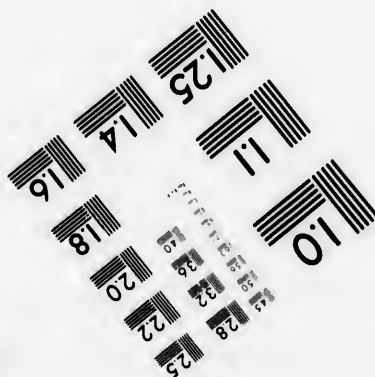
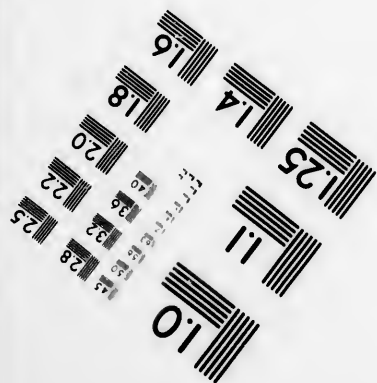
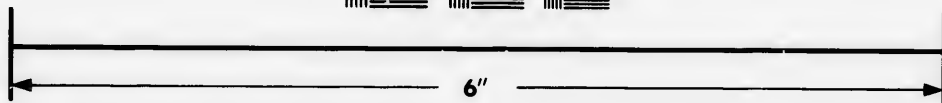
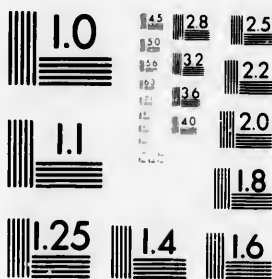


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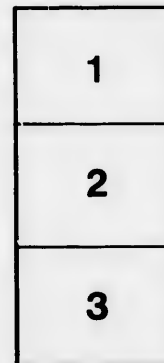
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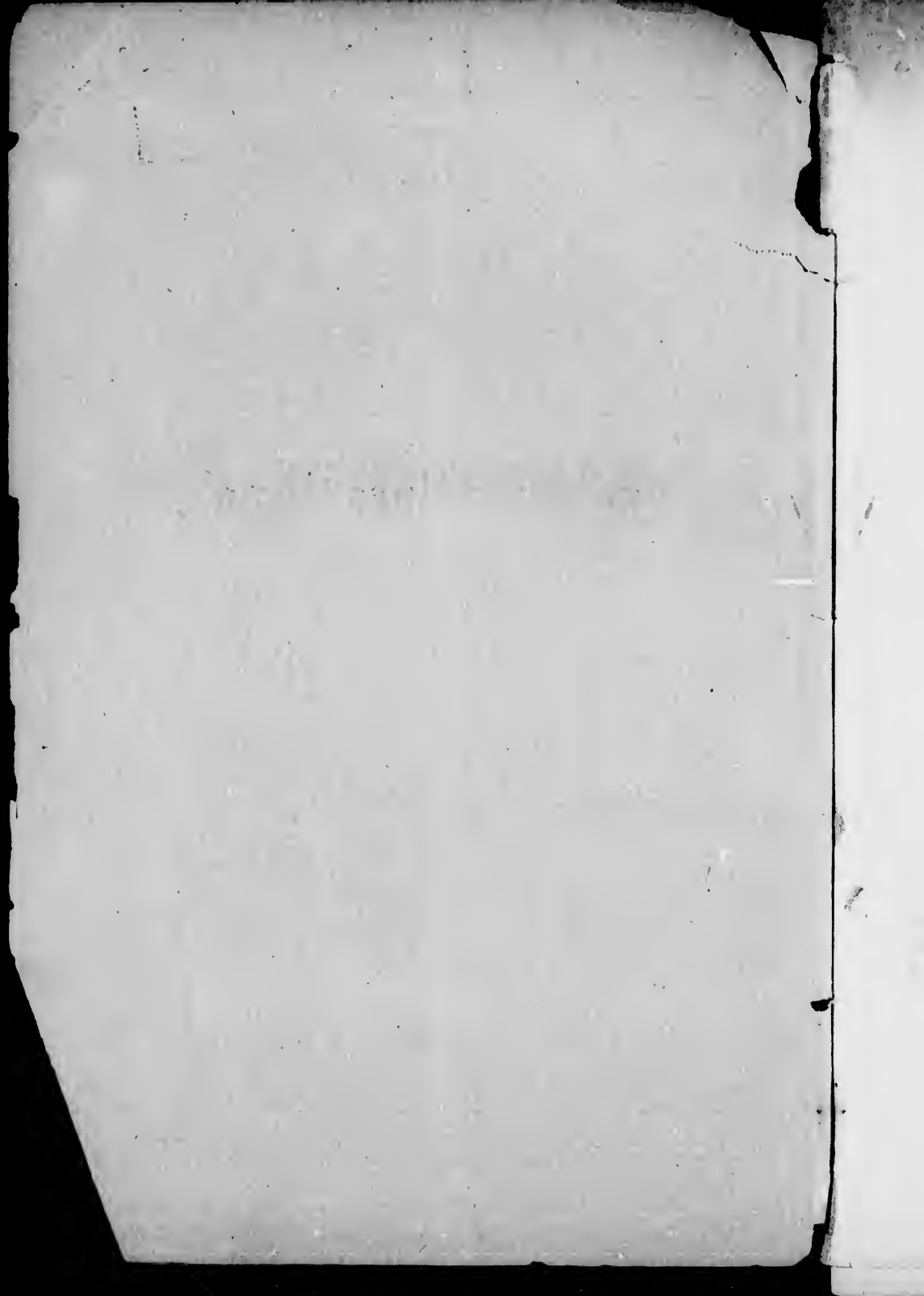
Common-Place Book.

“ Unus et alter,
Adluitur pannus ”
—HORACE.

TORONTO:

DUDLEY & BURNS, PRINTERS, COLDOKNE-ST.

1874.



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TO THE READER.



These Poems and this Essay would probably never have been published, in their present form, but for the following circumstance :

I happened, some little time ago, to be from home on business, and met, as we say, accidentally, the author, at a friend's house, where a number of us were gathered together for social intercourse and edification. He was requested to read something for the instruction and pleasure of the company ; he consented, and amongst other pieces, not his own composition, read those now published.

I was struck with their novelty and poetic beauty, but above all, with the importance of the truths they contained, and which they so graphically and eloquently inculcated. I thought they might impress others as favorably as they had done myself, and there and then determined they should be given to the public, should the author consent. He did consent, and they are now before the reader.

I am not aware whether the pieces, which the author has thrown into the form of a " Vision," have any foundation in fact. Be that as it may, the lessons they inculcate are none the less true.

Now a word or two about the author. He is a graduate of the College of St. Bees, Cumberland, England ; had for some years been an esteemed clergyman of the Episcopal Church, both in this and the mother country. For the past eight years he has been an earnest and devoted student of the Spiritual Philosophy. The result is that he is to-day a confirmed disciple and advocate of that beautiful and sublime science.

I have met with but very few so ready, and so well qualified as the author, to give to every one that asketh, a reason for the hope that is in him. His experience in Spiritualism has been great and varied. I hope he may some day be induced to give a history of it to the world in print.

One fault I have to find with him, viz., that he does not devote his life to the *public* teaching of that Philosophy for which his genius, his scholarship and his extensive and general information so admirably qualify him.

F. P. G. TAYLOR.

Toronto, June, 1874.

THE VISION.

SOME tales are lies from end to end,
And never ought to have been penned ;
'Tis easy labor for to trace
The foolish fable in their face.
But this that I'm about to tell,
Most truly on a night befell ;
And whilst since then time's rolled away,
It seems but like the other day.

'Twas in that genial, dreamy time,
When autumn's blessings mellow shine,
When skies assume a smoky hue,
And hills seem bathed in purple dew ;
While at their feet, as if asleep,
Lay Magog's waters, still and deep,—
Reflecting all the beauteous dyes
That now betint the evening skies.
The woodlands like a garden show,
So bright their varied colors glow ;
While all the face of nature seems
A picture of the land of dreams.

The feathery tribes by instinct led,
To sunny, Southern climes had fled ;
Hushed was the song from grove and field,
Except the lay the crickets yield.
Now full stored barns with hay and grains,
Had well repaid the farmer's pains ;
And freed from toils that seldom please,
He knew the luxury of ease.

The shades of eve had settled down,
Each object wore a deeper brown,
And when the sun had sank to rest,
The landscape looked in mourning dressed—
Anon the moon his light supplies,
And slowly scaled the Eastern skies,
Whose beams soon silvered mead and hill
And trembled in the gurgling rill—

I had been out to spend the day,
With neighbors in a social way,
Nor did our gossip loose its power,
Till time had struck the witching hour—
Then up I got and made my bow,
And said I must be going now,
It would be late ere I could gain
My home and friends on Stanstead Plain—

I deemed it best that way to take
That leads hard by the Crystal Lake;
Above whose waters calm and clear,
The sacred dead are sleeping near—

I gazed up to the glowing Wain,
And all the stars that swell his train,
Thinking, as thus I saw them roll
Around the dim magnetic pole,
That ever so they'd brightly shone,
Commencing with creations morn—
Compared with these the age of man,
Was but indeed a little span,
His grandest work, how small appears,
In presence of these mighty spheres—

I wondered had they given birth,
To beings such as dwell on earth ;
If so, what might their status be,
Compared with those we know and see—

Did ignorance there as here obtain,
With all the ills that mark its reign ;
Did sorrow, strife, disease and pain
And things that follow in their train ?

Perhaps to these bright orbs we'll soar,
When Jordan's stream we've ferried o'er—
Thus musing as I homeward drew,
The cemetery came full in view ;
Whose pointed monuments did seem
Like spectres in the moon's pale beam—

I now had won its western bounds,
And gazing o'er its peaceful grounds,
When lo ! with harsh and clanging ring
Its iron gate did open swing ;
Breaking the stillness far and near,
And falling weirdly on the ear—
I started back in some surprise,
Inclined to doubt both ears and eyes,
Deeming it an illusion vain,
A mere phantasm of the brain ;
I not perceiving any cause,
To make it stretch its rusty jaws—

Like some one chained by magic art,
I closely viewed its every part,
When slowly I began to see
A curious form approaching me ;

Unlike to any living mortal,
For through it shown the iron portal,
As if it had been made of glass,
Or fashioned out of heavy gas,

From which strayed rays of various light,
That fell on my astonished sight,
As I have seen the evening star
Shoot forth his radiance from afar—
The form was covered with a veil,
In texture fine as comet's tail,
Through which, as 'neath a gauzy screen,
The shape itself was clearly seen—
Altho' my ground I meant to keep,
I felt my flesh begin to creep,
The blood retreating to my heart,
And bounding thence with sudden start;
My knees beneath my weight did shake,
Like reeds when winds sweep thro' the brake,
While all the hairs upon my head,
Rose up as if inspired with dread—

The being stood before me now,
And seemed to make a gentle bow,
But not a word as yet was spoke,
Nor any sound the silence broke—

At length I said, in faltering speech,
By all the gods I thee beseech,
Tell me thou good or evil power,
Why thus thou meet'st me at this hour?

In silvery accents sweet and clear,
That fell like music on the ear,

From shepherd's pipe at dawn of morn,
When mellowed by long distance borne,
A voice from out that misty veil,
Revealed to me this curious tale—

SPIRIT :

Like thee I once was living here,
A mortal on this mundane sphere,
And occupied the sacred place
Of priest among the Hindoo race ;
But centuries vast have rolled away,
Since I forsook my house of clay,
To dwell in realms of spirit life,
Beyond the din of earthly strife—
Yet when conditions will admit,
And in my judgment think it fit,
I sometimes leave the upper sphere,
To visit mortals dwelling here ;
Tho' seldom seen by human sight,
As I am now by you to-night—
I saw thee lift a longing eye,
And wistful scan the starry sky ;
I knew that you desired to find,
Some being to instruct your mind—
Now 'tis my duty and my joy,
To always be in such employ,
Then cast aside all fear of ill,
And catechise me as you will—
But haste in what you have to say,
I cannot make a long delay—

WRITER :

At words so strange, but yet so kind,
All doubt and terror fled my mind ;

I said, thou being good and great,
 Thou dweller in the Spirit state,
 In words, I cannot now reveal
 To thee, the gratitude I feel,
 That thou should'st deign to meet me here,
 As if I were thy brother peer—
 To question thee I'm fully bent,
 Since I have now thy free consent,
 'Twill be a pleasure manifold,
 That I may have my doubts resolved—
 A future life I must avow,
 Because the proof's before me now,
 Then briefly first to me relate,
 Some facts about that spirit state—

S.—On this you may rest satisfied,
 As something not to be denied,
 That none can spirit life declare,
 Except the beings living there—
 Most human teachings on this theme,
 Are worthless as an idle dream.

Our life and state, hid from your view,
 Are just as real as your's to you—

We have our mountains, lakes and plains,
 In aspect such as earth contains ;
 In fact your globe and scenes so grand,
 Are shadows of our better land—
 When death with dire or gentle hand,
 Dissolves the soul and body's band,
 The spirit leaves the mortal coil,
 And wakes up on its native soil—

Death that is deemed with ills so rife,
Is but the gate that leads to life,
And is as natural as birth,
To all that dwell upon the earth—
Those then, who say that sin's its cause,
But little know of nature's laws ;
Whose power both birds and beasts confess
Who never sinned nor did transgress—

W.—But tell me, will you, what's the fate,
Of those who reach the spirit state ;
Is their condition ill or well,
Go these to heaven and those to hell ?
Your answer I would like to hear,
It causes much discussion here—

S.—There's no such hell or heaven there,
As ignorant teachers oft declare,
Souls carry with them when they go,
The status they had here below ;
And enter on their new career,
Just as they leave the mortal sphere—
Were that not so, 'twere hard to see,
How they could know themselves to be ;
They soon find out where'er they dwell,
Each being makes its heaven or hell,
Which are but states of soul or mind,
That mortals here, as there will find—
Pursue the good, let evil cease,
In time, 'twill yield a heaven of peace ;
Persist in vices' ways to go,
And you will find a hell of woe—
But in our life things always tend,
To shew progression has no end ;

That souls much *faster* there do climb
Than here, unto the life sublime—

W.—As thou hast long a dweller been,
In spirit spheres, and much hast seen,
In all the realms that thou hast trod,
Say, hast thou met a maker, God,
Or Jesus Christ the Nazarene,
Or any one who has them seen ?

S.—His presence everywhere we trace,
Through all the parts of boundless space ;
Yet any *form* of God divine,
Has never met these eyes of mine—
Indeed our wisest guides have said
He's only seen in what is made—
The prophet Jesus I have seen
And in his company oft have been ;
He visits us twice in the year
And lectures through the spirit sphere—
Once I heard him on Mount Hermon
Deliver us a noble sermon,
The text was "love," his favorite theme,
As seen in all creation's scheme—
To earth I'm told he seldom went
Unless upon some message sent—
By him small pleasure now is felt
To visit scenes where once he dwelt—
The truth he taught, both grand and plain
Is so mixed up with fables vain ;
His followers *now* and those of *old*
Are as unlike as tin and gold.

W.—But should those statements be received
As serious truths to be believed,

How should such facts be made to fit
With what we find in "Holy Writ;"
They'd sadly dim its ancient glory,
You know it tells a different story;
Besides I own I have my fears,
'Twould set our preachers by the ears.

S.—I must confess because 'tis true,
Your "Holy Writ" I never knew;
I mean while in my mortal state,
Tho' of it I have learnt of late
From those who came to join our bands,
And lived and died in Christian lands.
We Hindoos had a sacred book
From whence we all our doctrines took;
Believed it both divine and true,
And worthy of our reverence due.
All peoples have, (but that's no news),
Had holy books as well as Jews,
Assumed by God to have been given
As founts of truth and guides to heaven;
But mortals there soon find, I ween,
Of how much worth such lore has been,
In teaching them their souls to save,
Or of that place beyond the grave.

In these respects those records seem
The mere delusions of a dream;
Be sure I'll take small pains to see
Whether my words and their's agree;
You may believe it true or no
I've simply told you what I know.

As for your priests I little care,
No doubt my speech will make them stare;

But then they always think there's need,
To scout what contradicts their creed,
To raise their warning voices high,
But not to ask where truth may lie ;
If e'er to them you tell this vision,
They're sure to hold you in derision,
And call it all a grand illusion,
Or cunning work of Satan's choosing.

W.—If spirit life be as you show,
It much concerns us all to know,
Because our views of it, forsooth,
Are very far from near the truth ;
Indeed they look more like romance,
In face of that which you advance ;
Your statements all have this defence,
They seem to rest on common sense,
And why I should not them believe,
I really cannot well conceive,
Nor can I any motive see,
Why you should come and lie to me ;
Then tell me, please, a little more,
Of doings on your spirit shore,
What kind of life you there pursue,
And how you live and what you do.

S.—It gives me pleasure when I find
An honest, fearless manly mind,
Determined to maintain its way,
And get the truth, let come what may ;
I briefly therefore will relate,
Some features of our spirit state,
You may depend on what I say,
I'd scorn to lead your soul astray ;

'Twould be a crime in me so base,
Much penitence could scarce efface ;
First then, I'd have you understand,
The mode of travel in our land ;
We seldom walk as mortals do,
But glide celestial spaces through,
Nor have we wings fixed to our back
To steer along our airy track,
As oft we're represented fine
In pictures, in some sacred shrine ;
Our motive power o'er vale and hill,
Is but the influence of the will
By which we on our errands hie,
As swift as lightning through the sky ;
We sometimes take spirit coaches,
Then we use magnetic forces,
And rush along, as it would seem,
You here do by the power of steam.

We have our cities great and small,
With laws divine that govern all ;
Professions too of many a kind
That exercise the spirit mind.
Soldiers and lawyers there are none,
For we've no fighting to be done ;
Nor doctors have with drop and pill
Because there is naught to make us ill ;
These and some others of that grade
Are forced to learn an honest trade.

There arts and science stand supreme,
Are held by us in high esteem ;
For nothing better we can find
To elevate the soul and mind ;

I wish you could the music hear
When we've a concert in our sphere,
You'd vow no pleasure equalled this
'Twould drown you in a sea of bliss ;
Sculpture, painting, poetry too,
These sister arts we much pursue,
Astronomy that science grand,
We study too in spirit land,
In which I know you take delight
By what I saw and heard to-night.

W.—Tell me I pray you if you've time
Some facts about those orbs sublime,
On which I mused by the way
When gazing at their bright array.

S.—On many of these stars I've been,
And much of them have known and seen ;
To tell you all I cannot stay,
'Tis almost time to haste away.
Some of these orbs that meet your view
Own mortal races such as you,
But mostly of a higher birth
Than you, who live upon the earth ;
But others lower in the scale
Mere animals without the tail ;
Still all proceeding on the line
That leads them to the life divine ;
You see that star in the far west
That seems to crown yon mountain's crest,
Who in his grand refulgent light,
Has drowned his fellows out of sight,
Which most astronomers prefer
To call by name of Jupiter ;
Upon that planet we do find
The highest of the human kind.

The moon too whose reflected beams
Are silvering now your lakes and streams,
Affords a portion of her space
To beings of the human race,
Upon that side of her bright sphere
Which you have never seen from here ;
Now from these various worlds fly
The souls of all that live and die,
To that sublime ethereal zone
Where spirits have for ages gone.

I would not have you understand
That there is but one spirit land ;
I know, at least, of four, that lay
Within the shining milky way,
Each suited to the being's state,
That to their regions gravitate,
I think I can direct your eye
To where my own bright home doth lie.

You see that space in heaven, where
The Bootes seem to guide the Bear
Around the dimly glimmering pole ?
There in its orbit it doth roll ;
Whence friendly voices greet my ear,
To warn me I must there appear ;
Adieu, adieu, I can't delay
The time forbids a longer stay.

W.—Thus I have seen a northern light
Upon a clear and frosty night,
Stream up the zenith's dizzy height
So quickly as to baffle sight ;
Thus sped the spirit to his state
And left me at the iron gate.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF DICKENS.

FROM Bega's* stern and rugged steep,
That beetles o'er the dark blue sea,
I've often gazed in silence deep,
With pensive thought and fancy free.

Responsive to the wild wind's play,
Old Ocean heaved his billows hoar,
That sighing, urged their foaming way
To dash along the sounding shore.

The white-winged navies plough the surge,
And on their destined errands hie ;
Awhile they speck the ocean's verge,
Then sink beneath another sky.

Thus stored with life's immortal freight,
We sail Time's fitful current o'er ;
But soon we pass the bounds of sight,
To anchor on a kindlier shore.

Our hearts are wrung with pain and grief,
The tears run down from Pity's eye,
And naught but time can bring relief,
When worth and genius droop and die.

* A high headland in Cumberland, England, near St. Bees College.
From this promontory one gets an extensive view of the ocean.

Great Author of our life and fate,
Whose wisdom guides the rolling spheres;
Oh! why has worth so brief a date?
While villains batten grey with years.

Who now that awful void may fill?
Who now supply that storied lore,
Which spell-bound readers at its will,
Since CHARLES DICKENS is no more?

He was like Handel in his line,
A master of his charming art;
Few had like him that power divine,
That wakes the chords of every heart.

Those Christmas Chimes no more I'll hear,
While thought and being's left to me;
Like magic music greet the ear,
But mem'ries sad will wake of thee.

That wit, how sharp! like pointed steel,
That humorous glow, how bright and warm;
The one, the dullest soul could feel,
The saddest heart, the other charm.

Unrivalled in description's force,
The many-sided life he drew;
Fessed at once its native source;
We read and felt the portrait true.

The radiance of his genius bright
Shall down the coming ages stream,
Without a cloud to dim its light
Or quench the glory of its beam.

Alas ! how few of all that band,
Of whom great Dickens was the prince,
Remain to fame their native land
And by their tears our loss evince.

Thackeray, Lecch, and Jerrold too,
The souls of humor, wit and grace,
Have passed the bourne of mortal view,
And few survive to fill their place.

Within yon Abbey's cloistered gloom,
That towers against the evening skies,
Where England's honored find a tomb,
Now all that's dead of Dickens lies.

In Poets' Corner well he sleeps,
With Handel and Macaulay nigh ;
While o'er the spot Great Britain weeps,
And pitying nations heave a sigh.

Farewell, gentle, loving spirit,
The poor man's friend, oppression's scourge ;
If lives like thine no " well done " merit,
How few of us that claim may urge !

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE FROM THE PAST.

WHERE'ER we turn our wondering eyes,
No matter where the prospect lies ;
Be it where Southern climes appear,
And endless summer rules the year,—
Or where cold Lapland's ice and snow
Forbid the streams and seas to flow,
And cheerful sunbeams seldom stray,
For night excludes the god of day ;
Be it where lands whose kindly soil
With plenty crowns the laborer's toil,
Whose temperate breezes fan the sky,
And health and vigor both supply ;
Be it in crowded cities great,
Or hamlets void of pomp and state,
Or palaces where wealth and ease
Combine luxurious pride to please ;
Or humble cotter's gloomy cell,
Where squalid want and sorrow dwell.
In every realm, in every sphere,
There's much for grief and pity's tear ;—
True, life's path we mortals measure,
Is cheered with hopes and scenes of pleasure.
But yet 'twould seem the lot of all,
Has less of honey than of gall ;
How close beside the fragrant rose,
The poisonous, deadly night-shade grows ;
Here youth and health and beauty bloom,
There age and sickness crave a tomb,
Abundance sits in princely state
With pinching famine at its gate ;

Here wit and learning brightly shine,
There ignorance and dullness pine.
 Now, o'er the earth peace spreads her wings,
 And every heart with rapture sings;
 Anon the war-trump breaks the spell,
 For loudly rings the battle's yell;
Here, truth and love, of common birth,
 Unite to make a heaven of earth;
There, error grim and hatred fell
 Conspire to make of earth a hell;
Here freedom nobly soars and tries
 To win the wisdom of the skies,
 But superstition sour and gray
 Endeavors hard to block the way.
 Thus checkered is life's thread, when spun,
 Of all who dwell beneath the sun,
 And yet our blessings, oh, how vast!
 Compared with those in ages past;
 Our times excel the past as far
 As noon-day sun the morning star;
 Hence springs the hope that cheers the soul,
 That as the hoary centuries roll,
 Creation's dawn bright days shall know,
 And all, tho' good, shall better grow.
 To make this statement true appear,
 Let's briefly view the world's career!

THE WORLD'S BIRTH.

Our globe was long, in days of yore,
 A gaseous sea without a shore;
 Whose waves in wild upheaval roll
 Their bulky volume round the pole;
 Then as it surged through viewless space
 (Nor mortal eyes its path to trace,)

Great Nature's law the mass condensed,
And earth her spherul form commenced ;
Attraction then her power applied,
And every atom closer tied,
Till friction's force so great became
This sea of gas was all aflame ;
On, on, through boundless æther blue,
The glowing ball resistless flew,
Till, cooling in its wing'd career,
The solid rocks and earth appear.
As into space the heat withdraws,
It soon assumed magnetic laws.
Then gravitation's power begun
To link our planet to the sun ;
And there it shall forever swing,
Its course in huge ecliptic ring,
From which all other bodies fly,
That roll within the solar sky.
See now within earth's rocky cage,
Internal fires wildly rage,
Which often burst their granite bars,
And heave bleak mountains to the stars.
Stern Desolation waves his wing,
And broods o'er every mundane thing ;
But soon moist vapours rise to view,
And then distil in crystal dew ;
Whose glistening drops augmenting still,
With streams the hollow valleys fill ;
These all uniting as they glide,
Distend the ocean's swelling tide :—
Earth's now no more a barren scene
But clothed in Nature's verdant sheen.
Next, plants and trees and flowers appear,
And beauty fills the rolling year ;
The finny tribes with sportful glee,
Swarm in each stream, each lake and sea ;

The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
And tuneful make the summer hours.
Hark ! mammals roam the forest dread,
Who shake the ground with sounding tread,
But still no race with faith divine
Has yet appeared in Nature's shrine ;
At length the scene His presence owned,
And God his glorious efforts crowned.
Here, as we note the changes grand,
Unfolding in His work thus planned,
We must believe what's clearly shown,
Progression still is marching on.

THE FUTURE.

Ye poets, cease all gloomy rhyme
And mourn no more departed time,
" Lost Paradise " ye so deplore,
Lies not *behind* but on *before*,
Grim visaged war's blood-thirsty throat
Shall cease to swell the bugle's note ;
Mustering men to carnage dire,
Father 'gainst son and son 'gainst sire ;
Earth's fairest fields shall reek no more
With soulless forms in oozing gore,
Whose widows' wail and orphans' cry,
Call loud for vengeance from the sky ;
The cannon's mouth shall silenced be,
Whose voice oft roared o'er land and sea ;
Such cursed tools of death and toil
Shall moulded be to till the soil ;
Then every man shall sow and reap,
And for his use the produce keep ;
Nations shall yet be brought to see
Happiness come from harmony.

Not less disastrous to mankind
Than war, is Superstition blind ;
Assuming fair religion's state,
The foulest crimes to perpetrate.
'This cruel queen hath shed more blood,
Than famine, pestilence, or flood ;
Grand temples builds to Jesus' name,
'The saints she dooms to death and shame.
In every land her power has won,
Their bones lie bleaching in the sun ;
The ghastly records of a day,
Thank God, have well nigh passed away—
She aimed to crush out free-born thought
But all her efforts came to nought ;
Yet still she sits on places high,
Dark hatred lurking in her eye,
To see progression's banner fly
O'er every land beneath the sky.
Her ancient fane yet bears a light,
She struggles hard to keep in sight ;
But oh, its sheen is faint and dim,
Uncertain as the sailor's "glim"—
Whose feeble ray flits all around
And makes the darkness more profound ;
But outside of this tyrant's shrine
The torch of truth doth brightly shine,
For science with its varied rays,
Is sending forth a glorious blaze—
Thro' stained-glass windows quaint and grim
The light is struggling to get in ;
And when it does, old errors fly,
Whilst musty creeds and priest-craft die.
But not one truth that good men cherished,
E'er with its hapless victims perished,
It only then takes deeper root,
And higher heavenward branches shoot—

For truth's divine, of deathless birth,
Whether it spring from heaven or earth :
As separate drops of crystal rain,
That vegetation's life sustain,
Uniting as they come and go,
Increase the current's swelling flow ;
As single dew-gems in the sun,
To one pellucid globule run ;
As different tones from well-tuned lyre,
To make sweet music all conspire ;
As various colors growing bright,
Blend into one, and hence the light ;
So truth's grand parti-colored rays,
Shall melt in one in future days ;
Religion then shall not be forced,
From science pure to be divorced ;
For all mankind will own and see,
They're both the fruit of wisdom's tree.
But who that blissful time can name,
When men shall think and speak the same ?
The Master Mind could scarce intend
That all our diverse minds should blend.
In every realm of God's domain,
Endless variety doth reign ;
Look we unto the starry skies,
What wond'rous grandeur meets our eyes.
Here pallid light from Venus streams,
There Mars sends forth his ruddy beams ;
With these chaste Luna's ray combines,
And night with spangled glory shines.
Look we to trees, or plants, or flowers,
Whose beauty decks our summer bowers ;
The like diversities appear
That lend enchantment to our sphere ;
In yonder garland, see the rose
Looks fairer from the lily's snows ;

Each flower is lovely in its kind,
But brighter far when all entwined.
Thus, also, in the human race,
This varied law we clearly trace,—
Of form, of features, or of mind,
The self-same mould we nowhere find :
Hence, diverse creeds and thoughts arise,
That cruel bigots much surprise ;
Who, all that can't their "Shibboleth" spell,
Without remorse send down to hell ;
But Time that changeth mundane things,
Will healing bring beneath his wings,
And soon the race these truths shall see :
"Variety gives harmony—
"That men should no more men decry
"Because they can't see eye to eye ;
"That while they differ in their creed
"All may as brothers live agreed ;"
Behold the day of freedom nigh,
When slavery must surely die ;
E'en now the strains of its sweet voice
Have made the captive's heart rejoice,
Nor shall it ever silent be
Till man and woman both are free.
Ham's dusky sons no more remain
Like cattle galled with iron chain ;
Dragging their weary life along,
In patience under cruel wrong.
Brave Freedom's spirit at the North,
From Abram Lincoln's pen came forth ;
His words were heard from shore to shore,
And negro slavery lives no more.
The stain that long that flag disgraced
Is from the starry folds erased,
And now it floats o'er land and sea,
The emblem of a nation free.

That battle has been fought and won,
But now another has begun,
To free fair woman who remains
A captive still in slavery's chains ;
If Afric's sons their freedom claim,
Say why should she not do the same ?
She will, and every effort strain,
Until her lawful rights she gain ;
The bloodless conflict may be long,
But her's will be the victor's song.
Then drunkard's den and gambling hell
Shall vanish like a magic spell ;
Lust shall no more our homes disgrace
But love and virtue fill its place ;
Nor man no more the woman rule,
As if she were a natural fool.
Both, then, their lawful right will gain,
And peace and harmony shall reign ;
Nor is progression's grand career
Confined to this our mortal sphere,
But through the realms of boundless space,
Its glorious march we onward trace ;
When man has paid great nature's score,
And earth shall own his form no more,
With tireless pinion hence he'll soar,
To scenes of bliss unknown before.
There mid the spheres of spirit life,
Beyond the din of mortal strife,
Both mind and soul shall greater grow,
And ne'er can retrogression know.
There poet's strains shall sweeter flow,
And painter's canvas brighter glow,
And music with diviner strain,
Be born of the composer's brain ;
Angelic forms to life shall start,
Beneath the cunning sculptor's art ;

'Thus all by God's divine control
Work out the promptings of the soul.
How different is that land, I ween,
From what sectarian bigots dream,
E'en there content I doubt they'll dwell,
Where no poor wretches writhe in hell.
But should they leave that bliss in scorn,
Because no damned in Tophet groan,
Slight cause the good would have to mourn.
If bigots there do grieve to hear
The gospel sound so full of cheer,
Of heavenly love that all shall share
As free and boundless as the air ;
'Twere wise to strike their tents betimes,
And move to more congenial climes.
No bard am I, nor poet's son,
Nor ever Laureate's bays have won ;
But when I gaze upon the past,
And peer into the future vast,
From seeming ills see blessings spring,
The glorious vision makes me sing ;
I feel no power can long delay
The future's grand millennial day.

NATURE'S WAY.



ALL things in life unstable seem,
They come, and grow, and soon decay ;
At this our souls should not be grieved,
'Tis Nature's way.

Whatever was must ever be,
However great, small, mean, or fair ;
The *form* alone can pass away,—
The thing is there.

'Tis but the changing of the good,
That better may in future thrive ;
All that was worthy in the past
Shall still survive.

The ancient adamantine rocks
That long defied stern Nature's powers,
At last, when crumbled into dust,
Exist in flowers.

Successive flora crown the earth,
And bloom amid perpetual strife,
Whose forms are doomed by fate to yield
A higher life.

Huge fauna enter now the scene,
According to high Wisdom's plan,
Who roam the forests wild, then die,
To live in man.

Hail Man ! high priest of Nature's works,
Fair image of the "Great Divine !"
In thee His glory shall endure
And brightly shine.

But yet mutation holds the sway,
Nor yields the power to high or low ;
E'en man must still its influence feel,
While here below.

His life is like a waking dream,
A shadow vain that will not stay ;
And while he strives to hold it fast,
It fleets away.

His vigor, grace, and beauty too,
How soon, alas, they all decay !
Disease invades the seat of health,
Then where are they ?

The step of youth is light and gay,
His heart is blithe and turned to song ;
Old age with stealthy pace hath come,
He creeps along.

The glorious hopes his bosom swelled,
Of riches, fame, and honors high,
Like stranded wrecks on ocean's shore
All shattered lie.

The dear companions of life's prime,
Who oft made glad his childhood's home,
Now one by one have passed away,—
He sighs alone.

How vain are then man's earthly hopes,
When, realized, they will not stay ;
At this our soul should not be grieved—
 'Tis nature's way.

If this poor stage of life were all,
 'Twere better man had never been ;
Death puts an end to all the acts,
 And drops the scene.

Why talk of death ? There's no such thing
 In all the realms of boundless space ;
Perpetual change is nature's law,
 In every place.

Our mortal coil, when shuffled off,
 To spirit-life away we'll soar ;
There naught can stop Progression's march
 For ever more.

IN RE DIABOLI.

QUID ME VETAT VERUM DICERE RIDENTEM ?

AS poets have, in by-gone days,
Invoked the muse to aid their lays ;
Say, why may I not do so still,
And call her from the sacred hill,
My theme in verse to fitly guide,
And make its numbers smoothly glide ?

Come, then, fair goddess, leave thy shrine,
Sweet sister of the tuneful nine ;
Baptize me in thy holy spring,
That I may soar on poet's wing.
I know thy temple's now no more,
That once adorned fair Athen's shore,
That Fane of spotless marble made,
In dusty ruins low is laid ;
While o'er the scene where once it smiled
Rests gloom and desolation wild.

The sources of thy mystic stream,
The eye scarce traces where they've been ;
Those banks once crowned with flow'rets rare,
Are withered all, and bleak and bare.
Here oft of yore in joyous trance
The Graces led the moonlight dance,
While all adown Parnassus' vales
Oppressive silence sad prevails,
Save when beneath the midnight sky
The owl sends forth her boding cry.

Though now thou own'st no earthly shrine,
 Yet thou art none the less divine.
 In yonder heavens, far outspread,
 High towering o'er Olympus' head,
 Thy temple shines more truly grand
 Than that which graced Athenian land.
 There, too, Castalear's fountain flows,
 Murmuring sweetly as it goes ;
 To which all worthy bards may hie,
 And never fear to find it dry.

Do not, fair Muse, my verse disdain,
 Because it moves in lowly strain ;
 Thy aid I beg in Justice's name,
 Whilst I defend the Devil's fame.

" Lang syne in Eden's bonny yard,
 " When youthful lovers first were paired,
 " And a' the soul o' love they shared
 " The raptured hour,
 " Sweet on the fragrant flowery swaird
 " In shady bower ;
 " Then you, ye auld sneek-drawing dog,
 " Ye came to Paradise *incog.*,
 " And played on man a cursed brogue ;
 " Black be your fa',
 " And geid this infant world a shog,
 " Maist ruined a'.

Thus sang the swan o' bonny Doon,
 Nor sweeter bard e'er humm'd a tune ;
 And seldom was he so uncivil,
 As thus berate the pair auld Devil.
 Yet Robbin had a heart to feel
 For all the woes heap'd on the De'il—

His pains and punishment severe,
 And pity prompts this wish sincere :
 " Now fare ye weil auld Nickie Ben,
 " Oh, wad ye tak a thought and men',
 " Ye aiblins might, I dinna ken,
 " Still hae a stake ;
 " I'm wae to think upo' your den,
 " E'en for your sake.

Say, what are Satan's great transgressions,
 That he should merit such aspersions
 As have anent his fame been hurl'd,
 All through the so-called Christian world ?
 That he should drag an endless chain—
 Be damn'd for aye in hell to reign
 O'er cursed imps and unbelievers,
 And orthodoxy's vile blasphemers ;
 There to endure God's vengeance dire
 In torments of eternal fire,
 Without a chance to 'scape his doom,
 Or ray of hope to gild the gloom ?

The difference of thy state how vast
 From what it was in ages past,
 When first Creation's dawn was seen
 'Mid sacred hosts you stood supreme,
 Sweeping the chords of Heaven's lyre—
 In song you led the angels' choir.

'Tis said by some—a doubtful story—
 'Twas pride that caused thy fall from glory ;
 Thrust out from Heaven to Earth afar,
 You came like to a flaming star ;
 But how in Heaven pride should grow
 E'en Milton fails to let us know—

Who has pack'd well the verse he sings
With many as mysterious things.

The fallen seraph Eden found,
And gazing with amazement round
Upon the beauties of the place,
He met the mother of our race.
The record says he changed his shape
Into the likeness of an ape,
Or, as some say, a serpent crawling,
Which must to Eve have been appalling.
Why he should make such transformation,
Passes far my comprehension.

But he, without much hesitation,
At once commenced this conversation :
" Of all the trees of this retreat,
" Hath God declared ye shall not eat ?"

" Yes ; what adorns our home so fair,
" We may partake of free as air ;
" But one tree in its midst doth stand,
" On that we may not lay a hand—
" Not even touch it passing by,—
" That day we touch it we must die."

" That day ye of that fruit partake,
" Grim death shall not you overtake.
" Than now far wiser ye shall be,
" And all things much more clearly see ;
" Like gods, the 'good from evil know,'
" And be the gods of earth below."

Nor saying this can I descry
Wherein the Devil told a lie ;

For after the first pair did eat
 This tempting fruit of Eden's seat,
 The Lord himself—without abatement—
 Confirmed the truth of Satan's statement ;
 While the two culprits, as appears,
 Lived on for near a *thousand years*.

If this be so, the poet begs
 To know why snakey lost his legs,
 And why he should be so accurst
 As doom'd for meat to eat the dust ?
 Since he was but the angel's screen
 Through which to talk with Adam's queen.

But, by-the-by, I've oft admired
 Our mother Eve, how she aspired,
 Nor could in Eden be contented
 To dwaddle round like one demented,
 So ignorant, as scripture shows,
 She did not know she needed clothes ;
 And here I make a frank confession—
 I cannot see her great transgression,
 Or that she did deserve the rod
 For striving to *become like God*.

Dear Mrs. Eve, I like your spirit—
 May all your daughters it inherit ;
 Adam, to me you seem a noodle,
 As pluckless as a yellow poodle,
 For when your crimes God's wrath did rouse,
 With fear you slunk behind your spouse.

But here, and now let me remark,
 The scripture leaves us in the dark—

How this serpent, used so uncivil,
 Got changed into our modern Devil;
 For Moses, who records the "fall,"
 Of no such being speaks at all.
 To tell the *how* is past all hopes, aye,
 "I 'specks he grow'd" like poor black Topsy.

It makes me vexed, I freely own,
 To hear the parsons rant and groan
 About the crimes of hoary Satan,
 And by such canting live and fatten.
 I'd sooner freeze in polar seas—
 Than preach such stuff for bread and cheese.

But if he's such a wicked cuss,
 And 'mong the godly makes a fuss,
 Prayers to God they quick should send them,
 That He would either *kill* or *mend him*.
 This sure would be the quickest plan,
 To rid the Church of the "*old man*;"
 Beyond that which the Saints would gain,
 'Twould put the Devil out of pain.

Then send to all the brethren greetings,
 That there shall be protracted meetings,
 To plead with Heaven face to face,
 And settle this long standing case;
 Nick's had enough to make him grieve
 For any prank he played on Eve.

The cloth will ne'er agree to that—
 It puts the matter far too pat—
 They'd rather be left free to wrangle,
 And fill the world with foolish jangle;

Besides, what could the saintly crew
Without the poor old Devil do?
They'd have to take another tack,
Than heap their frailties on his back;
So long to this they've been inured,
His loss could hardly be endured.

But should the Devil be converted,
And have his name 'mid saints inserted,
Go forth the gospel trump to blow,
Save all the damned from sin and woe,
Quench all the fiery flames of hell
And all its stores of brimstone sell;
Or should it seem to Heaven best
To put the matter thus at rest,—
"Annihilate the horrid crew,"—
Say, what would all the preachers do?
Would they not raise a fearful bray,
To see their calling done away?

Some then perhaps would till the soil,
And earn their bread by honest toil;
Whilst others, following old desires,
Would kindly take to stoking fires.

To seek the truth with all my soul,
Guided by Reason's firm control,
To walk in Wisdom's pleasant way,
Our God and all his laws obey;
To love and help our brother man
With all the power a mortal can;
To leave this world of toil and care
The better that we breathed its air;
To cast out fear, be wisely free,
"The love of God constraineth me."

I vow by all the stars on high,
That flood with light yon midnight sky,
I never could by fear's dread rod
Be led to virtue and to God ;
All virtue's of spurious kind,
Produced by terror on the mind.

MOONLIGHT RAMBLE.

NO night winds sighed among the trees,
Nor sound of bird or beast was heard ;
Bright sparkling dew begemm'd the flow'rs,
Which all around their fragrance shed.

No darkling clouds obscured the sky,
The stars were mirrored in each rill,
And while I wandered in the vale,
The Moon had climbed the highest hill.

Her silver sheen now bathed in light
Each craggy steep and woodland green,
And, ghost-like, in the winding glen,
Kilkonley's ruins grey were seen.

Pensive and sad I wandered on,
As time and space unheeded fled,
Scarce fully conscious of the fact—
I stood amid the silent dead.

In moonbeams slept that roofless fane,
Sad contrast now to days of yore ;
Then priests and people thronged its aisles,
Now silence reigns for evermore.

Here bathed in light, *there* dark in shade,
The sacred pile looked fair and grand ;
While sculptured saints and corbel grim
Seemed product of some fairy's hand.

Weird shadows flit along the walls,
Then o'er the crumbling tombstones creep,
Whose records sum the life's brief hour
Of those whose ashes still they keep.

Alas ! how many blasted hopes,
How many broken hearts lie here ;
Here friends and foes together sleep,
Nor more have cause for hope or fear.

Thus as I mused, a misty thing,
A shapeless form it seemed to be,
Came floating from the ruins grey,
Through the church-yard, and made for me.

With fear and wonder great I gazed
Upon the unsubstantial sight,
But, as I looked, the thing took shape,
And, lo ! a female spirit bright.

The hair was of the Autumn hue,
That down the back in ringlets strayed ;
The neck and face of marble seemed,
As on her form the moonbeams played.

Her eyes were blue as evening sky,
Her smile was sweet as dawn of morn,
Her voice melodious as the thrush
That sings upon the flowery thorn.

The blood crept chilly through my veins,
The pulse of life gave sudden start ;
I knew it was her angel form,
And rushed to press it to my heart.

“Stay, stay my love,” the spirit said,
“Nor nearer now approach to me;
“That fated hour is not arrived,
“When you and I shall joined be.

“I loved thee once,” she sweetly said,
“Nor can that passion e'er decay,
“Till Ocean's depth have drained been,
“And mountains high have fled away.

“Wipe off thy tears and grieve no more,
“Nor in thine heart let sorrow be;
“My earthly form from thee has gone,
“In spirit, love, I'm still with thee.

“I'll cheer thee in dark sorrow's hour,
“When friends are few and hope is slim,
“When sickness wrings thy fevered brow,
“And earthly prospects all are dim.

“When thy departing hour has come,
“Decreed by God's unerring hand,
“I'll present be to comfort thee,
“Then join thee in the summer land.”

Thus when she'd spoke, in haste she sped,
And vanished from my ravished sight;
But never till my dying hour
Shall I forget that vision bright.

AN AULD CHRISTIAN'S REVERIE.

WHILE winds across lake Magog blaw,
And roads are blocked wi' drifted snaw,
And through the cluds nae stars ava
Blink in the sky ;
And cattle nestle in the straw,
And snugly lie ;
While blust'ring storms the steeples shake,
And mak' our doors and windows quake,
And nervous bodies keep awake,
Till maist insane ;
Then by the fire my seat I take,
To muse alane.

As up the lum the bleezes speel,
And a' their glow and warmth I feel,
My limbs I on the settle keel,
And smoke my pipe ;
It helps the mind's digestion weel,
And mak's it ripe.

Now whisky toddy, reeking het,
I closely by my elbow set,
And now and then my throat I wet ;
It's unco good,
To mak' the sad their cares forget,
And warm the bluid.

There are some folks who seem to think
That na sane man wad tak' a drink,
Because it might at ruin's brink
Him prostrate lay ;
And ablins health and fortune sink
Beneath its sway.

Religion, too, is on the wane,
 The pulpits dinna now maintain
 Their former zeal, wi' might and main,
 As ance they did.
 The gospel loons hanged their strain,
 And truth is hid.

Oh! Goudie, how I miss thy lear,
 Thy doctrines aye were strang and clear,
 Such as good folks rejoiced to hear,
 But sinners shiver;
 Till Death at last thee aff did steer
 Across the river.

Few men could preach sic themes sae well,
 "How Satan ance in heaven did dwell,
 "Before God thrust him down to hell
 " For cursed pride;
 "And wi' him a' t' nps that fell,
 " There to abide.

"How he then cam' to Eden's bowers,
 "And like a snake among the flowers
 "Exerted a' his wondrous powers
 " Of telling lies.
 "Where close beside frail Eve he cowers,
 " In that disguise.

"How he at last, through Adam's wife,
 "Maist lost us a' eternal life,
 "And made the earth wi' death sae rife,
 " It's like a tomb.
 "Synce stuffed the race wi' sin and strife,
 " E'en frae the womb."

Auld Goudie was a man o' skill,
 Could deal damnation wi' a will;
 The sinner's cup he used to fill
 To overflow,

And mixed him up a bitter pill
Of brunstane woe.

Then well he'd tell the saints o' grace,
"How they should see their Father's face,
"And at His right tak' their plac'
"And joytful sit,
"To see the damned of Satan's race
"Writhe in the pit."

It's now a kind o' gospel beer—
A sickly milk-and-water cheer—
That modern pastors brew us here,
A twadly dram ;
A hundred glasses taken clear
'S na worth a damn.

Just think—as I hae heard them tell,
"That notwithstanding Adam fell,
"Nane o' his race wad roast in hell,
"Or sic a place ;
"That e'en the very de'il himself
"Might yet find grace!"

My bluid rins cauldly through my veins,
Whene'er I hear such awful strains
Come frae their wild heretic brains,
As weel it may ;
They'll get a singeing for their pains
Some other day.

And then——
I'll think na mair, it turns my head,
My ingle, too, is almost dead,
And my auld feet are cauld as lead ;
'Twere surely best
To gang and say my prayers instead,
Then creep to rest.

HOME RE-VISITED.

MUCH I have wandered,
And fondly pondered
O'er many scenes
Mountain and lea.

Where nature was wild,
Or sunny and mild,
Rich in delights and
Pleasant to see.

But the home of my childhood,
With its pure streams and wildwood,
Where stands the old homestead,
Are dearer to me.

Though changed is the scene
Of life's early dream,
Where often I sported
Free as the breeze.

Still wild roses blow
On each green hedge row,
And the rooks build their
Nests on the trees.

The ivy yet clings
To gables and wings,
As if to prevent
Further decay.

Vainly it straineth,
Nothing remaineth,
All must consume and
Moulder away.

I seek as of yore,
The vine-shaded door,
But no one meets me
Blithesome and gay.

All's silent within,
And sombre and grim,
For pale Death has marched
Off with his prey.

Me thought as I gazed,
The old fire blazed,
Shedding its rays on
Forms of the dead.

Whose voices once dear
I seemed still to hear,
Thrilling my soul with
Pleasure and dread.

But soon that fair gleam
Of memory's weird dream,
Charming enchantment!
Vanished away.

Gone now is the mill,
By Lugar's clear rill,
Whose rough clatter made
Music's wild swell.

The stream yet abides,
And sweetly it glides,
Hard by the cot where
Dwelt Lucy Bell.

In form that appears
Unchanged by years,
Stands the quaint lonely
Home of the dead.

I'll visit that place,
If there I may trace
The green turf that now
Covers her head.

Yes, here is the mound,
With daises girt round,
That wraps the dear form
Slumbering below.

These flowers will die,
As winter draws nigh,
And in spring time will
Flourish and grow.

But never again
Shall sunshine or rain,
To life and to love
Those ashes restore.

I o'er them may weep,
And sad vigils keep,
But her rest can be
Broken no more.

That heart is now still,
Whose pure love did fill
My ardent young soul
Full of delight.

That peerless sweet face,
Where shone nature's grace,
Moulders in silence,
Hid from my sight.

No more shall I hear,
Her voice soft and clear,
As she sang in the
Calm evening hour.

Her sunny bright smile,
My cares would beguile;
Now she's faded and
Gone like a flower.

Lovely home of my childhood,
With thy weird glens and wild-wood,
Though crumbling to ruins
No beauty like thine.

SCEPTICISM.

WITH certain classes and individuals, "Scepticism" is a word in very bad repute. The ignorant, the prejudiced, the lazy and the cowardly look upon it as the embodiment of all that is evil, morally and spiritually.

It is preached against, prayed against, lectured against, and talked against.—This is not to be wondered at; it disturbs the stagnant tranquility of their minds, unsettles their long and much cherished superstitions, and imposes upon them the disagreeable task of examining the foundation of those opinions in which they were educated. This labor of course they are much averse to. Such men generally take their political and theological creeds from their parents and neighbors, as men take their clothes from the tailor, *ready-made*,—therefore they dislike exceedingly to be disturbed, and to be compelled to be thoughtful, anxious, diligent and enquiring.

If all the world were in their condition of mind, all the world would fear scepticism and hate it as heartily as they do. Fortunately, however, for the sake of humanity, such is by no means the case. There are many who look upon scepticism with a very different eye. They regard it as the great *Evangel of progress*; and it well deserves the title. But for it, the civilization of the present had been an impossibility, and instead of dwelling, as we do to-day, in light and liberty, we had been groping in the dim twilight of the middle ages, surrounded on all sides by superstitions that debase the mind, and spiritual despotism that enslaves the soul. But this scepticism has destroyed every

stronghold of error and delusion, and reformed every department of speculative and practical knowledge. Nor has its work been of a negative character only. It has laid the foundations for future freedom and progress, deep and broad. Let such as doubt the truth of this broad statement, read honestly and think truthfully, and they will have reason to change their minds.

But what does scepticism really mean? In the minds of many it is synonymous with infidelity; one who doubts the existence and perfections of the Deity and the truths of Revelation, and consequently the divine origin of any Revelation whatever. But this does not necessarily follow, and is no fair or honest meaning of the word. To explain it thus is to give the abuse of it, for its explanation. One might as well say that lust was the meaning of love;—lust is love run to seed. Infidelity is scepticism carried to excess. Good and evil are always near neighbors to each other. Wit is closely allied to madness, wisdom to folly, and religion to fanaticism. But it is wise to distinguish things that differ from each other.

A sceptic is one who doubts before he believes,—carefully examines opinions before he receives them, and never adopts them unless founded in reason and truth, it matters not how, when, or in what form they come. It has been said, and there is truth in the statement, that “He who has never doubted has never really believed.” Scepticism thus defined is not a thing to be dreaded, but admired. In this point of view, it is a kind of John the Baptist, a forerunner of truth.

Every reader of history knows the intellectual and moral condition of the ages that preceded the Reformation. Darkness covered the land, and gross darkness the people. It was a darkness that might have been felt. And when a ray of light occasionally sprung up, here and there, it only seemed to make that dark-

ness look more profound. Scepticism had for centuries been as good as dead, and whenever it did happen to raise its head and give signs of life, it was forthwith put to death. No wonder. Tyranny, superstition and scepticism could not exist together. It still struggled on for life, and finally found an embodiment in the persons of Huss and Jerome of Prague, and Wickliffe in England. They doubted, examined and enquired. Those rare souls,—those truly moral heroes preached and wrote, and lectured against the errors and superstitions of their age with all the energies of their minds. But, poor men, they had manifestly been born out of due time; they effected *comparatively* little. The times were not ready for such a work as theirs. The two former perished in the flames of persecution in the midst of their Godlike labor. The latter was allowed to die in his bed in peace, but the haters of the truth, and the lovers of error and superstition, as if sorry for the leniency shown to the old man when alive, barbarously tore his body from its resting-place, ground it to dust, and threw it into the river Severn. In after times, however, it was found that scepticism had only been wounded; that it was by no means dead. The mantle of these martyrs fell upon the lion-hearted Luther, and nobly he wore it. He was a host of sceptics rolled into one. But his lot had fallen in more propitious times. A great part of Europe was ready and waiting for the advent of such a man. Luther did not make the *age* that gave him birth. *Sceptical*, it made *him* a *sceptic*. No one gives character to the times in which he lives; they give character to him. Scepticism was abroad, and he caught its spirit, and the result was the downfall of many time-honored superstitions and of spiritual despotism.

He fought a good fight, and won the battle. His

name is enrolled in the list of those moral heroes who can never perish from the history of the world.

The spirit of scepticism that had taken possession of Luther in Germany, now inspired Calvin in France, Beza in Geneva, Zuingle in Switzerland, Cranmer and Ridley in England, and Knox in Scotland. The result of all their doubtings, searchings, reasonings and preaching was the glorious Reformation, the greatest event, by far, that has happened to the world in modern times. It was the work of a truthful scepticism. But much remained, and yet remains, to be done in the way of reformation. The foundations of religious liberty had been laid, but the superstructure had to be raised; and sceptical Chillingworth was the man to erect the edifice. Educated in a college that has for ages been noted as the refuge of superstition and conservative bigotry, Chillingworth came forth liberal and strong in the love of the truth. His liberality, however, must have been obtained *from* that seminary, and not *at* it, or *in* it. In his immortal work, "The Religion of Protestants," he sets at open defiance all authority of churches, popes and bishops in matters of religion. Nothing found admittance into his creed that had any tendency to weaken the right of private judgment, or put aside the reason and common sense of man. *Private judgment is the foundation stone of the fabric of the Reformation.* It is the key-stone of the arch,—take that away, the structure falls to ruin. If mankind have no right to private judgment in matters of religion, the whole Protestant world are damnable heretics in separating from the Roman church. But who would credit that private judgment had been the cause and soul of the Reformation, to see the illiberality and dogmatism of many of the so-called Protestant churches, even of the present day? Each communion claims this right for itself, but is very un-

willing to grant it to others, or even to its own members.

But it seems to have been given to this moral giant to secure the temple of freedom from ever again falling into ruin. He helped more than perhaps any other man of his day or since, to restore dignity to the human mind, and give importance to individuality. This scepticism and the results of it permeated the length and breadth of the civilized world. What Luther and Chillingworth were to religion, sceptical Voltaire was to history. With regard to his religious views we have here nothing to say; for those he is alone responsible to that Being in whose hands are the hearts and souls of all men. Up to the period that gave this great man birth, there had been but little written that deserved the name of history. It was so mixed up with fables of various kinds, religious and profane, that it was well nigh worthless. This was true of the history of almost every country. Take one sample as a specimen of the whole from the history of Rome :

It was recorded as a sober truth that "the god Mars had ravished a virgin, and the result was two sons, Romulus and Remus; both children, by their parents, were doomed to destruction. But their precious little lives were preserved by the tender-hearted affection of a she-wolf and an equally amiable woodpecker. The one supplied the babes with milk, and the other defended them from insects. When the children had reached the age of manhood, they determined to build a city. In this desire they were joined by the descendants of the Trojan warriors, and they conjointly built Rome, so called from Romulus. Remus was unfortunately murdered, and Romulus was caught up to heaven by his father, who for that purpose had descended from Olympus in a fearful storm." Such was the stuff of which history generally was made up in

the time of Voltaire. He set himself manfully to work a reformation in history, and also in the methods of writing it. He brought to his task rare tools. He had a brilliant wit, as keen and cutting as a razor, strong reasoning powers—when he chose to use them, an immense amount of learning, and a judgment the most clear and profound. With these he laughed out and purged out the follies and fables of his time. Every honest historian knows how much he is indebted to Voltaire for his knowledge of how to make the writing of history a success. In all probability, had Voltaire never lived, Macaulay had never written such a history. It is the fashion of the present time, among many, as it has been the weakness and wickedness of the past, to revile that great man, rather than to read his works. The ignorance of such men is only equalled by their dislike of him. It is sufficient to abuse Voltaire because their prejudiced fathers did the same.

The great cannons of criticism, by which he blew to atoms the historical nonsense of his day, are these :

That on account of the inevitable mixture of fables, essential to a barbarous and unlettered people, no trustworthy accounts can be had concerning *their origin*.

That even such documents as the Romans might once have possessed, were all destroyed before they could be *incorporated into history*.

That ceremonies established in honor of certain events, alleged to have taken place in former times, were proofs, not that the events had *actually happened*, but that they were *believed* to have happened.

As soon as these three tests were applied to Roman history, it fell to pieces. So did all histories of a similar kind.

Niebuhr's great history of Rome, so much praised by Dr. Arnold, was written on the plan projected by

Voltaire. And all his most decisive arguments against the truthfulness of the early history of that country are taken from the Frenchman. He was not like many sceptics, more remarkable for pulling down than building up. He was good at both. His learned book on "The Morals and Characters of Nations," is sufficient proof of the truth of that statement. Like all reformers in those times, he was unjustly persecuted whilst alive, but praised by many when he was dead.

But not only did scepticism find its way into religion and history, but into the physical sciences. It found, in England, a fitting instrument in the person of the illustrious Boyle. No man of his day contributed more to the advancement of science generally, and the science of chemistry in particular. But for him our chemists might yet have been wasting their energies in searching, in the laboratory, amid its fire, smoke and crucibles, for the philosopher's stone; or attempting to transmute the baser into the precious metals. Boyle was a thorough sceptic in his method of study. He saw that little or nothing could be done to advance the science of chemistry, until old theories had been abandoned, however supported by great names, or however venerable by age. His fundamental rule was this:—First of all, to doubt; and then to discover. Here is a golden rule for every enquirer after truth to follow. All scientific men have adopted it who have enriched the world by their achievements in science, philosophy, or in any department of human knowledge. So deeply important did Boyle consider scepticism to the successful study of chemistry, that he gave his most important work on that subject the significant title of "The Sceptical Chemist." A host of men of a kindred spirit have followed in the footsteps of this great chemical pioneer, encouraged by his example and lighted by the torch

of his genius, whose united success has raised chemistry from being one of the meanest, to be the most useful and grandest of all the physical sciences.

Whilst scepticism was busy amongst the chemists, it was not less so amongst the astronomers. Copernicus could no longer believe the ancient doctrines concerning our planet. It had been believed that it was a flat fixture, so that if any venturesome soul dared to go far enough, he would assuredly fall over the sides of it, into a fathomless abyss of nothing. It was believed that the earth was the centre of the solar system, and that all heavenly bodies moved around it. This motion was maintained by the church, on scriptural grounds. But although Copernicus was a theologian, science had informed him this was not true. He had found to his own satisfaction, and to the entire satisfaction of those who were able to understand his demonstration, that the sun, and not the earth, was the centre of the solar system. So great, however, was the opposition of the theologians and schoolmen of his day generally, that he had not the moral courage to publish his great discoveries until a little before his death. When dying he received a copy of his great work, but was then too ill to take any interest in it. By this caution he avoided the persecution his more daring successor encountered. Galileo not only discovered but published a demonstration of his discovery that the earth had a diurnal motion round itself, as well as an annual motion round the sun. For this discovery, as every school boy knows, he was cast into prison by the superstitious bigots of his age, and, *in words*, made to recant his belief, in order to gain his freedom.—He whispered in an undertone to those near him, "It moves, nevertheless." So it must always be with truth. It moves, still. It cannot be stopped by denunciation of churches,

nor by the ignorant prejudices of men. As well try to stem the rushing tide, or chain the roaring winds. Tycho Brahe, and others, followed in the footsteps of these illustrious sons of science. Error after error fell before their discoveries, until the time of Newton, who seemed to unite in himself all the wisdom of his predecessors. He is, without controversy, the greatest genius, Shakespeare alone excepted, that the world has ever produced. He accepted the truth of the doctrine of ancient Ptolemy, that "He who is to follow philosophy must be a *free man in mind*." No fear of ancient and revered opinions ever deterred him from investigation, and declaring his discoveries. He went on, conquering and to conquer, regardless of consequences. But he lived in comparatively happy times. The spirit of persecution, or at least the *power to persecute*, for opinion's sake, was dead. He therefore lived in happiness, died in peace, and was laid in the grave with honor.

But as all minds have points of weakness, even the mightiest, so had his. He wrote a commentary on the book of Revelations. The result proved that whilst he was at home among the stars, he was at sea, without compass or rudder, in the hieroglyphic menagerie of the seer of Patmos. Few now read that work, and fewer still believe its interpretations.

Bacon was another of the sceptical innovators on stereotyped opinions. He changed the whole method of investigation. If not the author, he was at least the great expounder and illustrator of what is called the "*Inductive Philosophy*," a system of enquiry, which has guided the minds of most of the world's greatest thinkers, and experimenters, since his day.

John Locke followed in his footsteps and produced his great work, on the "*Human Understanding*," a

work that has had a world-wide reputation and influence. It has been thought by some, that its reasoning leads to materialism. But nevertheless, the clearness, and strength of its logic, and the profundity of its thought, as well as the extensive knowledge it displays of the operations of the human mind, must forever preserve it as a monument of the genius of its author.

In France, a still greater sceptical thinker than either of the above-mentioned arose, in the person of Renè Descartes, the most profound, and original genius that country has ever produced. He unquestionably effected the most radical revolution in the methods of thought, that has ever been accomplished by any individual mind. He commenced at the foundation to build, what he believed to be, a temple of truth ; with what success, it is not our business here to say. His method of enquiring after truth, will be best shown by a few extracts gathered from various of his works. "I therefore " says he, " occupy myself fully and earnestly in effecting a general destruction of all my old opinions ; for if we would know all the truths that can be known, we must, in the first place, free ourselves from our prejudices, and make a point of rejecting those things which we have received, until we have subjected them to a new examination. We, therefore, must derive our opinions not from traditions, but from ourselves ; we must not pass judgment upon any subject which we do not clearly and distinctly understand ; for even if such a judgment be correct, it can only be so by accident. not having solid ground on which to support it. But so far are we from this state of indifference, that our memory is full of prejudices ; we pay attention to *words*, rather than *things*, and being thus slaves to forms, there are too many who believe themselves to be religious, when in fact they are only

bigoted and superstitious ; who think themselves perfect, because they go much to church, because they often repeat prayers, because they wear short hair, because they fast, because they give alms. These are the men who think themselves such friends of God, that nothing they do displeases Him." These are the sentiments, and that was the method of the man who made so many important scientific discoveries. Such a mind was eminently fitted to make discoveries, and he made them ; he was the first who applied Algebra to Geometry ; pointed out the important law of the sines, discovered the changes to which light is subjected in the eye by the crystalline lens ; detected the causes of the rainbow ; while the great discovery of Harvey—the circulation of the blood—was by his contemporaries either neglected or disbelieved, even by the great Bacon himself, it was at once recognized by the Frenchman, as a great and important truth. Moreover he may be considered the author of the "*Deductive Philosophy* ;" a method of investigating truth, the very opposite, in many respects of the "*Inductive Philosophy*," but yet intimately connected with it. The union of these methods, would seem to be necessary, in order to produce the highest results of thought. No man but Newton has been able to wield this two-edged sword of truth, with such ease and dexterity. Hence, perhaps, his great success. Like Voltaire, Descartes was not only a great destroyer of error and superstition, but a mighty builder up of truth. What Chillingworth was, in many respects, in England, Voltaire was in France ; he was a second Luther, and he bore the same relationship to the old philosophers, that Luther bore to the old theologians. In few words, he was one of the great liberators and reformers of the European intellect. He has been abused, misrepresented and slandered, for his views of religion. It is much more easy for narrow-

minded bigots to abuse such a man, than either to make his discoveries, produce his works, or confer such intellectual blessings on the human race. No wonder they prefer to abuse him. Will the time ever come when men shall be valued for what they *are*, and for the good they *do*, rather than for the *dogmas* they profess to *believe*? We hope so for the sake of humanity.

This necessarily brief and imperfect sketch, of the doings of scepticism, would be still more imperfect, if we neglected to say a word or two in relation to its innovations on the old opinions respecting the genesis, and transformations of the earth.

Previous to the development of the science of geology, little or nothing was known on these subjects, except what could be gathered from the Mosaic record. There were those who doubted, however, the correctness, *in many respects*, of the record, touching the creation of the earth, and the changes through which it had passed. Amongst those sceptical spirits were three, who independently, and unknown to each other, commenced the study of geology; Werner in Germany, Hutton in Scotland, and Smith in England. The two former adopted the *deductive method* of enquiry, and the latter the *inductive method*. Here we have the two different methods of enquiry of Bacon and Descartes, brought to the investigation of this great subject. What success attended their efforts, and the efforts of their respective followers, up to the present, is no secret to any one, who reads and thinks. The *negative* result of all however, is that the Mosaic record is no longer accepted by enlightened men, as an infallible history of the cosmogony of our earth; and when they desire information on geological subjects, they go to the records of geologists, rather than the records of Moses. Of course both the revealments of

the science of astronomy and geology, met with bitter opposition from theologians, in so far as these revelations seemed to conflict with the Bible. For a while the pupils thundered against such heresy. It is observable that they always *thunder* more than they *lighten* on most subjects. That thunder has now died away; it frightened nobody, it killed nobody. Discreet ministers have now come *at last* to the conclusion that they should have adopted *at first*, namely, that Moses never intended to give a scientific account of the origin of the earth, and the starry universe. And that after all both the deductions of science and the ancient record, when properly understood, may agree. He however, who can see this agreement, must have quicker eyes and sharper intellect than most people possess.

The *positive results* of the science of geology have been great. We have now some rational and consecutive history of the origin of the earth; and of the beings that live and move thereon; from the lowest to the highest, from the radiate to the man. Its revelations are most interesting and sublime. They ramify out and throw light on a thousand different studies, and enable us to understand, what without them would have been darkness and mystery. Geology and Chemistry are now sister sciences, destined to advance the civilization of the world, more than any other of the sciences. The one by its minuteness, and the other by its greatness, touch the opposite poles of the material universe. When we shall know all the laws that govern its composition, and all the laws that govern its position, then all the laws that govern matter will be known to us. That time however must be very far distant.

Such are a few of the happy results of a truthful scepticism, when combined with honesty of heart and strength of mind. It sometimes leads to what some

people call heresy. It made Sir Isaac Newton a Socinian, and Locke a Unitarian in their creeds. It caused Milton to become a rebel to monarchy, and tainted with Arianism the Paradise Lost. It brought Charles the first to the block, and Cromwell to the throne, and helped greatly to establish the mighty Republic of this Western continent. These last events could not have taken place so long as the old notion of the Divine right of kings, instead of the Divine right of men, held possession of the mind. That superstition done away, all was clear. Let us not be afraid of honest enquiry and progress. Doubtless there are restless souls that are ever on the wing of enquiry, and count it bondage to have any settled faith in anything. Such a mind is undesirable; it leads not to the legitimate use of scepticism. But there are more who hate to change their notions, however absurd. Such minds are like a stagnant pool, that the pure breezes of heaven never agitate; into which run no refreshing streamlets, and from which nothing flows; it becomes corrupt and is a receptacle only for weeds. Motion and progress, both in thought and action, is the normal condition of the mind of man. Man is like a noble vessel, not built to be anchored, but to sail. "An anchorage may at times be a temporary need, in order to make some special repairs, or to take fresh cargo on board, yet the natural condition of both ship and soul, is not the harbor, but the ocean, to cut with even keel the vast and beautiful expanse, to pass from island on to island, of more than Indian balm, or to continents fairer than Columbus won; or best of all, steering close to the wind to extract motive power from the greatest obstacles. Men must forget the eternity through which they have to pass, when they talk of anchoring here upon this bank and shoal of time. It would be a tragedy to see the shipping of

the world whitening the seas no more, but idly riding at anchor in Atlantic ports. But it would be more tragic to see the world of souls fascinated into a fatal repose, and renouncing their destiny of motion." Sometimes progressive souls are asked, by fearful mortals, when will you end with this enquiry? Their answer is, *Never*. To end is to stagnate, and die. The infinite truth of the universe is before us. What we have got of truth we keep, but forever press on for more. And as this is the normal condition of man here, it will be his natural condition hereafter.

