the Renaissance in Italy*, has so great a power over words that his natural tendency, even in verse, is to let himself be carried away by them. Some of his later sonnets are very markedly of Shakespearian inspiration. Those I have quoted seem to me to form the best representative selection that could be made, exhibiting as they do Mr. Symonds' range. The contrast between the sombre ccxviii. and the glowing ccxx. is very striking. The following (which, like each of the foregoing, with the exception of No. ccxv., is from *Vagabunduli Libellus*) is interesting on account of its being constructed upon only three rhymes *ire eeze, ark* :—

IN BLACK AND WHITE: WINTER ETCHINGS

I.—*The Chorister.*

Snow on the high-pitched minster roof and spire :
 Snow on the boughs of leafless linden trees :
 Snow on the silent streets and squares that freeze
 Under night's wing down-drooping nigh and nigher.
 Inside the church, within the shadowy choir,
 Dim burn the lamps like lights on vaporous seas ;
 Drowsed are the voices of droned litanies ;
 Blurred as in dreams the face of priest and friar.
 Cold hath numbed sense to slumber here ! But hark,
 One swift soprano, soaring like a lark,
 Startles the stillness ; throbs that soul of fire,
 Beats around arch and aisle, floods echoing dark
 With exquisite aspiration ; higher, higher,
 Yearns in sharp anguish of untold desire.

NOTE.—(Referred to on page xlii. of Introductory Essay.)
 Reference was made in the Introduction to a sonnet where the first three lines rhyme, and therewith also the fifth, sixth, and seventh ; there are, as already stated, one or two sonnets in French so constructed, but the following is, so far as I know, the only example of the kind in English :—

THE MANSIONS OF THE BLEST.

One, who through waiting years of patient pain
 Had lived in heavenly hope—of Death full fain—

Yea, who unto Death had prayed, had prayed in vain,
 At last was lowered into the dark deep grave :
 But could the cold moist earth the soil restrain ?
 Could Death perpetuate his usurping reign ?
 Nay, with a joyous, an adoring strain
 The glad soul mounted from that narrow cave.

How awful was the silence of the sky !
 How terrible the emptiness of space !
 O for a voice, a touch, a shadowy face !
 Only the cold stars glittered icily,
 And of the promised pathway was no trace :—
 A sun-suck'd dewdrop, Immortality !

Nos. ccxxii.-ccxxiii. LORD TENNYSON. The Poet-Laureate has written few sonnets of recent years, but whether old or new, he has done nothing of this kind superior to his powerful *Montenegro*. The other fine sonnet which I quote is one of his earliest.

If it were structurally more satisfactory, and if it had not the fatal flaw of a repetition of "thee" as a terminal, the following sonnet, though irregular, would probably take rank even above *Montenegro* :—

But were I loved, as I desire to be,
 What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
 And range of evil between death and birth,
 That I should fear,—if I were loved by thee !
 All the inner, all the outer world of pain
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert mine,
 As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
 Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.
 'Twere joy, not fear, clasped hand in hand with thee,
 To wait for death—mute—careless of all ills,
 Apart upon a mountain, though the surge
 Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

No. ccxxiv. JAMES THOMSON (1834-1882). There is no sadder story in the annals of literature—where sad stories are only too easily to be found—than that of poor James Thomson. Mr. Philip Marston and myself were the last of his acquaintances who saw him alive, and neither of

us is likely ever to forget the pathetically tragic circumstances of his end. As time goes on *The City of Dreadful Night* will more and more be considered a truly remarkable poem. It has the distinction of being the most hopelessly sad poem in literature. Much of Thomson's other work is characterised by equally high qualities—one or two of the shorter poems by even greater technical skill, if not exceeding it in power of sombre imagination. He stands quite by himself—following no leader, belonging to no school: to De Quincey, however, he has strong affinities. In Mr. Philip Marston's words (*Athenæum*)—"In time to come the critic of these years will look back wonderingly upon the figure of the somewhat solitary poet who belonged to no special community or brotherhood in art." The following *In Memoriam* sonnet by Mr. Marston will be admired and understood even by those who have not read the *City of Dreadful Night* :—

No tears of mine shall fall upon thy face,
 Whatever city thou hast reached at last,
 Better it is than that where thy feet passed
 So many times, such weary nights and days.
 Thy journeying feet knew all its inmost ways,
 Where shapes and shadows of dread things were cast :
 There moved thy soul profoundly dark and vast,
 There did thy voice its song of anguish raise.
 Thou would'st have left that city of great night,
 Yet travelled its dark mazes all in vain :
 But one way leads from it, which found aright,
 Who quitteth it shall not come back again.
 There didst thou grope thy way through thy long
 pain :
 Hast thou outside found any world of light ?

Nos. ccxxv. REV. R. A. THORPE. Of this writer I have no particulars : nor do I even know if he be still alive. His sonnet I found in Housman's now scarce collection (1835).

Nos. ccxxvi.-ccxxvii. LORD THURLOW (1781-1829). Lord Thurlow never made any impression on the public at large. A few eminent judges, Lamb, Dyce, and others, genuinely admired some of his work. Concerning No. ccxxv., Archbishop Trench has written that it is "a sonnet of stately and thoughtful beauty—one which no anthology of English sonnets ought henceforward ever to omit."

M Nos. ccxxviii.-ccxxx. JOHN TODHUNTER, M.D. Dr. Todhunter has written some excellent sonnets. They are mostly to be found in his *Laurella: and other Poems, and Forest Songs.*

Nos. ccxxxI. RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH. Since these Notes were first printed, English literature has sustained a loss in the death of Archbishop Trench. His poetry is deservedly popular with a wide section of English readers. Some of his sonnets are very fine.

No. ccxxxii. F. HERBERT TRENCH. Mr. F. H. Trench is a nephew of the late Archbishop of Dublin. What verse of his I have seen has considerable promise.

M TUPPER, MARTIN. It is, I fancy, generally supposed that Mr. Tupper has written no verse except his famous and once widely read *Proverbial Philosophy*; this, however, is a mistake. In 1860 he published a volume containing 300 sonnets. From a series that appeared in *The Dublin University Magazine*, vol. lii., 1858, I may quote:—

THE BRECKNOCK BEACONS.

O glorious sea of mountains in a storm,
 Joyously surging, and careering high
 With angry crests flung up against the sky
 And billowy troughs between, that roll enorm—
 For miles of desolate grandeur scoop'd out deep—
 Yet all congeal'd and magically asleep
 As on a sudden stopt to this fixt form
 By "Peace, be still!"—well may the film'd eye
 Of Ignorance here behold in cloudy robe
 The mythologic Arthur on his throne
 A Spiritual King, sublime, alone,
 Marshalling tempests over half the globe,
 Or, kindlier now by summer zephyrs fann'd
 Blessing invisibly his ancient land.

Nos. ccxxxiii.-ccxxxvii. CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER (1808-1879). The late Vicar of Grasby was the second of the three eldest Tennyson brothers, Frederick, Charles, and Alfred. While still in his twenties, he assumed his grandmother's name, Turner, and thenceforth became known by that name, round which he has cast "an abiding light." In 1827 he and his brother Alfred jointly published the

now very scarce *Poems by Two Brothers*. In 1830 he published on his own account the slim little volume entitled *Sonnets and Fugitive Pieces*. Although thirty-four years elapsed before another volume was issued, Mr. Tennyson-Turner's reputation—at best confined to a very select circle—suffered no diminution, a remarkable proof of the poetic value of what his thin little book contained. Recently his collected sonnets, with a memoir and other interesting matter, have been issued by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to print the sonnets I have selected. These beautiful poems speak more eloquently than any words of mine for their author's claim to one of the highest places among nineteenth century sonnet-writers.

No. ccxxxvi. Coleridge, who was much pleased with this sonnet as a whole, proposed instead of ll. 10-12—

“To that lone Sound mute listener and alone—
And yet a Sound of Commune, strongly thrown,
That meets the Pine-Grove on the cliffs above.”

He also proposed to delete “fond” in the fourteenth line, probably regarding it not only as a useless extra syllable, but as doubly unnecessary through being implied in “love.”

Nos. ccxxxviii.-ix. SAMUEL WADDINGTON. I have already had occasion to refer to Mr. Waddington and his two pleasant little sonnet anthologies. A year or so ago he published a daintily got up collection of his own sonnets and miscellaneous poems, whence I extracted the two I have quoted. These effectually prove that Mr. Waddington can compose in as well as write about his favourite poetic form.

Nos. ccxli.-ccxlii. WILLIAM WATSON. Mr. William Watson is a young poet who a few years ago published a volume of verse entitled *The Prince's Quest*, which, though strongly derivative, is full of fine things. My attention was first drawn to it by the late D. G. Rossetti, whose copy, with several markings and marginalia, I afterwards came to possess. The following striking lines were marked by him as specially excellent:—

"About him was a ruinous fair place,
 Which Time, who still delighteth to abase
 The highest, and throw down what men do build,
 With splendid prideful barrenness had filled,
 And dust of immemorial dreams, and breath
 Of silence, which is next of kin to death.
 A weedy wilderness it seemed, that was
 In days forepast a garden, but the grass
 Grew now where once the flowers, and hard by
 A many-throated fountain had run dry
 Which erst all day a web of rainbows wove
 Out of the body of the sun its love.
 And but a furlong's space beyond, there towered
 In midmost of that silent realm deflowered
 A palace builded of black marble, whence
 The shadow of a swart magnificence
 Falling, upon the outer space begot
 A dream of darkness where the night was not."

Since *The Prince's Quest* Mr. Watson has published a little volume of Epigrams, many of which are very pleasing. His strongest work as yet, however, is to be found in the series of political sonnets which in 1885 appeared in the *National Review*, under the title *Ver Tenebrosum*. These are meant to be read in sequence, but I may quote two of them:—

REPORTED CONCESSIONS.

So we must palter, falter, cringe and shrink,
 And when the bully threatens, crouch or fly.—
 There are who tell me with a shuddering eye
 That war's red cup is Satan's chosen drink.
 Who shall gainsay them? Verily I do think
 War is as hateful almost, and well-nigh
 As ghastly, as the terrible Peace whereby
 We halt for ever on the crater's brink
 And feed the wind with phrases, while we know
 There gapes at hand the infernal precipice
 O'er which a gossamer bridge of words we throw,
 Yet cannot chose but hear from the abyss
 The sulphurous gloom's unfathomable hiss
 And simmering lava's subterranean flow.

NIGHTMARE.

(Written during apparent imminence of War.)

In a false dream I saw the Foe prevail.
 The war was ended; the last smoke had rolled
 Away; and we, erewhile the strong and bold,
 Stood broken, humbled, withered, weak and pale,
 And mourned, "Our greatness is become a tale
 To tell our children's babes when we are old.
 They shall put by their playthings to be told
 How England once, before the years of bale,
 Throned above trembling, puissant, grandiose, calm,
 Held Asia's richest jewel in her palm;
 And with unnumbered isles barbaric she
 The broad hem of her glistening hem imperial'd;
 Then when she wound her arms about the world,
 And had for vassal the obsequious sea."

Nos. ccxlii.-vii. THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON. This poet occupies an unique place in the present world of letters. Few men have ever gained so wide and genuine a reputation without having been much more before the public. As the "friend of friends" of the late Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and as standing in equally close relationship to one of the most eminent of living poets, it is all the more remarkable how absolutely he has retained his own individuality. He has published several noteworthy signed articles upon poetry, among them a most able paper called "Physiognomic Poetry," which appeared in the *New Quarterly*, and articles upon Rossetti in *The Nineteenth Century* and in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; but it is chiefly upon his admirable critical reviews in *The Athenæum* that his wide and growing reputation is based. Lately he contributed to the *Encyclopædia Britannica* a brilliant treatise upon "Poetry," characterised by that searching critical faculty, insight, and illustrative power which render his anonymous papers so attractive. To all lovers of sonnet-literature, and especially to admirers of Mr. Watts' sonnets, it is pleasant to learn that probably he will soon issue his numerous already-published sonnets with many others in volume form.

Many of Mr. Watts' sonnets have appeared in *The Athenæum*. Three of them—*Natura Benigna*, *Natura Maligna*, and "The Dream"—are taken from the

idyll, *The Coming of Love*, whence also is excerpted the following sonnet, "The Rosy Scar." It alludes, the author tells us, to a legend among the *Fratres Roris Cocti* (embodied in an old Latin poem published at Leipzig), to the effect that on Christmas Eve, Father Rosenkreutz returns to earth in the form of a "rosy phantom," and may be seen, "sometimes on a mountain peak, sometimes on a tower of a cathedral, sometimes walking along the waves of the sea, watching the rosy cross break through the sky on a Christmas morning;" and the sonnet describes some Christians labouring on board a Moslem slave-ship, unhappy slaves to whom "on a certain Christmas Eve the "beneficent phantom" appeared, and reminded them of the Father's great teaching, that to "suffer on earth is but to borrow the Rosy Scar of Christ."

THE ROSY SCAR.

While Night's dark horses waited for the wind,
 He stood—he shone—where Sunset's fiery glaives
 Flickered behind the clouds; then, o'er the waves,
 He came to us, Faith's remnant sorrow-thinned.
 The Paynim sailors clustering, tawny-skinned,
 Cried "Who is he that comes to Christian slaves?
 Nor water-sprite nor jinni of sunset-caves,
 The rosy phantom stands, nor winged nor finned!"

All night he stood till shone the Christmas-star;
 Slowly the Rosy Cross, streak after streak,
 Flushed the grey sky—flushed sea and sail and spar,
 Flushed—blessing—every slave's woe-wasted cheek,
 Then did great Rosenkreutz, the Dew-King, speak:
 "Sufferers, take heart, Christ lends the Rosy Scar."

Several of them (notably "Foreshadowings" and the two "Nature" sonnets) have attracted wide notice and much comment. It was natural that the work of one who is generally regarded as our most thorough critic of contemporary poetic literature should be subjected to exceptional scrutiny and comparison, and while some of Mr. Watts' sonnets do not seem to be wholly satisfactory (for my own part, I refer to those which are *pièces d'occasion*, such as that addressed to Mrs. Garfield, and others of like description), the majority are really noteworthy productions.

Elision, which can be such a "lift" to a fine line, is much favoured by Mr. Watts; indeed, it threatens to become a mannerism with this writer: there are very few of his published sonnets without its occurrence somewhere.

Those which I have selected seem to me to represent their author at his best; they are certainly powerful and imaginative sonnets, flawless in form, and altogether the productions of a poet of high order. Possibly there are others of Mr. Watts' which may be finer, but those which I have chosen are those which most appeal to me.

"The First Kiss" and "The Heaven that Was" are, by the courtesy of the author, printed here for the first time. I must find space for the following:—

A TALK ON WATERLOO BRIDGE.

(A Reminiscence.)

We talked of "Children of the Open Air,"
 Who once in Orient valleys lived aloof,
 Loving the sun, the wind, the sweet reproof
 Of storms, and all that makes the fair earth fair,
 Till, on a day, across the mystic bar
 Of moonrise, came the "Children of the Roof,"
 Who find no balm 'neath evening's rosiest woof
 Nor dews of peace beneath the Morning Star.

We looked o'er London where men wither and choke,
 Roofed in, poor souls, renouncing stars and skies,
 And lore of woods and wild wind-prophecies—
 Yea, every voice that to their fathers spoke:
 And sweet it seemed to die ere bricks and smoke
 Leave never a meadow outside Paradise.

This sonnet is printed at the close of the second of two papers which appeared in *The Athenæum* in the autumn of 1861, under the signature of Mr. Watts, entitled *Reminiscences of George Borrow*. They form as brilliant and fascinating a chapter of biography as has been given us by any writer of our time. Mr. Watts was, during the later years of "Lavengro's" life, an intimate friend of his; though the acquaintanceship began during the former's boyhood,—curiously enough, while the two were swimming (as yet all unknown to each other) in the rough seas off the Yarmouth

coast. As the concluding sentences of these reminiscences are in close connection with the sonnet here given, I append them. "The last time I ever saw him (Borrow) was shortly before he left London to live in the country. It was, I remember well, on Waterloo Bridge, where I had stopped to gaze at a sunset of singular and striking splendour, whose gorgeous clouds and ruddy mists were reeling and boiling over the West-end. Borrow came up and stood leaning over the parapet, entranced by the sight, as well he might be. Like most people born in flat districts, he had a passion for sunsets. Turner could not have painted that one, I think, and certainly my pen could not describe it; for the London smoke was flushed by the sinking sun and had lost its dunness, and, reddening every moment as it rose above the roofs, steeples, and towers, it went curling round the sinking sun in a rosy vapour, leaving, however, just a segment of a golden rim, which gleamed as dazzlingly as in the thinnest and clearest air—a peculiar effect which struck Borrow deeply. I never saw such a sunset before or since, not even on Waterloo Bridge; and from its association with 'the last of Borrow,' I shall never forget it."

No. ccxlviii. AUGUSTA WEBSTER. Mrs. Augusta Webster comes second to Robert Browning as a dramatic poet, among living writers. From her earliest book down to her latest, the very beautiful *In a Day*, she has shown a mental vigour—a poetic power and insight—to which it may be doubted if justice has been ever fully done, notwithstanding the high reputation in which Mrs. Webster is undoubtedly held. She has written very few sonnets, and the form does not seem natural to her. "The Brook Rhine" is distinctly her best.

No. ccxlix. JOSEPH BLANCO WHITE (1775-1841). Blanco White owes an enduring fame to a single sonnet—but this sonnet is one of the noblest in any language. There is quite a "Blanco White" literature concerning the famous fourteen lines headed *Night and Death*. It is strange that the man who wrote this should do nothing else of any importance, and its composition must either have been a magnificent accident or the outcome of a not very powerful poetic impulse coming unexpectedly and in a moment of white heat, and therein exhausting itself for ever. Coleridge spoke of

it as "the finest and most grandly conceived sonnet in our language;" and, later, Leigh Hunt wrote that, in point of thought, it "stands supreme, perhaps, above all in any language: nor can we ponder it too deeply, or with too hopeful a reverence." I may refer those who wish for further particulars to the interesting notes compiled by Mr. Main (*Treasury of English Sonnets*). From these notes I excerpt an earlier reading of this famous sonnet, which Mr. Main obtained from the Rev. Dean R. Perceval Graves, of Dublin, who, some fifty years ago, copied it either from an autograph or from an early printed copy.

Mysterious Night! when the first man but knew
Thee by report, unseen, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of Light and Blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the Host of Heaven came,
And lo! creation widened on his view!
Who could have thought what darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun? or who could find,
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,
That to such endless Orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Weak man! why to shun death this anxious strife?
If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life?

I have ventured on an important alteration of the accepted text, an alteration which every commentator has yearned to make—or ought to have so yearned. This is the substitution of "flow'r" for "fly" in the 11th line. Even if White did not write "flow'r," we may at least credit him with the intention of doing so. The earliest known appearance of *Night and Death* is in the *Bijou* (Pickering), 1828; the next, in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1835.

No. ccl. HENRY KIRKE WHITE (1795-1806). The star of Kirke White's reputation has waned considerably of recent years. His poetry is certainly not calculated to withstand the stress of time.

No. ccli. CHARLES WHITEHEAD (1804-1862). Whitehead was and is best known through his novel *Richard Savage*,

The fine sonnet which I have quoted is as Whitehead really wrote it: the finer version in Mr. Caine's anthology was taken down to Rossetti's dictation. It had long been a favourite with Rossetti, and it gained greatly by passing through the poetic atmosphere of his mind. All interested in Whitehead as a man and a writer, and in the tragic story of his life, should read Mr. Mackenzie Bell's monograph—*A Forgotten Genius* (Fisher Unwin, 1885).

No. cclii. WILLIAM HENRY WHITWORTH. Mr. Whitworth was a head-master in a large public school. Mr. Housman had a great admiration for his sonnets, and printed several of them in his anthology.

No. ccliii. OSCAR WILDE. Mr. Oscar Wilde has written some excellent sonnets. No. ccliii. appears in his *Poems*.

No. ccliv. JOHN WILSON ("Christopher North"). I am glad to be now able to print Christopher North's fine sonnet, "The Evening Cloud," with which I became acquainted too late for its insertion in the previous editions of this book.

No. cclv. The Rev. RICHARD WILTON is the author of three volumes of finely contemplative and religious verse—*Wood-Notes and Church-Bells* (Bell & Daldy, 1873), *Lyrics Sylvan and Sacred* (George Bell & Sons, 1878), and *Sungleams: Rondeaux and Sonnets*. "Frosted Trees" is excerpted from *Sungleams*. From *Wood-Notes* I have pleasure in quoting a sonnet founded on a passage in one of Archbishop Trench's poems.

THE VOICE AT EVENTIDE.

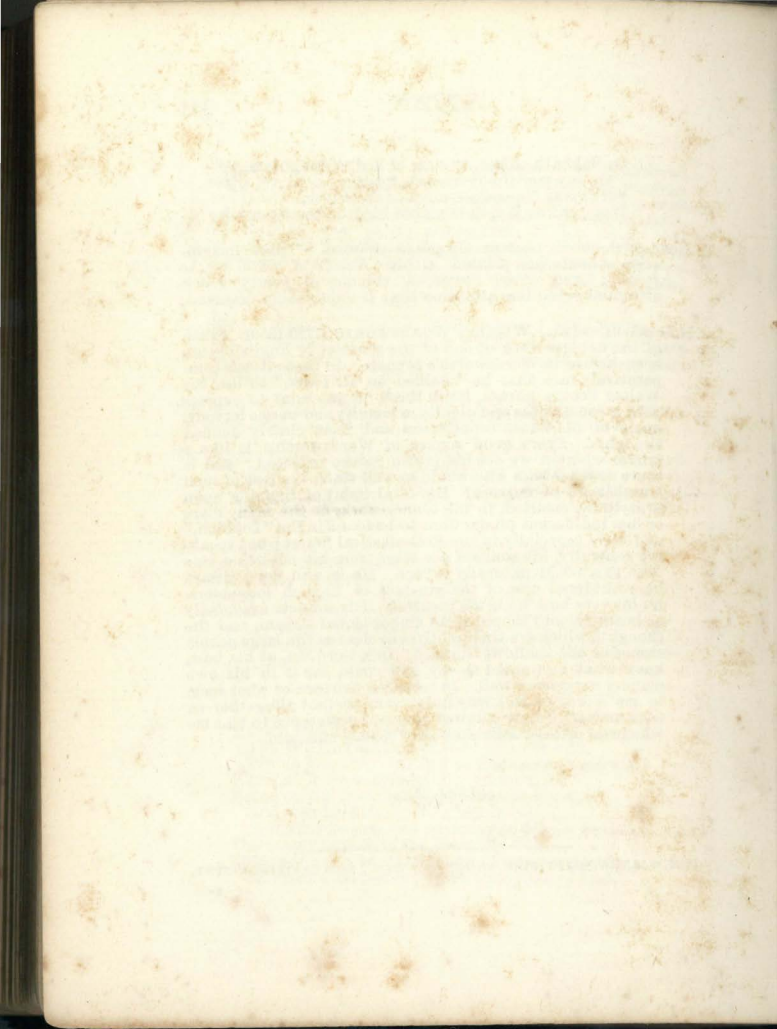
Hush'd was the music of the Sabbath-bell;
 The twilight anthem of the birds was still,
 Which late they warbled at their own sweet will;
 When on mine ear a soothing murmur fell.
 Borne on the evening breeze it seemed to swell
 And wander fitfully from hill to hill,
 And with its gracious harmony to fill
 The grassy hollow of the listening dell.
 That murmur was "the sound of many waters,"
 Fall below fall—more sweet than note of bird,

Or Sabbath chime, or song of loving daughters,
 Or any melody by mortals heard :
 For it was Nature's symbol of the Voice,
 Which when it speaks makes highest heaven rejoice !

Nos. cclvi.-cclvii. JAMES CHAPMAN WOODS. These imaginative sonnets are printed in Mr. Wood's *A Child of the People: and other Poems*, a volume of poetry which attracted much less attention than it indubitably deserved. 21

Nos. cclviii.-cclxx. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850). Some of the noblest work of one of the greatest of English poets is enshrined in Wordsworth's sonnets. In these it was comparatively rare that he "walked on all fours," to use Sir Walter Scott's phrase, for in them he was wont to express with a conciseness and dignity, a lucidity and poetic fervour, many of his finest conceptions and most clearly defined thoughts. Every good sonnet of Wordsworth's is like a mirror wherein we see his poetic nature reflected; and is there another man who would so well stand the test of such a multitude of mirrors? His fatal habit of rhyming upon everything resulted, in his sonnet-work, in the many more or less indifferent productions to be found in the "Duddon," and more especially in the Ecclesiastical Series: but speaking generally, his sonnets are freer from his besetting sins than one would naturally expect. He is, and must always be, considered one of the greatest of English sonneteers. At his very best he is *the* greatest. His sonnets are mostly as beautiful and limpid as an amber-tinted stream, and the thoughts which are their motives as clear as the large pebbly stones in the shallows thereof. In a word, he, at his best, knew what he wanted to say, and could say it in his own manner supremely well. In selecting thirteen of what seem to me Wordsworth's very finest sonnets (not altogether an easy matter), I have allowed personal preference to bias me whenever critical estimates were closely balanced.





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