

NOTES

30. On the "Poems written in Youth" little comment is needed. This section includes the pieces printed for first volume of 1827 (which was subsequently suppressed), such poems from the first and second published volumes of 1829 and 1831 as have not already been given in their revised versions, and a few others collected from various sources. "Al Aaraaf" first appeared, with the sonnet "To Silence" prefixed to it, in 1829, and is, substantially, as originally issued. In the edition for 1831, however, this poem, its author's longest, was introduced by the following twenty-nine lines, which have been omitted in--all subsequent collections:

AL AARAAF

Mysterious star!

Thou wert my dream

All a long summer night--

Be now my theme!

By this clear stream,

Of thee will I write;

Meantime from afar

Bathe me in light I

Thy world has not the dross of ours,

Yet all the beauty--all the flowers

That list our love or deck our bowers
In dreamy gardens, where do lie
Dreamy maidens all the day;
While the silver winds of Circassy
On violet couches faint away.
Little--oh "little dwells in thee"
Like unto what on earth we see:
Beauty's eye is here the bluest
In the falsest and untruest--On the sweetest
air doth float
The most sad and solemn note--

If with thee be broken hearts,
Joy so peacefully departs,
That its echo still doth dwell,
Like the murmur in the shell.
Thou! thy truest type of grief
Is the gently falling leaf!
Thy framing is so holy
Sorrow is not melancholy.

31. The earliest version of "Tamerlane" was included in the suppressed volume of 1827, but differs very considerably from the poem as now published. The present draft, besides innumerable verbal alterations and improvements upon the original, is more carefully punctuated, and, the lines being indented, presents a more pleasing appearance, to the eye at

least.

32. "To Helen" first appeared in the 1831 volume, as did also "The Valley of Unrest" (as "The Valley Nis"), "Israfel," and one or two others of the youthful pieces. The poem styled "Romance," constituted the Preface of the 1829 volume, but with the addition of the following lines:

Succeeding years, too wild for song,
Then rolled like tropic storms along,
Where, through the garish lights that fly
Dying along the troubled sky,
Lay bare, through vistas thunder-riven,
The blackness of the general Heaven,
That very blackness yet doth Ring
Light on the lightning's silver wing.

For being an idle boy lang syne;
Who read Anacreon and drank wine,
I early found Anacreon rhymes
Were almost passionate sometimes--
And by strange alchemy of brain
His pleasures always turned to pain--
His naiveté to wild desire--
His wit to love-his wine to fire--
And so, being young and dipt in folly,

I fell in love with melancholy,

And used to throw my earthly rest
And quiet all away in jest--
I could not love except where Death
Was mingling his with Beauty's breath--
Or Hymen, Time, and Destiny,
Were stalking between her and me.

But now my soul hath too much room--
Gone are the glory and the gloom--
The black hath mellow'd into gray,
And all the fires are fading away.

My draught of passion hath been deep--
I revell'd, and I now would sleep
And after drunkenness of soul
Succeeds the glories of the bowl
An idle longing night and day
To dream my very life away.

But dreams--of those who dream as I,
Aspiringly, are damned, and die:
Yet should I swear I mean alone,

By notes so very shrilly blown,
To break upon Time's monotone,
While yet my vapid joy and grief
Are tintless of the yellow leaf--
Why not an imp the graybeard hath,
Will shake his shadow in my path--
And e'en the graybeard will o'erlook
Connivingly my dreaming-book.

DOUBTFUL POEMS

ALONE

From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were--I have not seen
As others saw--I could not bring
My passions from a common spring--
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow--I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone--
And all I lov'd--I lov'd alone--
Then--in my childhood--in the dawn
Of a most stormy life--was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still--
From the torrent, or the fountain--
From the red cliff of the mountain--
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold--
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by--
From the thunder, and the storm--

And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view--

{This poem is no longer considered doubtful as it was in 1903. Liberty
has been taken to replace the book version with an earlier, perhaps more
original manuscript version--Ed}

TO ISADORE

I

BENEATH the vine-clad eaves,
Whose shadows fall before
Thy lowly cottage door
Under the lilac's tremulous leaves--
Within thy snowy clasped hand
The purple flowers it bore..
Last eve in dreams, I saw thee stand,
Like queenly nymphs from Fairy-land--
Enchantress of the flowery wand,
Most beautiful Isadore!

II

And when I bade the dream
Upon thy spirit flee,
Thy violet eyes to me
Upraised, did overflowing seem
With the deep, untold delight
Of Love's serenity;
Thy classic brow, like lilies white
And pale as the Imperial Night
Upon her throne, with stars bedight,

Enthralled my soul to thee!

III

Ah I ever I behold

Thy dreamy, passionate eyes,

Blue as the languid skies

Hung with the sunset's fringe of gold;

Now strangely clear thine image grows,

And olden memories

Are startled from their long repose

Like shadows on the silent snows

When suddenly the night-wind blows

Where quiet moonlight ties.

IV

Like music heard in dreams,

Like strains of harps unknown,

Of birds forever flown

Audible as the voice of streams

That murmur in some leafy dell,

I hear thy gentlest tone,

And Silence cometh with her spell

Like that which on my tongue doth dwell,

When tremulous in dreams I tell

My love to thee alone!

V

In every valley heard,

Floating from tree to tree,

Less beautiful to, me,

The music of the radiant bird,

Than artless accents such as thine

Whose echoes never flee!

Ah! how for thy sweet voice I pine:--

For uttered in thy tones benign

(Enchantress!) this rude name of mine

Doth seem a melody!

THE VILLAGE STREET

IN these rapid, restless shadows,
Once I walked at eventide,
When a gentle, silent maiden,
Walked in beauty at my side
She alone there walked beside me
All in beauty, like a bride.

Pallidly the moon was shining
On the dewy meadows nigh;
On the silvery, silent rivers,
On the mountains far and high
On the ocean's star-lit waters,
Where the winds a-weary die.

Slowly, silently we wandered
From the open cottage door,
Underneath the elm's long branches
To the pavement bending o'er;
Underneath the mossy willow
And the dying sycamore.

With the myriad stars in beauty
All bedight, the heavens were seen,
Radiant hopes were bright around me,

Like the light of stars serene;
Like the mellow midnight splendor
Of the Night's irradiate queen.

Audibly the elm-leaves whispered
 Peaceful, pleasant melodies,
Like the distant murmured music
 Of unquiet, lovely seas:
While the winds were hushed in slumber
 In the fragrant flowers and trees.

Wondrous and unwonted beauty
 Still adorning all did seem,
While I told my love in fables
 'Neath the willows by the stream;
Would the heart have kept unspoken
 Love that was its rarest dream!

Instantly away we wandered
 In the shadowy twilight tide,
She, the silent, scornful maiden,
 Walking calmly at my side,
With a step serene and stately,
 All in beauty, all in pride.

Vacantly I walked beside her.

On the earth mine eyes were cast;
Swift and keen there came unto me
Ritter memories of the past
On me, like the rain in Autumn
On the dead leaves, cold and fast.

Underneath the elms we parted,
By the lowly cottage door;
One brief word alone was uttered
Never on our lips before;
And away I walked forlornly,
Broken-hearted evermore.

Slowly, silently I loitered,
Homeward, in the night, alone;
Sudden anguish bound my spirit,
That my youth had never known;
Wild unrest, like that which cometh
When the Night's first dream hath flown.

Now, to me the elm-leaves whisper
Mad, discordant melodies,
And keen melodies like shadows
Haunt the moaning willow trees,
And the sycamores with laughter
Mock me in the nightly breeze.

Sad and pale the Autumn moonlight
Through the sighing foliage streams;
And each morning, midnight shadow,
Shadow of my sorrow seems;
Strive, O heart, forget thine idol!
And, O soul, forget thy dreams!

THE FOREST REVERIE

'Tis said that when
The hands of men
Tamed this primeval wood,
And hoary trees with groans of woe,
Like warriors by an unknown foe,
Were in their strength subdued,
The virgin Earth Gave instant birth
To springs that ne'er did flow
That in the sun Did rivulets run,
And all around rare flowers did blow
The wild rose pale Perfumed the gale
And the queenly lily adown the dale
(Whom the sun and the dew
And the winds did woo),
With the gourd and the grape luxuriant grew.

So when in tears
The love of years
Is wasted like the snow,
And the fine fibrils of its life
By the rude wrong of instant strife
Are broken at a blow
Within the heart
Do springs upstart

Of which it doth now know,
And strange, sweet dreams,
Like silent streams
That from new fountains overflow,
With the earlier tide
Of rivers glide
Deep in the heart whose hope has died--
Quenching the fires its ashes hide,--
Its ashes, whence will spring and grow
Sweet flowers, ere long,
The rare and radiant flowers of song!