

I think, around me in this twilight room,
I but remark mortality's sad gloom ;
Whilst hope and joy cloudless and soft appear,
In the sweet beam that lights thy distant sphere.

THE SPIRIT OF NAVIGATION.¹

STERN Father of the storm ! who dost abide
Amid the solitude of the vast deep,
For ever listening to the sullen tide,
And whirlwinds that the billowy desert sweep !
Thou at the distant death-shriek dost rejoice ;
The rule of the tempestuous main is thine,
Outstretched and lone ; thou utterest thy voice,
Like solemn thunders : These wild waves are mine ;
Mine their dread empire ; nor shall man profane
The eternal secrets of my ancient reign.

The voice is vain : secure, and as in scorn,
The gallant vessel scuds before the wind ;
Her parting sails swell stately to the morn ;
She leaves the green earth and its hills behind ;
Gallant before the wind she goes, her prow
High bearing, and disparting the blue tide
That foams and flashes in its rage below ;
Meantime the helmsman feels a conscious pride,
And while far onward the long billows swell,
Looks to the lessening land, that seems to say, Farewell !

Father of storms ! then let thy whirlwinds roar
O'er seas of solitary amplitude ;
Man, the poor tenant of thy rocky shore,
Man, thy terrific empire hath subdued ;

¹ Inscribed to the Rev. Dr Vincent Hind, Master of Westminster School.

And though thy waves toss his high-foundered bark
Where no dim watch-light gleams, still he defies
Thy utmost rage, and in his buoyant ark
Speeds on, regardless of the darkening skies ;
And o'er the mountain-surges, as they roll,
Subdues his destined way, and speeds from pole to pole.

Behold him now, far from his native plain,
Where high woods shade some wild Hesperian bay,
Or green isles glitter in the southern main,
His streaming ensign to the morn display !
Behold him, where the North's pale meteors dance,
And icy rocks roll glimmering from afar,
Fearless through night and solitude advance !
Or where the pining sons of Andamar,
When dark eclipse has wrapt the labouring moon,
Howl to the demon of the dread monsoon !

Time was, like them, poor Nature's shivering child,
Pacing the beach, and by the salt spray beat,
He watched the melancholy surge, or smiled
To see it burn and bicker at his feet ;
In some rude shaggy spot, by fortune placed,
He dreamed not of strange lands, and empires spread,
Beyond the rolling of the watery waste ;
He saw the sun shine on the mountain's head,
But knew not, whilst he hailed the orient light,
What myriads blessed his beam, or sickened at the sight.

From some dark promontory, that o'erbent
The flashing waves, he heard their ceaseless roar ;
Or carolled in his light canoe content,
As, bound from creek to creek, it grazed the shore ;

Gods of the storm the dreary space might sweep,
And shapes of death, and gliding spectres gaunt,
Might flit, he thought, o'er the remoter deep ;
And whilst strange voices cried, Avaunt, avaunt !
Uncertain lights, seen through the midnight gloom,
Might lure him sadly on to his cold watery tomb.

No city, then, amid the calm clear day,
O'er the blue waters' undulating line,
With battlements, and fans that glittered gay,
And piers, and thronging masts, was seen to shine.
No cheerful sounds were wafted on the gale,
Nor hummed the shores with early industry ;
But mournful birds in hollow cliffs did wail,
And there all day the cormorant did cry,
While with sunk eye, and matted, dripping locks,
The houseless savage slept beneath the foam-beat rocks.

Thus slumbering long upon the dreamy verge
Of instinct, see, he rouses from his trance !
Faint, and as glimmering yet, the Arts emerge,
One after one, from darkness, and advance,
Beauteous, as o'er the heavens the stars' still way.
Now see the track of his dominion wide,
Fair smiling as the dayspring ; cities gay
Lift their proud heads, and o'er the yellow tide,
Whilst sounds of fervent industry arise,
A thousand pennants float bright streaming in the skies !

Genius of injured Asia ! once sublime
And glorious, now dim seen amid the storm,
And melancholy clouds of sweeping time,
Who yet dost half reveal thine awful form,

Pointing, with saddened aspect and slow hand,
To vast emporiums, desolate and waste ;
To wrecks of unknown cities, sunk in sand !
'Twas at thy voice, Arts, Order, Science, Taste,
Upsprung, the East adorning, like the smile
Of Spring upon the banks of thy own swelling Nile.

'Twas at thy voice huge Enterprise awoke,
That, long on rocky Aradus reclined,
Slumbered to the hoarse surge that round her broke,
And hollow pipings of the idle wind ;
She heard thy voice, upon the rock she stood
Gigantic, the rude scene she marked—she cried,
Let there be intercourse, and the great flood
Waft the rich plenty to these shores denied !
And soon thine eye delighted saw aspire,
Crowning the midland main, thy own Imperial Tyre.

Queen of the waters ! who didst ope the gate
Of Commerce, and display in lands unknown
Thy venturous sail, ev'n now in ancient state
Methinks I see thee on thy rocky throne ;
I see their massy piles thy cothons¹ rear,
And on the deep a solemn shadow cast ;
I traverse thy once echoing shores, and hear
The sound of mighty generations past :
I see thy kingly merchants' thronged resort,
And gold and purple gleam o'er all thy spacious port.

I mark thy glittering galleys sweep along—
The steady rowers to the strokes incline,
And chaunt in unison their choral song ;
White through their oars the ivory benches shine ;

¹ Artificial harbours.

The fine-wrought sails, which looms of Egypt wove,
 Swell beautiful beneath the bending mast ;
 Hewn from proud Lebanon's immortal grove,
 The oaks of Bashan brave the roaring blast !
 So o'er the western wave thy vessels float,
 For verdant Egypt bound, or Calpe's cliffs remote.

Queen of the waters ! throned upon thy seat
 Amid the sea, thy beauty and thy fame
 The deep, that rolls low-murmuring at thy feet,
 And all the multitude of isles, proclaim !
 For thee Damascus piles her woolly store ;
 To thee their flocks Arabia's princes bring ;
 And Sheba heaps her spice and glittering ore ;
 The ships of Tarshish of thy glory sing : ¹
 Queen of the waters ! who is like to thee,
 Replenished in thy might, and throned on the sea !

The purple streamers fly, the trumpets sound,
 The adventurous bark glides on in tranquil state ;
 The voyagers, with leafy garlands crowned,
 Draw back their arms together, and elate
 Sweep o'er the surge ; the spray far scattered flies
 Beneath the stroke of their unwearied oars ;
 To their loud shouts the circling coast replies ;
 And now, o'er the deep ocean, where it roars
 They fly ; till slowly lessening from the shore,
 Beneath the haze they sink—sink, and are seen no more.

When Night descends, and with her silver bow
 The Queen of Heaven ² comes forth in radiance bright,

¹ Ezekiel xxvii. 25, "The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee, and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas."—² Astarte, or the Moon, the goddess of the Sidonians, called the *Queen of Heaven*. "The women knead their dough, to make cakes to the Queen of Heaven" (Jer. vii. 18).

Surveying the dim earth and seas below ;
Why from afar resounds the mystic rite
Hymned round her uncouth altar ? Virgins there
(Amid the brazen cymbal's hollow ring)
And aged priests the solemn feast prepare ;
To her their nightly orisons they sing ;
That she may look from her high throne, and guide
The wandering bark secure along the trackless tide.

Her on his nightly watch the pilot views
Careful, and by her soft and tranquil light,
Along the uncertain coast his track pursues ;
And now he sees great Carmel's woody height,
Where nightly fires to grisly Baal burn ;
Round the rough cape he winds ; neantime far on
Thick eddyng scuds the hollow surf upturn ;
He thinks of the sweet light of summer gone !
He thinks, perhaps, dashed on the rugged shore,
He never shall behold his babes' loved mother more !

Slow comes the morn ; but ah ! what demon form,¹
While pealing thunder the high concave rends,
Rises more vast amid the rushing storm !
With dreadful shade his horrid bulk ascends
Dark to the driving clouds ; beneath him roars
The deep ; his troubled brow is wrapped in gloom ;
See, it moves onwards ; now more huge it soars !
Who shall avert the poor seafarer's doom !
Who now shall save him from the spectre's might
That treads the rocking waves in thunder and in night !

Dread phantom ! art thou he whose fearful sway,
As Egypt's hoary chronicles have told,

¹ Waterspouts are more frequent near the capes of Latikea, Grecgo, and Carmel, than in any other parts of the Mediterranean Sea.—*Shaw's Travels*.

The clouds, the whirlwinds, and the seas obey,
Typhon, of aspect hideous to behold !
Oh, spare the wretched wanderers, who, led
By flattering hopes, have left the peaceful shore !
Behold, they shrink, they bend with speechless dread ;
From their faint grasp drops the unheeded oar !
It answers not, but mingling seas and sky,
In clouds, and wind, and thunder, rushes by.

Hail to thy light, lord of the golden day,
That, bursting through the sable clouds again,
Dost cheer the seaman's solitary way,
And with new splendour deck the lucid main !
And lo ! the voyage past, where many a palm,¹
Its green top only seen, the prospect bounds,
Fringing the sunny sea-line, clear and calm ;
Now hark the slowly-swelling human sounds !
Meantime the bark along the placid bay
Of Tamiatis keeps her easy-winding way.

Here rest we safe from scenes of peril past,
No danger lurks in this serene retreat ;
No more is heard the roaring of the blast,
But pastoral sounds of scattered flocks that bleat,
Or evening herds that o'er the champaign low ;
Here citrons tall and purple dates around
Delicious fragrance and cool shade bestow ;
The shores with murmuring industry resound ;
While through the vernal pastures where he strays,
The Nile, as with delight, his mazy course delays.

¹The coast of Egypt is not discovered till its trees are seen.
