

while they themselves have been fugitives every where, without security any where. They are

—a people scatter'd wide indeed,
Yet from the mingling world distinctly kept;
Ages ago the Roman standard stood
Upon their ruins, yet have ages swept
O'er Rome herself, like an overwhelming flood,
Since down Jerusalem's streets she pour'd her children's blood,
And still the nation lives!

SONNET, ON SEEING A BEAUTIFUL INFANT DEAD.

Can this be death? Can this be that fell pow'r
Which robs the world of beauty and of bliss?
It looks like slumber's softest, calmest hour—
And may the infant never wake from this?

Alas! its lips are pale—no gentle breath
Escapes from them, like Summer's mildest sigh,
No throbbing pulse is there—it must be death!
But who shall tell us what it is to die?

All that we know of life is like a dream—
A dream that ends when death's dark hour is giv'n—
But death we know not: only that we deem—
In holy hope—it leads the soul to Heaven!

Farewell, sweet babe! thou wert an angel here—
Now thou'rt a seraph in a higher sphere.

ON THE RUINS OF PESTUM.

"I ask'd of Time, from whom those temples rose,
That prostrate by his hand in silence lie.
His lips disdain'd the mystery to disclose,
And, borne on swifter wing, he hurried by!—
'These broken columns whose?' I ask'd of Fame.
(Her kindling breath gives life to work sublime.)
With downcast looks of mingled grief and shame,
She heav'd th' uncertain sigh, and follow'd Time.
Wrapt in amazement, o'er the mouldering pile,
I saw oblivion pass, with giant stride;
And whilst his visage wore pride's scornful smile,
'Haply thou knowest, then tell me whose,' I cried—
'Whose these vast domes that even in ruin shine?'
'I reek not whose,' he said—'they now are mine!'"

ST. AGNES' EVE.

Formerly this was a night of great import to maidens who desired to know who they should marry. Of such it was required, that they should not eat on this day; and those who conformed to the rule called it fasting St. Agnes' fast.

And on sweet St. Agnes' night
Please you with the promis'd sight,
Some of husbands, some of lovers,
Which an empty dream discovers.

BEN JOHNSON.

Old Aubrey has a recipe, whereby a lad or lass was to attain a sight of the fortunate lover. "Upon St. Agnes' night you take a row of pins, and pull out every one, one after another, saying a Pater Noster, sticking a pin in your sleeve, and you will dream of him or her you shall marry."

Little is remembered of these homely methods for knowing "all about sweethearts," and the custom would scarcely have reached the greater number of readers, if one of the sweetest of our modern poets had not preserved its recollection in a delightful poem. Some stanzas are culled from it, with the hope that they may be read by a few to whom the poetry of Keates is unknown, and awaken a desire for further acquaintance with his beauties:—

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES.

St. Agnes' Eve? Ah, bitter chill it is!
The owl, for all its feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did avert;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white—
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven, with upward eyes, for all that they desire.

Full of this whim war thoughtless Madeline

Out went the taper as she hurried in—
Its little smoke, in pallid moon-shine, died.
She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide,
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carved imagines
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grasses,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, with dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules in Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for Heaven:—

—Her vespers done
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one—
Loosens her fragrant bodice—by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppi'd warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow day,
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gaz'd upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing.—