

And all my humble villagers were gay ;
I saw thee sitting on the highway side,
To feel once more the warm sun's blessed beam :
Didst thou then think upon thy own gay prime,
On such a holiday, and the glad time
When thou wert young and happy, like a dream
Now perished ! No ; the murmured prayer alone
Rose from the trembling lips towards the Throne
Of Mercy ; that ere spring returned again,
And the long winter blew its dreary blast,
To sweep the verdure from the fading plain,
Thy burden would be dropped, thy sorrows past !
O blind and aged man, bowed down with cares,
When will the grave shelter thy few gray hairs !

THE VISIONARY BOY.

OH ! lend that lute, sweet Archimage, to me !
Enough of care and heaviness
The weary lids of life depress,
And doubly blest that gentle heart shall be,
That woos of poesy the visions bland,
And strays forgetful o'er enchanted land !
Oh ! lend that lute, sweet Archimage, to me !
So spoke, with ardent look, yet eyebrow sad,
When he had passed o'er many a mountain rude,
And many a wild and weary solitude, 10
'Mid a green vale, a wandering minstrel-lad.
With eyes that shone in softened flame,
With wings and wand, young Fancy came ;
And as she touched a trembling lute,
The lone enthusiast stood entranced and mute.

It was a sound that made his soul forego 16
All thoughts of sadness in a world of woe.
Oh, lend that lute ! he cried : Hope, Pity, Love,
Shall listen ; and each valley, rock, and grove,
Shall witness, as with deep delight,
From orient morn to dewy-stealing night.
My spirit, rapt in trance of sweetness high,
Shall drink the heartfelt sound with tears of ecstasy !
As thus he spoke, soft voices seemed to say,
Come away, come away ;
Where shall the heart-sick minstrel stray,
But (viewing all things like a dream)
By haunted wood, or wizard stream ?
That, like a hermit weeping,
Amid the gray stones creeping ; 30
With voice distinct, yet faint,
Calls on Repose herself to hear its soothing plaint.
For him, romantic Solitude
Shall pile sublime her mountains rude ;
For him, with shades more soft impressed,
The lucid lake's transparent breast
Shall show the banks, the woods, the hill,
More clear, more beautiful, more still.
For him more musical shall wave
The pines o'er Echo's moonlit cave ; 40
While sounds as of a fairy lyre
Amid the shadowy cliffs expire !
This valley where the raptured minstrel stood
Was shaded with a circling slope of wood,
And rich in beauty, with that valley vied,
Thessalian Tempe, crowned with verdant bay,
Where smooth and clear Peneus winds his way ;
And Ossa and Olympus, on each side,
Rise dark with woods ; or that Sicilian plain

Which Arethusa's clearest waters lave, 50
 By many a haunt of Pan, and wood-nymph's cave,
 Linger and listening to the Doric strain
 Of him,¹ the bard whose music might succeed
 To the wild melodies of Pan's own reed!
 This scene the mistress of the valley held,
 Fancy, a magic maid ; and at her will,
 Aërial castles crowned the gleaming hill,
 Or forests rose, or lapse of water welled.
 Sometimes she sat with lifted eye,
 And marked the dark storm in the western sky ; 60
 Sometimes she looked, and scarce her breath would draw,
 As fearful things, not to be told, she saw ;
 And sometimes, like a vision of the air,
 On wings of shifting light she floated here and there.
 In the breeze her garments flew,
 Of the brightest skiey blue,
 Lucid as the tints of morn,
 When Summer trills his pipe of corn :
 Her tresses to each wing descending fall,
 Or, lifted by the wind, 70
 Stream loose and unconfined,
 Like golden threads, beneath her myrtle coronal.
 The listening passions stood aloof and mute,
 As oft the west wind touched her trembling lute.
 But when its sounds the youthful minstrel heard,
 Strange mingled feelings, not to be expressed,
 Rose undefined, yet blissful, on his breast,
 And all the softened scene in sweeter light appeared.
 Then Fancy waved her wand, and lo !
 An airy troop went beckoning by : 80
 Come, from toil and worldly woe ;
 Come, live with us in vales remote ! they cry.

¹ Theocritus.

These are the fitting phantasies ; the dreams 83
That lead the heart through all that elfin land,
Where half-seen shapes entice with whispers bland.
Meantime the clouds, impressed with livelier beams, .

Roll, in the lucid track of air,
Arrayed in coloured brede, with semblances more fair.

The airy troop, as on they sail,
Thus the pensive stranger hail : 90

In the pure and argent sky,
There our distant chambers lie ;
The bed is strewed with blushing roses,
When Quietude at eve reposes,
Oft trembling lest her bowers should fade,
In the cold earth's humid shade.

Come, rest with us ! evanishing, they cried—
Come, rest with us ! the lonely vale replied.

Then Fancy beckoned, and with smiling mien,
A radiant form arose, like the fair Queen 100

Of Beauty : from her eye divinely bright,
A richer lustre shot, a more attractive light.
She said : With fairer tints I can adorn
The living landscape, fairer than the morn.
The summer clouds in shapes romantic rolled,
And those they edge the fading west, like gold ;
The lake that sleeps in sunlight, yet impressed
With shades more sweet than real on its breast ;

'Mid baffling stones, beneath a partial ray,
The small brook huddling its uneven way ; 110

The blue far distant hills, the silvery sea,
And every scene of summer speaks of me :
But most I wake the sweetest wishes warm,
Where the fond gaze is turned on woman's breathing form.

So passing silent through a myrtle grove,
Beauty first led him to the bower of Love.

A mellow light through the dim covert strayed, 117
And opening roses canopied the shade.

Why does the hurrying pulse unbidden leap !
Behold, in yonder glade that nymph asleep !
The heart-struck minstrel hangs, with lingering gaze,
O'er every charm his eye impassioned strays !

An edge of white is seen, and scarcely seen,
As soft she breathes, her coral lips between ;
A lambent ray steals from her half-closed eye,
As her breast heaves a short imperfect sigh.
Sleep, winds of summer, o'er the leafy bower,
Nor move the light bells of the nodding flower ;
Lest but a sound of stirring leaves might seem
To break the charm of her delicious dream ! 130
And ye, fond, rising, throbbing thoughts, away,
Lest syren Pleasure all the soul betray !

Oh ! turn, and listen to the ditty
From the lowly cave of Pity.

On slaughter's plain, while Valour grieves,
There he sunk to rest,
And the ring-dove scattered leaves
Upon his bleeding breast !

Her face was hid, while her pale arms enfold
What seemed an urn of alabaster cold ; 140
To this she pressed her heaving bosom bare :

The drops that gathered in the dank abode
Fell dripping, on her long dishevelled hair ;

And still her tears, renewed, and silent, flowed :
And when the winds of autumn ceased to swell,
At times was heard a slow and melancholy knell !

'Twas in the twilight of the deepest wood,
Beneath whose boughs (like sad Cocytus, famed
Through fabling Greece, from lamentation named ¹

¹ " From lamentation named, and loud lament."—*Milton*.

A river dark and silent flowed, there stood 150
A pale and melancholy man, intent
His look upon that drowsy stream he bent,
As ever counting, when the fitful breeze
With strange and hollow sound sung through the trees,
Counting the sallow leaves, that down the current went.
He saw them not :
Earth seemed to him one universal blot.
Sometimes, as most distempered, to and fro
He paced ; and sometimes fixed his chilling look
Upon a dreadful book, 160
Inscribed with secret characters of woe ;
While gibbering imps, as mocking him, appeared,
And airy laughter 'mid the dusk was heard.
Then Fancy waved her wand again,
And all that valley that so lovely smiled
Was changed to a bare champaign, waste and wild.
“ What pale and phantom-horseman rides amain ? ”
'Tis Terror ;—all the plain, far on, is spread
With skulls and bones, and relics of the dead !
From his black trump he blew a louder blast, 170
And earthquakes muttered as the giant passed.
Then said that magic maid, with aspect bland,
'Tis thine to seize his phantom spear,
'Tis thine his sable trumpet to command,
And thrill the inmost heart with shuddering fear.
But hark ! to Music's softer sound,
New scenes and fairer views accordant rise :
Above, around,
The mingled measure swells in air, and dies.
Music, in thy charmed shell, 180
What sounds of holy magic dwell !
Oft when that shell was to the ear applied,
Confusion of rich harmonies,

All swelling rose, 84
 That came, as with a gently-swelling tide :
 Then at the close,
 Angelic voices seemed, aloft,
 To answer as it died the cadence soft.
 Now, like the hum of distant ocean's stream,
 The murmurs of the wond'rous concave seem ; 190
 And now exultingly their tones prolong
 The chorded pæans of the choral song,
 Then Music, with a voice more wildly sweet
 Than winds that pipe on the forsaken shore,
 When the last rain-drops of the west are o'er,
 Warbled : Oh, welcome to my blest retreat,
 And give my sounds to the responsive lyre :
 With me to these melodious groves retire,
 And such pure feelings share,
 As, far from noise and folly, soothe thee there. 200
 Here Fancy, as the prize were won,
 And now she hailed her favourite son,
 With energy impatient cried :
 The weary world is dark and wide,
 Lo ! I am with thee still to comfort and to guide.¹
 Nor fear, if, grim before thine eyes,
 Pale worldly Want, a spectre, lowers ;
 What is a world of vanities
 To a world as sweet as ours !
 When thy heart is sad and lone, 210
 And loves to dwell on pleasures flown,
 When that heart no more shall bound
 At some kind voice's well-known sound,
 My spells thy drooping languor shall relieve,
 And airy spirits touch thy lonely harp at eve.

¹ I have placed Music last, as I think a perfect musical ear implies the highest degree of cultivation.

Look!—Delight and Hope advancing, 216
Music joins her thrilling notes,
O'er the level lea come dancing ;
Seize the vision as it floats,
Bright-eyed Rapture hovers o'er them, 220
Waving light his seraph wings,
Youth exulting flies before them,
Scattering cowslips as he sings !
Come now, my car pursue,
The wayward Fairy cried ;
And high amid the fields of air,
Above the clouds, together we will ride,
And posting on the viewless winds,
So leave the cares of earth and all its thoughts behind.
I can sail, and I can fly, 230
To all regions of the sky,
On the shooting meteor's course,
On a winged griffin-horse !
She spoke : when Wisdom's self drew nigh,
A noble sternness in her searching eye ;
Like Pallas helmed, and in her hand a spear,
As not in idle warfare bent, but still,
As resolute, to cope with every earthly ill.
In youthful dignity severe,
She stood : And shall the aspiring mind, 240
To Fancy be alone resigned !
Alas ! she cried, her witching lay
Too often leads the heart astray !
Still, weak minstrel, wouldst thou rove,
Drooping in the distant grove,
Forgetful of all ties that bind
Thee, a brother, to mankind ?
Has Fancy's feeble voice defied
The ills to poor humanity allied ?

Can she, like Wisdom, bid thy soul sustain
Its post of duty in a life of pain ! 250

Can she, like meek Religion, bid thee bear
Contempt and hardship in a world of care !

Yet let not my rebuke decry,
In all, her blameless witchery,
Or from the languid bosom tear
Each sweet illusion nourished there.

With dignity and truth, combined,
Still may she rule the manly mind ;
Her sweetest magic still impart 260

To soften, not subdue, the heart :
Still may she warm the chosen breast,
Not as the sovereign, but the guest.
Then shall she lead the blameless Muse
Through all her fairest, wildest views ;
To mark amid the flowers of morn,
The bee go forth with early horn ;
Or when the moon, a softer light
Sheds on the rocks and seas of night,
To hear the circling fairy bands 270
Sing, Come unto these yellow sands !
Sweeter is our light than day,
Fond enthusiast, come away !

Then Chivalry again shall call
The champions to her bannered hall !

The pipe, and song, with many a mingled shout,
Ring through the forest, as the satyr-rout,
Dance round the dragon-chariot of Romance ;
Forth pricks the errant knight with rested lance ;
Imps, demons, fays, in antic train succeed, 280
The wandering maiden, and the winged steed !
The muttering wizard turns, with haggard look,
The bloody leaves of the accursed book,

Whilst giants, from the gloomy castle tower,
With lifted bats of steel, more dreadful lower !

At times, the magic shall prevail
Of the wild and wonderous tale ;
At times, high rapture shall prolong
The deep, enthusiastic song.

Hence, at midnight, thou shalt stray,
Where dark ocean flings its spray,
To hear o'er heaven's resounding arch
The Thunder-Lord begin his march !

Or mark the flashes, that present
Some far-off shattered monument ;

Whilst along the rocky vale,
Red fires, mingled with the hail,
Run along upon the ground,
And the thunders deeper sound !

The loftier Muse, with awful mien,
Upon a lonely rock is seen :

Full is the eye that speaks the dauntless soul ;
She seems to hear the gathering tempest roll
Beneath her feet ; she bids an eagle fly,
Breasting the whirlwind, through the dark-red sky ;
Or, with elated look, lifts high the spear,
As sounds of distant battles roll more near.

Now deep-hushed in holy trance,
She sees the powers of Heaven advance,
And wheels, instinct with spirit, bear
God's living chariot through the air ;
Now on the wings of morn she seems to rise,
And join the strain of more than mortal harmonies.

Thy heart shall beat exulting as she sings,
And thou shalt cry : Give me an angel's wings !

With sadder sound, o'er Pity's cave,
The willow in the wind shall wave ;

And all the listening passions stand,
Obedient to thy great command.

318

With Poesy's sweet charm impressed,
Fancy thus shall warm thy breast ;
Still her smiling train be thine,
Still her lovely visions shine,
To cheer, beyond my boasted power,
A sad or solitary hour.

Thus let them soothe a while thy heart,
"Come like shadows, so depart ;"
But never may the witching lay
Lead each sense from life astray ;
For vain the poet's muse of fire,
Vain the magic of his lyre,
Unless the touch subdued impart
Truth and wisdom to the heart !

330

CADLAND,¹ SOUTHAMPTON RIVER.

If ever sea-maid, from her coral cave,
Beneath the hum of the great surge, has loved
To pass delighted from her green abode,
And, seated on a summer bank, to sing
No earthly music ; in a spot like this,
The bard might feign he heard her, as she dried
Her golden hair, yet dripping from the main,
In the slant sunbeam.

So the pensive bard
Might image, warmed by this enchanting scene,
The ideal form ; but though such things are not,
He who has ever felt a thought refined ;

10

¹ A beautiful seat of Henry Drummond, Esq.