

SUNSET ON THE BORDER.

[From *Marmion*.]

Day set on Norham's castled steep
 And Tweed's fair river, broad and deep,
 And Cheviot's mountains lone:
 The battled towers, the donjon keep,
 The loop-hole grates where captives weep,
 The flanking walls that round it sweep,
 In yellow luster shone.
 The warriors on the turrets high,
 Moving athwart the evening sky
 Seemed forms of giant height:
 Their armor, as it caught the rays,
 Flashed back again the western blaze,
 In lines of dazzling light.

St. George's banner, broad and gay,
 Now faded, as the fading ray
 Less bright, and less was flung;
 The evening gale had scarce the power
 To wave it on the donjon tower,
 So heavily it hung.
 The scouts had parted on their search,
 The castle gates were barred;
 Above the gloomy portal arch,
 Timing his footsteps to a march,
 The warden kept his guard;
 Low humming, as he passed along,
 Some ancient border-gathering song.

PROUD MAISIE.

Proud Maisie is in the wood
 Walking so early;
 Sweet Robin sits on the bush
 Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
 When shall I marry me?"
 — "When six braw¹ gentlemen
 Kirkward shall carry ye."

¹ Brave, fine.

"Who makes the bridal bed,
 Birdie, say truly?"
 "The gray-headed sexton
 That delves the grave duly.

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
 Shall light thee steady;
 The owl from the steeple sing
 Welcome, proud lady."

PIBROCH OF DONUIL DHU.

Pibroch of Donuil Dhu, Pibroch of Donuil,
 Wake thy wild voice anew, summon Clan-Conuil.
 Come away, come away, hark to the summons!
 Come in your war array, gentles and commons.

Come from deep glen and from mountain so rocky,
 The war-pipe and pennon are at Inverlochy.
 Come every hill-plaid and true heart that wears one,
 Come every steel blade and strong hand that bears one.

Leave untended the herd, the flock without shelter;
 Leave the corpse uninterred, the bride at the altar;
 Leave the deer, leave the steer, leave nets and barges:
 Come with your fighting gear, broadswords and targes.

Come as the winds come when forests are reuded;
 Come as the waves come when navies are stranded;
 Faster come, faster come; faster and faster,
 Chief, vassal, page and groom, tenant and master.

Fast they come, fast they come; see how they gather!
 Wide waves the eagle plume blended with heather.
 Cast your plaids, draw your blades, forward each man set!
 Pibroch of Donuil Dhu, knell for the onset!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

LINES TO AN INDIAN AIR.

I arise from dreams of thee
 In the first sweet sleep of night,
 When the winds are breathing low
 And the stars are shining bright.

I arise from dreams of thee,
 And a spirit in my feet
 Has led me—who knows how?—
 To thy chamber-window, sweet,

The wandering airs they faint
 On the dark, the silent stream;
 The champak odours fall
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
 The nightingale's complaint,
 It dies upon her heart,
 As I must die on thine,
 O belovèd as thou art!

O lift me from the grass!
 I die, I faint, I fail!
 Let thy love in kisses rain
 On my lips and eyelids pale.
 My cheek is cold and white, alas!
 My heart beats loud and fast:
 O! press it close to thine again,
 Where it will break at last.

VENICE.

[From *Lines Written in the Euganean Hills.*]

Sun-girt city, thou hast been
 Ocean's child, and then his queen;
 Now is come a darker day
 And thou soon must be his prey,
 If the power that raised thee here
 Hallow so thy watery bier.
 A less drear ruin than than now,
 With thy conquest-branded brow
 Stooping to the slave of slaves
 From thy throne among the waves,
 Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
 Flies, as once before it flew,
 O'er thine isles depopulate,
 And all is in its ancient state;
 Save where many a palace gate
 With green sea-flowers overgrown,
 Like a rock of ocean's own

Topples o'er the abandoned sea
 As the tides change sullenly.
 The fisher on his watery way
 Wandering at the close of day,
 Will spread his sail and seize his oar
 Till he pass the gloomy shore,
 Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
 Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
 Lead a rapid masque of death
 O'er the waters of his path.

A LAMENT.

O world! O life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood before,
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more—O, never more!

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring and summer and winter hoar
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
 No more—O, never more!

THE POET'S DREAM.

[From *Prometheus Unbound.*]

On a poet's lips I slept
 Dreaming like a love-adept
 In the sound his breathing kept.
 Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
 But feeds on the aerial kisses
 Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
 He will watch from dawn to gloom
 The lake-reflected sun illumine
 The yellow bees in the ivy bloom,
 Nor heed nor see what things they be;
 But from these create he can
 Forms more real than living man,
 Nurslings of immortality.

GEORGE GORDON BYRON.

ELEGY ON THYRZA.

And thou art dead, as young and fair
 As aught of mortal birth ;
 And form so soft and charms so rare,
 Too soon returned to earth :
 Though earth received them in her bed,
 And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
 In carelessness or mirth,
 There is an eye which could not brook
 A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low
 Nor gaze upon the spot ;
 There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
 So I behold them not :
 It is enough for me to prove
 That what I loved and long must love
 Like common earth can rot ;
 To me there needs no stone to tell
 'Tis nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
 As fervently as thou,
 Who didst not change through all the past
 And canst not alter now.
 The love where death has set his seal
 Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
 Nor falsehood disavow :
 And, what were worse, thou canst not see
 Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours ;
 The worst can be but mine :
 The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
 Shall never more be thine.
 The silence of that dreamless sleep
 I envy now too much to weep,
 Nor need I to repine
 That all those charms have passed away,
 I might have watched through long decay.

The flower in ripened bloom unmatched
 Must fall the earliest prey ;
 Though by no hand untimely snatched,
 The leaves must drop away :
 And yet it were a greater grief
 To watch it withering leaf by leaf,
 Than see it plucked to-day ;
 Since earthly eye but ill can bear
 To trace the change to foul from fair.

I know not if I could have borne
 To see thy beauties fade ;
 The night that followed such a morn
 Had worn a deeper shade :
 Thy day without a cloud hath past,
 And thou wert lovely to the last,
 Extinguished, not decayed ;
 As stars that shoot along the sky
 Shine brightest as they fall from high.

As once I wept, if I could weep,
 My tears might well be shed,
 To think I was not near to keep
 One vigil o'er thy bed ;
 To gaze, how fondly ! on thy face,
 To fold thee in a faint embrace,
 Uphold thy drooping head ;
 And show that love, however vain,
 Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
 Though thou hast left me free,
 The loveliest things that still remain,
 Than thus remember thee !
 The all of thine that cannot die
 Through dark and dread Eternity,
 Returns again to me,
 And more thy buried love endears
 Than aught, except its living years.

THE BALL AT BRUSSELS ON THE NIGHT BEFORE WATERLOO.

[From *Childe Harold*.]

There was a sound of revelry by night,
 And Belgium's capital had gathered there
 Her beauty and her chivalry, and bright
 The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men:
 A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
 Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
 Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
 And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
 But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it? No; 'twas but the wind,
 Or the car rattling o'er the stony street.
 On with the dance! let joy be unconfined!
 No sleep till morn when youth and pleasure meet
 To chase the glowing hours with flying feet—
 But hark! that heavy sound breaks in once more,
 As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
 And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
 Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar! . . .

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
 And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
 And cheeks all pale which but an hour ago
 Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness;
 And there were sudden partings, such as press
 The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs
 Which ne'er might be repeated: who could guess
 If evermore should meet those mutual eyes,
 Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise?

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
 The mustering squadron, and the clattering car
 Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
 And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
 And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;

And near, the beat of the alarming drum
 Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
 While thronged the citizens with terror dumb,
 Or whispering, with white lips, "The foe! They come! they come!"

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose,
 The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills
 Have heard, and heard, too, have her Saxon foes:
 How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
 Savage and shrill! But with the breath which fills
 Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
 With the fierce native daring which instils
 The stirring memory of a thousand years;
 And Evan's, Donald's fame rings in each clansman's ears.

And Ardennes waves above them her green leaves,
 Dewy with nature's tear-drops, as they pass,
 Grieving, if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
 Over the unreturning brave—alas!
 Ere evening to be trodden like the grass
 Which now beneath them, but above shall grow,
 In its next verdure, when this fiery mass
 Of living valor rolling on the foe,
 And burning with high hope, shall moulder cold and low.

JOHN KEATS.

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN.

Thou still unravished bride of quietness!
 Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time,
 Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme;
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,
 In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
 What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet; but those unheard
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
 Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
 Fair youth beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
 Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
 Though winning near the goal—yet do not grieve:
 She cannot fade though thou hast not thy bliss,
 Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
 And happy melodist, unwearied
 Forever piping songs forever new;
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!
 Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
 Forever panting and forever young;
 All breathing human passion far above,
 That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloyed,
 A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
 And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
 What little town by river or sea-shore,
 Or mountain built with peaceful citadel,
 Is emptied of its folk this pious morn?
 Ah! little town, thy streets forever more
 Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
 Why thou art desolate can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;
 Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
 When old age shall this generation waste,
 Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
 "Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

MADELINE.

[From *The Eve of St. Agnes.*]

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
 Its little smoke in pallid moonshine died;
 She closed the door, she panted, all akin
 To spirits of the air and visions wide;
 No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
 But to her heart her heart was voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
 As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
 Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
 All garlanded with carven imageries
 Of fruits and flowers and bunches of knot-grass,
 And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together pressed,
 And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
 Save wings, for heaven: Porphyro grew faint:
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

CHARLES DICKENS.

BOB SAWYER'S BACHELOR PARTY.

[From *Pickwick Papers.*]

After supper another jug of punch was put on the table, together with a paper of cigars and a couple of bottles of spirits. Then there was an awful pause; and this awful pause was occasioned by a very common occurrence in this sort of places, but a very embarrassing one, notwithstanding.