

"Woe is me !

The winged words on which my soul would pierce  
 Into the heights of Love's rare Universe,  
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.  
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire !"

The Spenserian stanza readily revealed his genius. *The Revolt of Islam* and *Adonais* have caught up the form and absorbed it to perfection, albeit some stateliness is curiously absent, though necessarily so. *Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples* are in a measure adapted from the Spenserian, and exceedingly harmonious. Shelley was free and new and wonderful, and though he loved Spenser, his own flowing song was paramount. In *The Skylark*, however, where he has adopted the device of ending the stanza with an Alexandrine, (probably Spenser's stanza still rang in his ears), he has

"And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest,"

while Spenser's Una

" . . . praying still did wake, and waking did lament."

Keats cries: I have known him ! Keats,—the large-eyed, melancholy Greek, full of love and reverence, vision, murmur, and melody. His life presents curious analogies with that of Spenser, of whom also he was a fervent, though not exclusive, disciple. Both were often dominated by sound and music, exquisitely sensitive as they were to sweetness of tone. Craik has it that the true poet alone can judge the essence of song, the musical element, such power over language belonging to only the "greatest poets—in Spenser especially, whose poetry is ever as rich with the charm of music as with that of picture, and who makes us feel in so many a victorious stanza that there is nothing his wonder-working mastery over words cannot make them do for him."

At sixteen, Keats obtained *The Faerie Queene*, and read it with immediate effect. Week after week he shouted over it in the ears of Cowden Clarke. "He ramped through the scenes of the romance, says his friend and tutor, "like a young horse turned into a spring meadow." With what keen relish the boy devoured the poem may well be judged by the extent of its influence upon his future work. He early employed the Spenserian