

283.—SELF-PRESERVATION

Both time and tide close tight the door of life:
It never loved them—much less as true friends;
And only thought of them as things to cleanse
The conscience, moiled with sloth or strife.

If it surrenders bouncing bairns and wife
To them; it is unwillingly: and wends
He his way home, where blank bereavement bends
Him, more than age, disease, or surgeon's knife.

Then blame not life if it exclusive be;
And keeps at bay the beasts that prowl to kill:
Self-preservation is a law of love.
The stars, when bathing don't jump in the sea;
They choose some shady pool on heaven's hill:
Not trusting earth and hell, they swim above.