

REGRET.

("Oui, le bonheur bien vite a passé.")

[Bk. V. ii., February, 1821.]

Yes, Happiness hath left me soon behind!

Alas! we all pursue its steps! and when
We've sunk to rest within its arms entwined,
Like the Phoenician virgin, wake, and find
Ourselves alone again.

Then, through the distant future's boundless space,

We seek the lost companion of our days:
"Return, return!" we cry, and lo, apace
Pleasure appears! but not to fill the place
Of that we mourn always.

I, should unhallowed Pleasure woo me now,

Will to the wanton sorc'ress say, "Begone!
Respect the cypress on my mournful brow,
Lost Happiness hath left regret--but thou
Leavest remorse, alone."

Yet, haply lest I check the mounting fire,

O friends, that in your revelry appears!
With you I'll breathe the air which ye respire,
And, smiling, hide my melancholy lyre
When it is wet with tears.

Each in his secret heart perchance doth own
Some fond regret 'neath passing smiles concealed;--
Sufferers alike together and alone
Are we; with many a grief to others known,
How many unrevealed!

Alas! for natural tears and simple pains,
For tender recollections, cherished long,
For guileless griefs, which no compunction stains,
We blush; as if we wore these earthly chains
Only for sport and song!

Yes, my blest hours have fled without a trace:
In vain I strove their parting to delay;
Brightly they beamed, then left a cheerless space,
Like an o'erclouded smile, that in the face
Lightens, and fades away.

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