MINOR POEMS BY MILTON

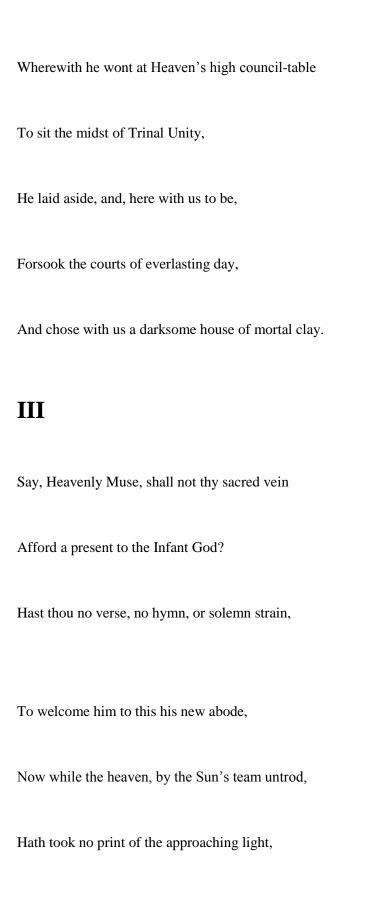
JOHN MILTON



ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

Ι This is the month, and this the happy morn, Wherein the Son of Heaven's eternal King, Of wedded maid and virgin mother born, Our great redemption from above did bring; For so the holy sages once did sing, That he our deadly forfeit should release, And with his Father work us a perpetual peace. II That glorious form, that light unsufferable,

And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,



And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV

See how from far upon the eastern road

The star-led wizards haste with odors sweet!

Oh! run; prevent them with thy humble ode,

And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;

Have thou the honor first thy Lord to greet,

And join thy voice unto the Angel Quire,

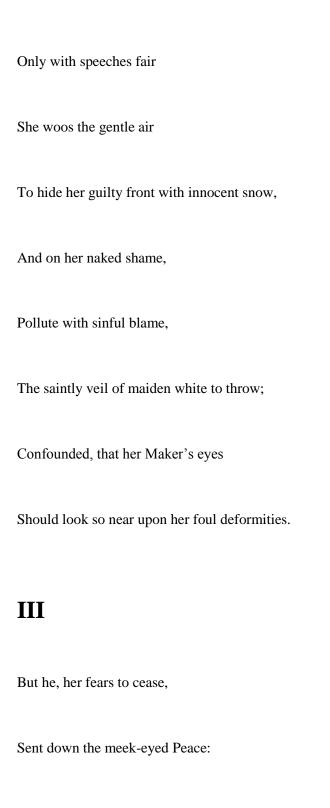
From out his secret altar touched with hallowed fire.

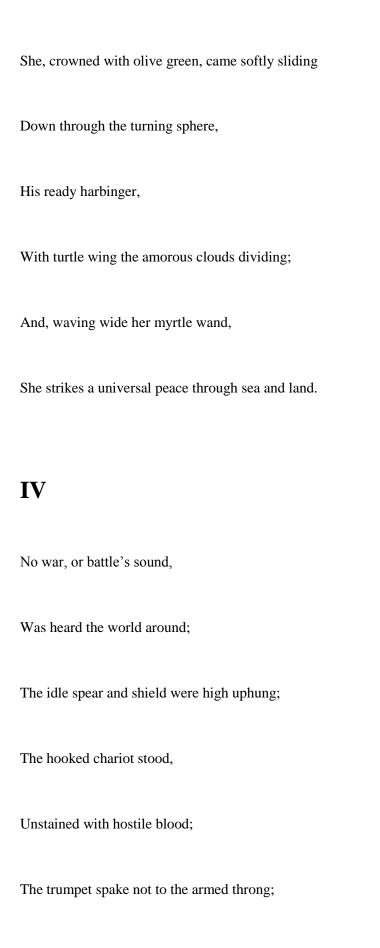
THE HYMN

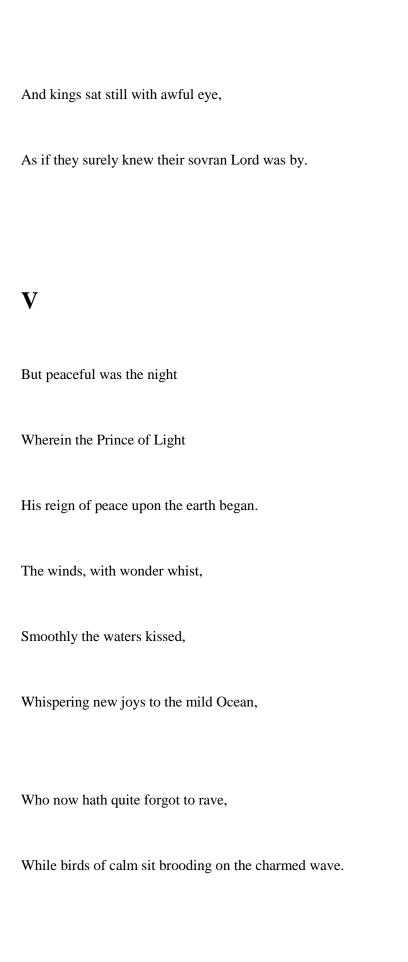
It was the winter wild, While the heaven-born child All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies; Nature, in awe to him, Had doffed her gaudy trim, With her great Master so to sympathize: It was no season then for her

To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

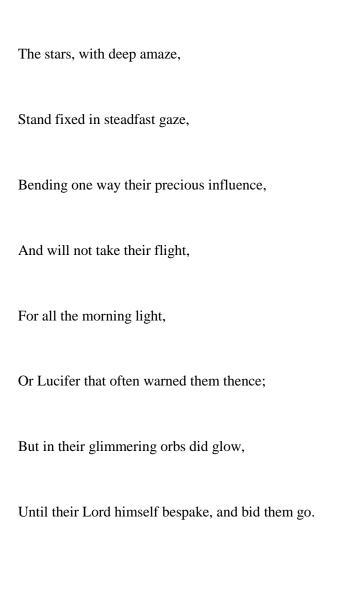
II





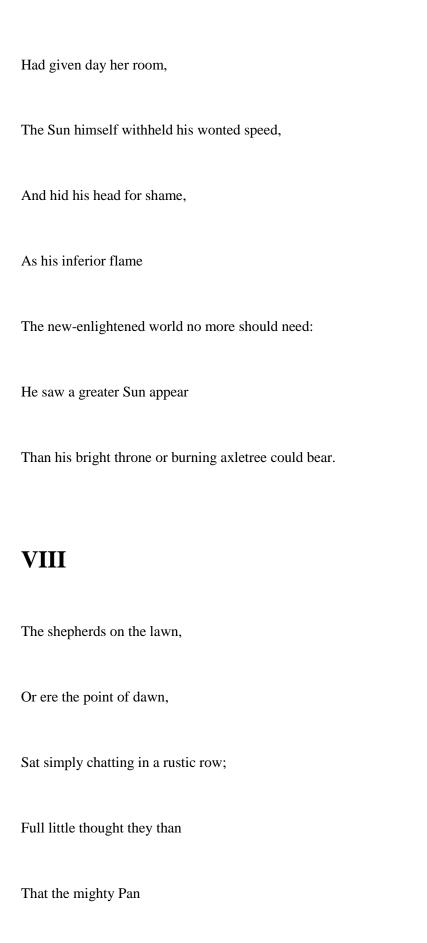


VI



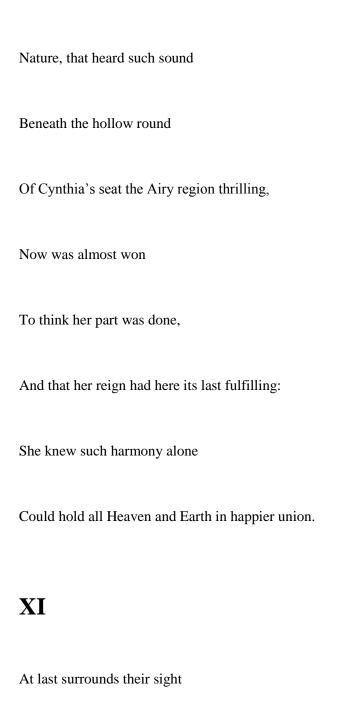
VII

And, though the shady gloom



Was kindly come to live with them below:
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.
IX
When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

\mathbf{X}

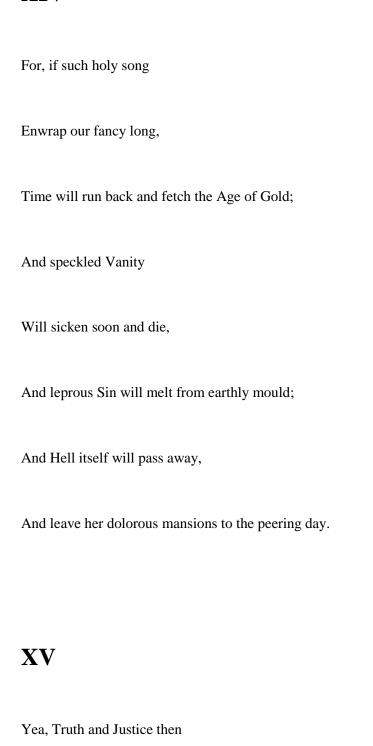


A globe of circular light,

That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed;
The helmed cherubim
And sworded seraphim
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.
XII
Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,

And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep
XIII
Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

XIV

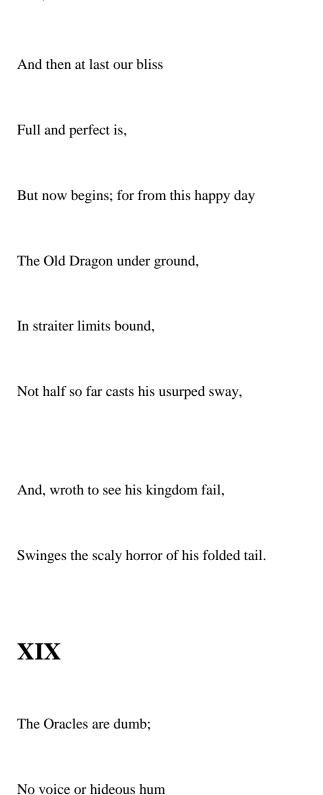


Will down return to men,

Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.
XVI
But wisest Fate says No,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,

So both himself and us to glorify:	
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,	
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.	
XVII	
With such a horrid clang	
As on Mount Sinai rang,	
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:	
The aged Earth, aghast	
With terror of that blast,	
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,	
When, at the world's last session,	
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.	

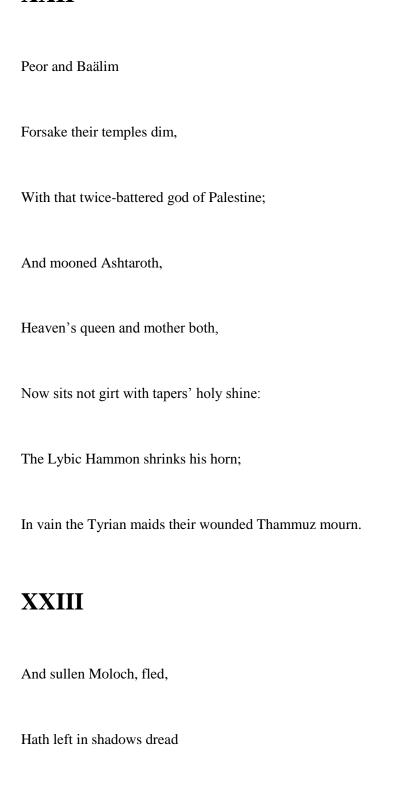
XVIII



Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.
XX
The lonely mountains o'er,
The lonely mountains o'er, And the resounding shore,
And the resounding shore,

The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.
XXI
In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

XXII

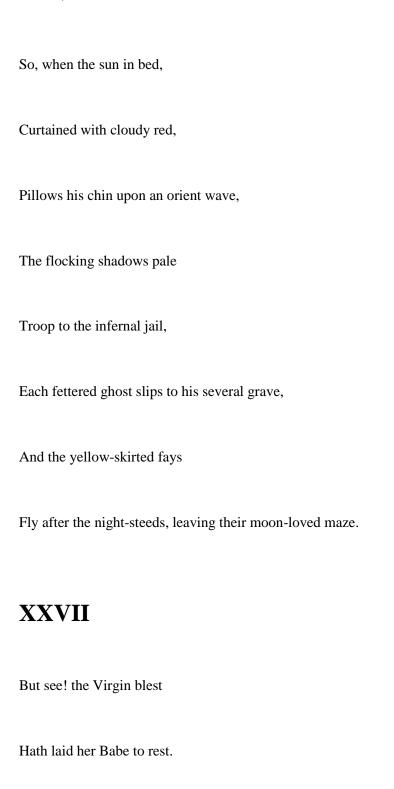


His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.
XXIV
Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;

The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worshipped ark.
XXV
He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

In vain, with timbrelled anthems dark,

XXVI



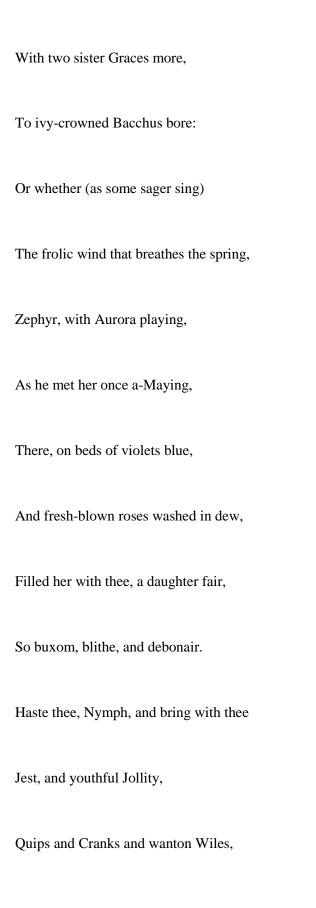
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemed star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.
ON SHAKESPEARE
ON SHAKESPEARE What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones
What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones
What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones The labor of an age in piled stones?
What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones The labor of an age in piled stones? Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid

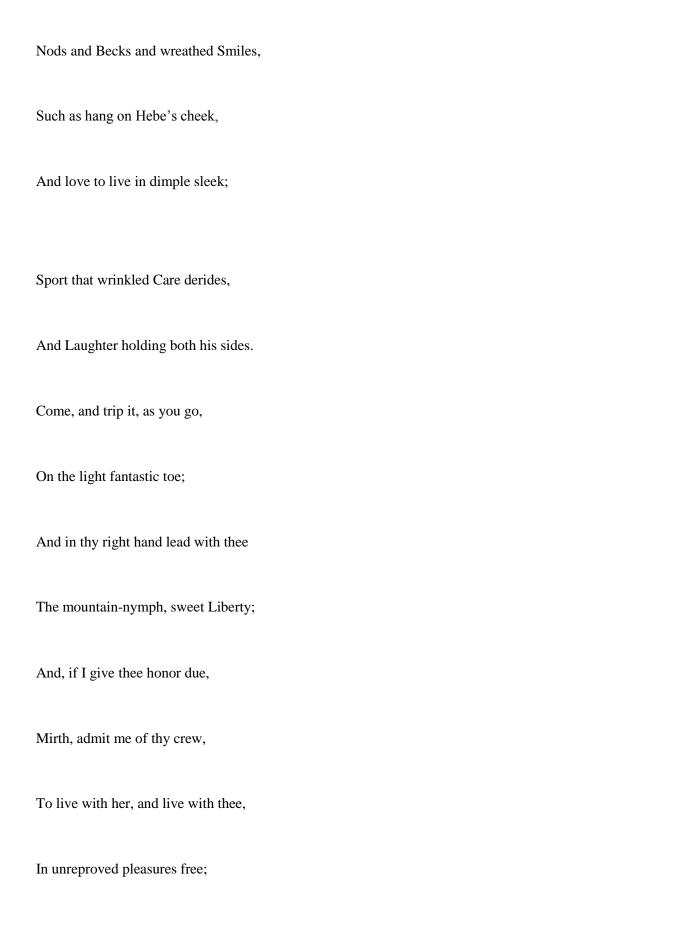
Thou in our wonder and astonishment Hast built thyself a livelong monument. For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavoring art Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book Those Delphic lines with deep impression took, Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving, Dost make us marble with too much conceiving, And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

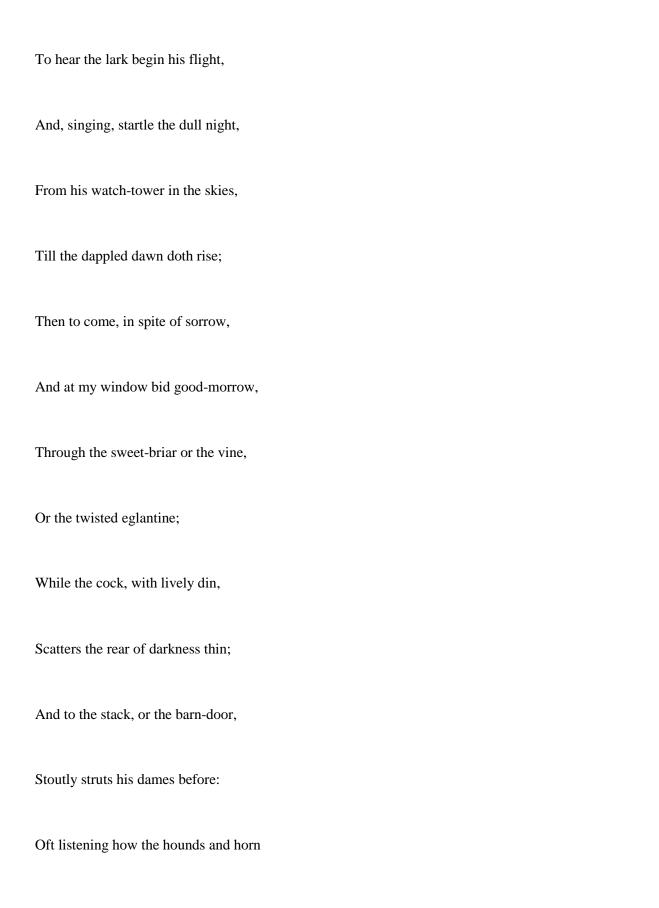
L'ALLEGRO

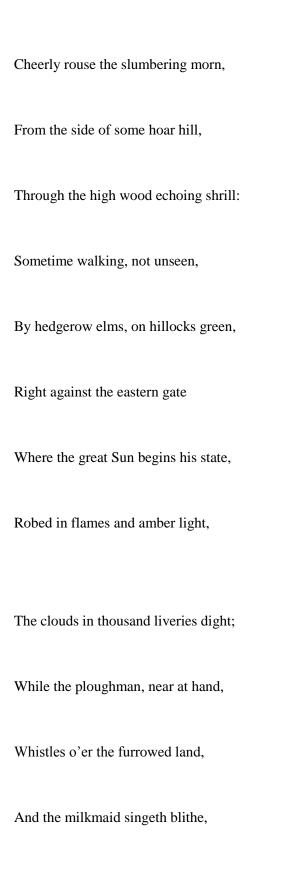
Hence, loathed Melancholy,

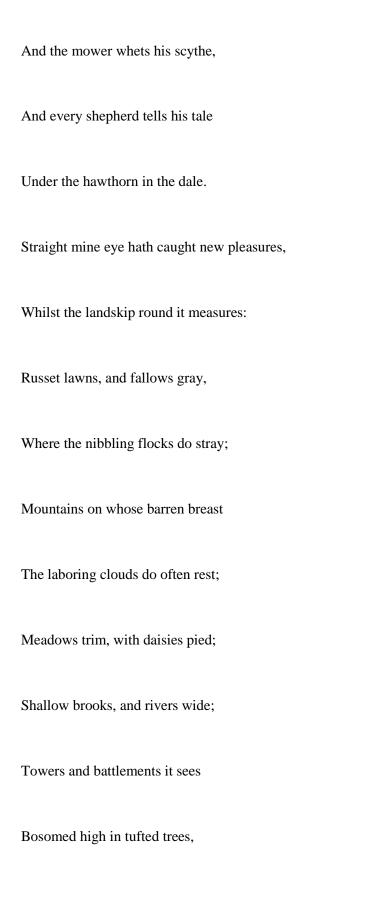
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,

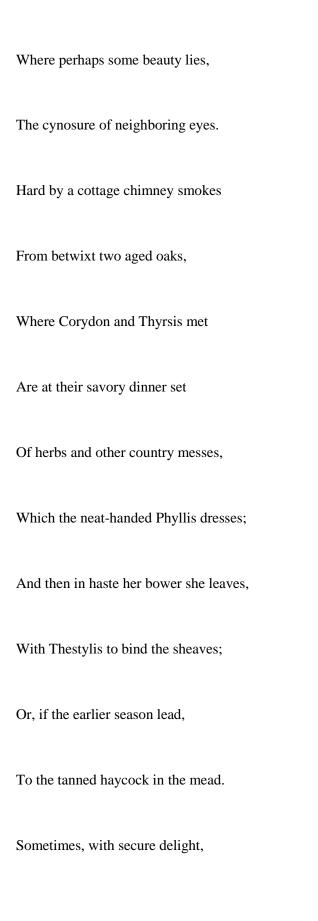


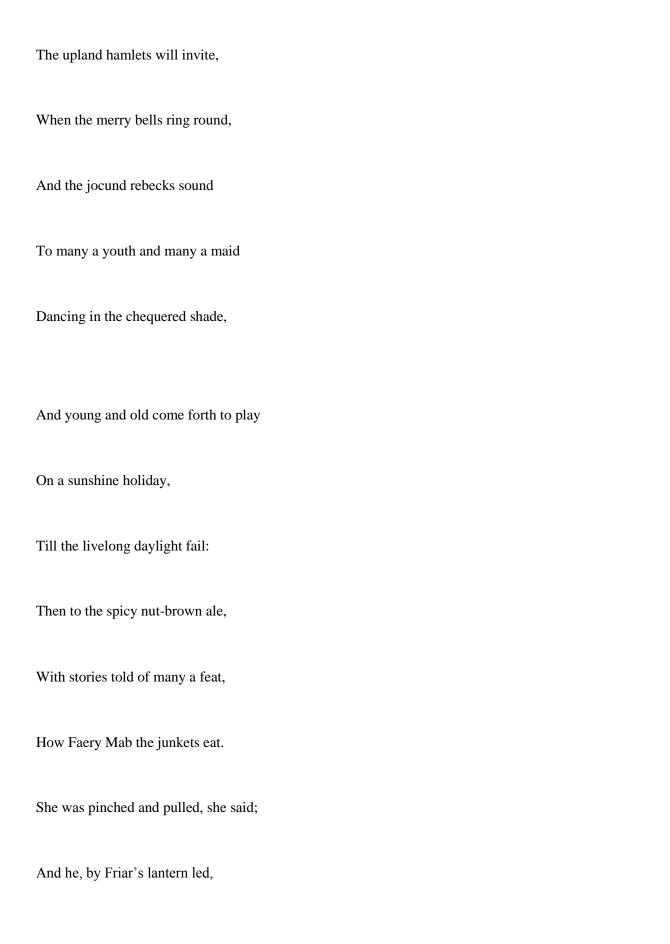


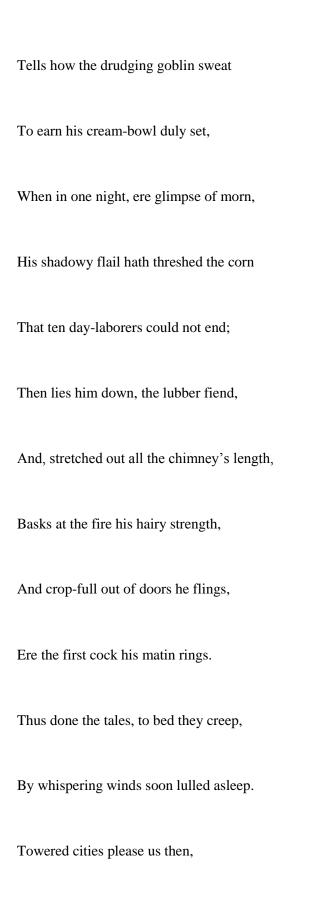


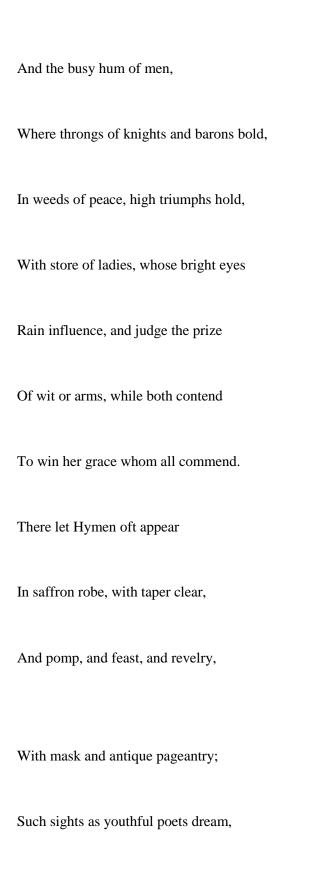


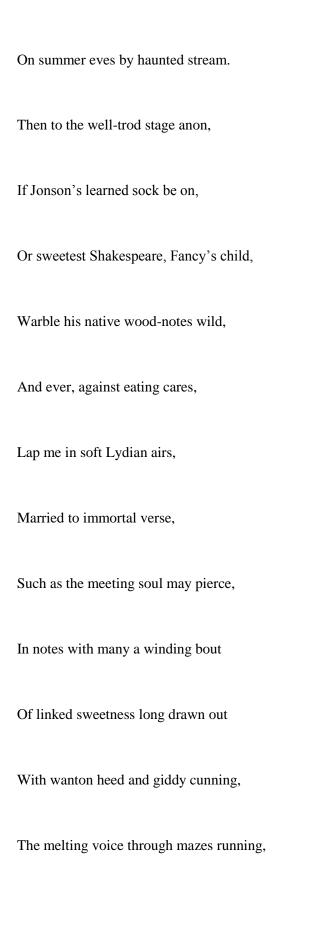


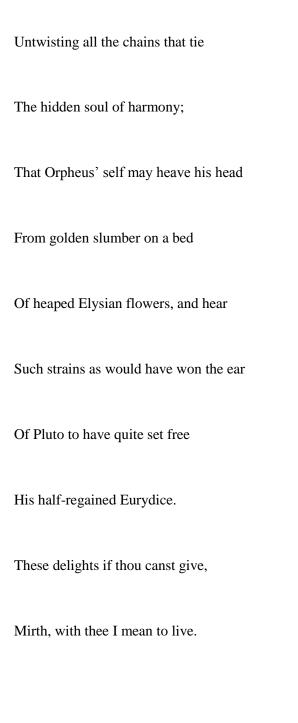








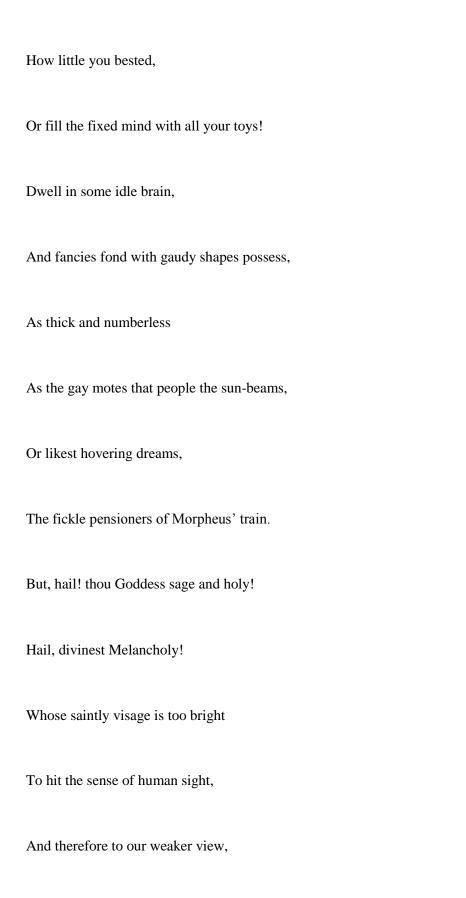


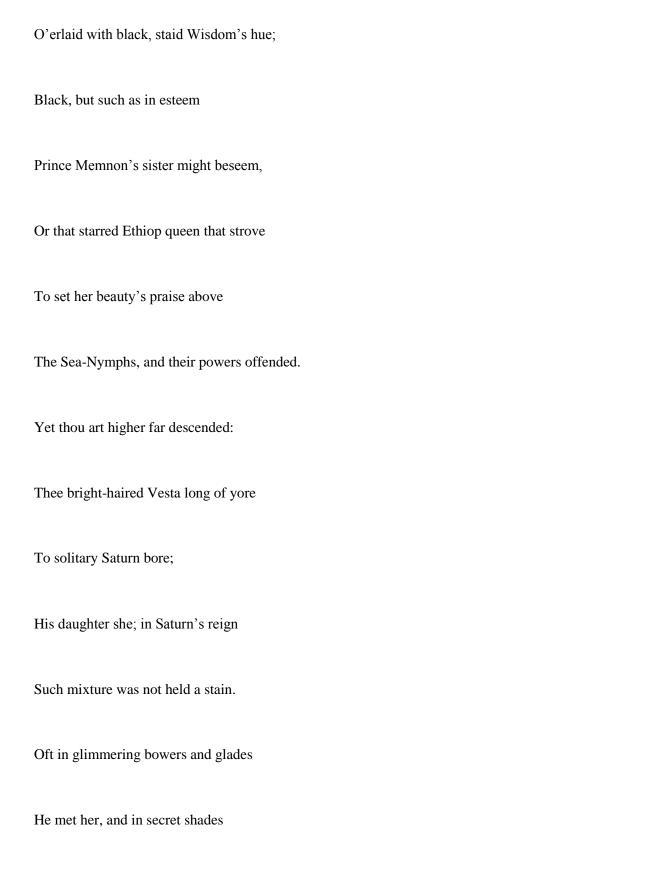


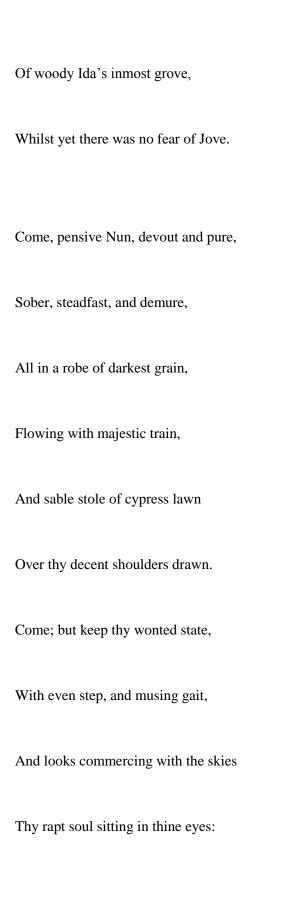
IL PENSEROSO

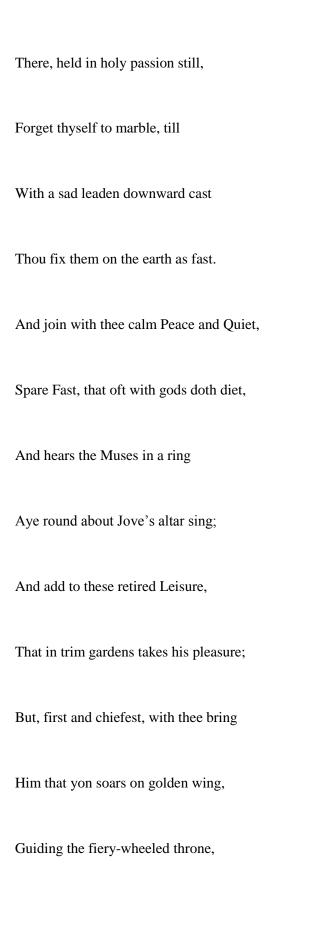
Hence, vain deluding Joys,

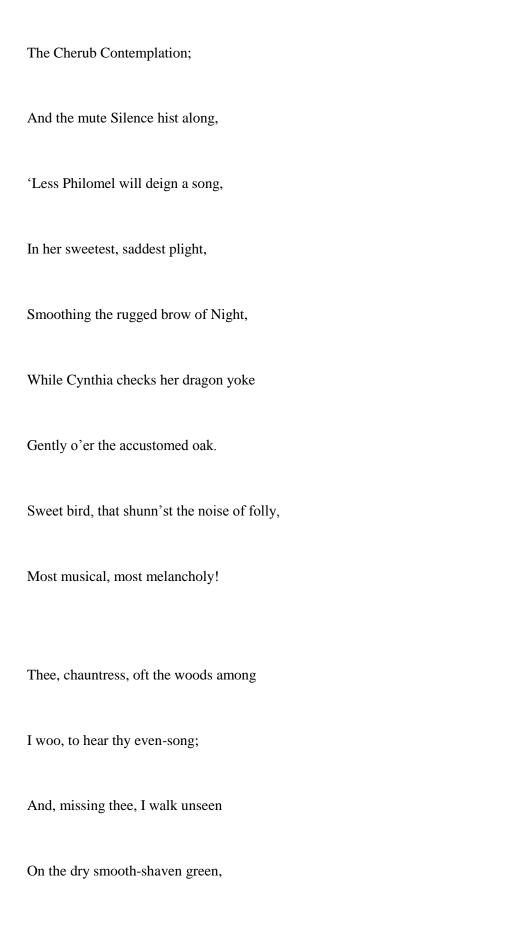
The brood of Folly without father bred!

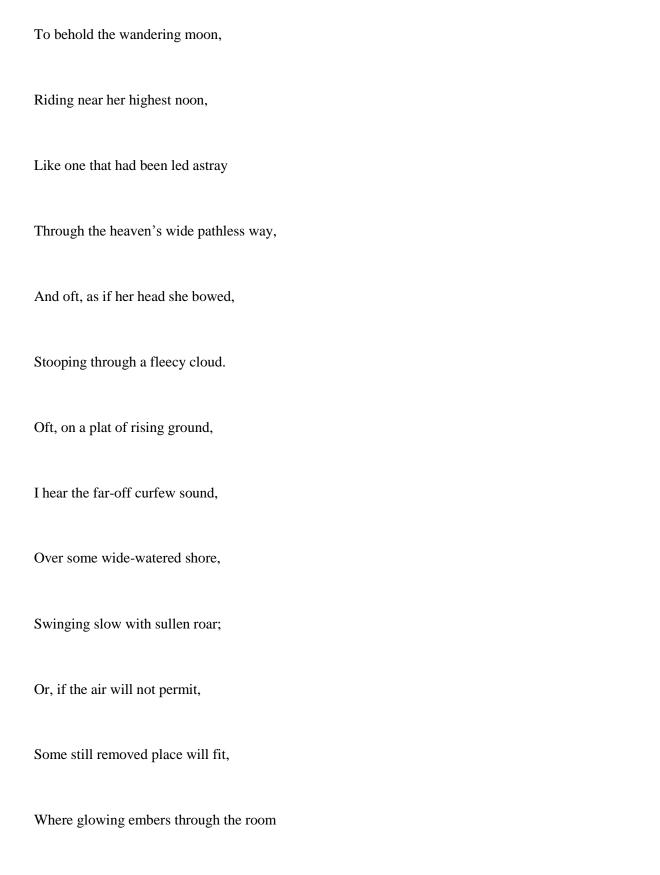


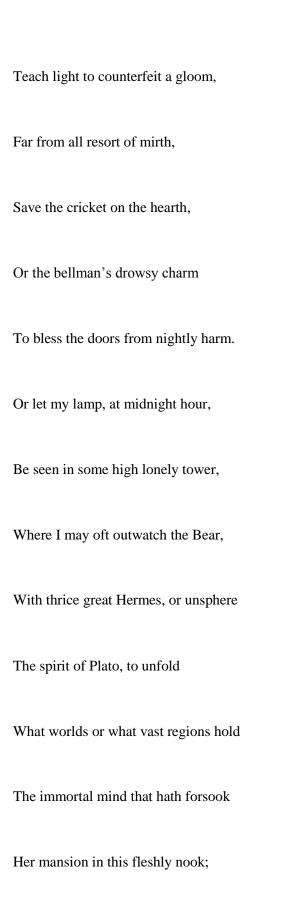


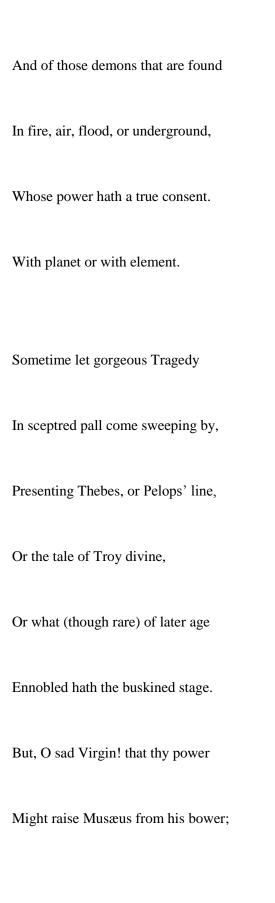


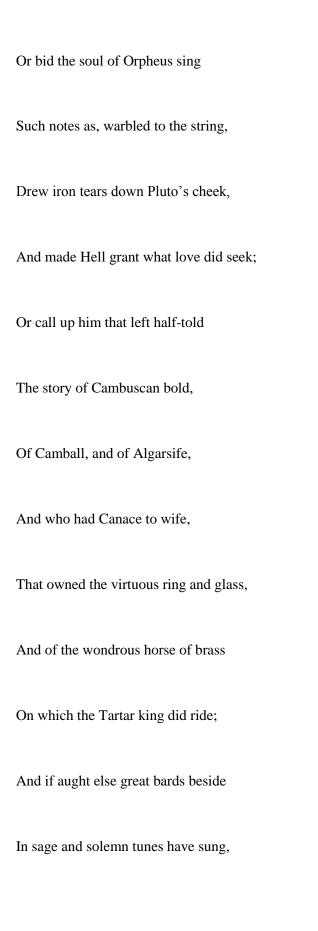


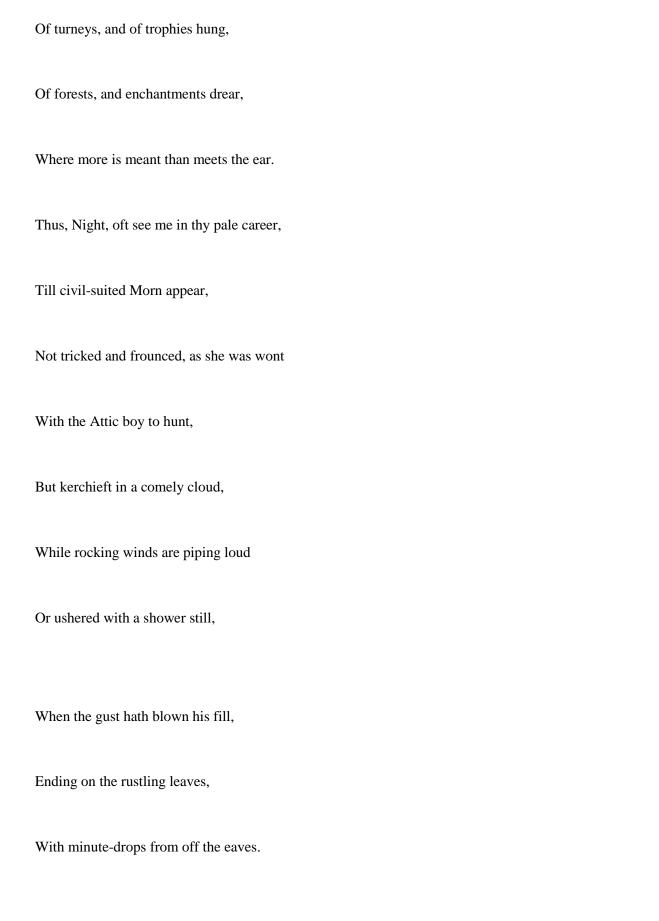


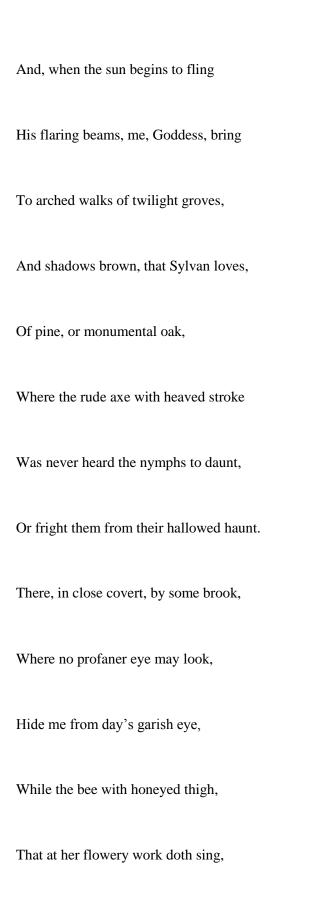


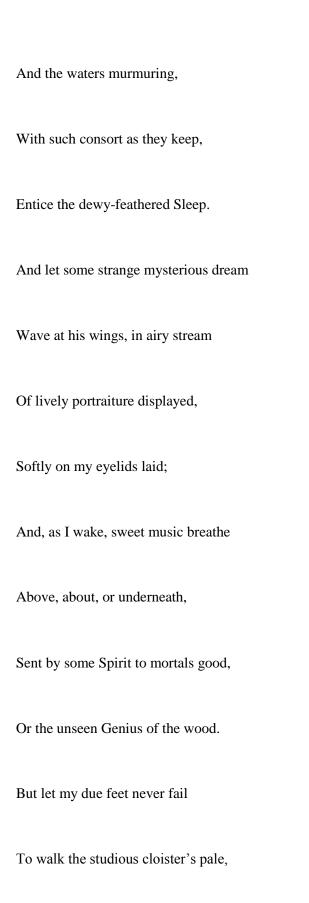


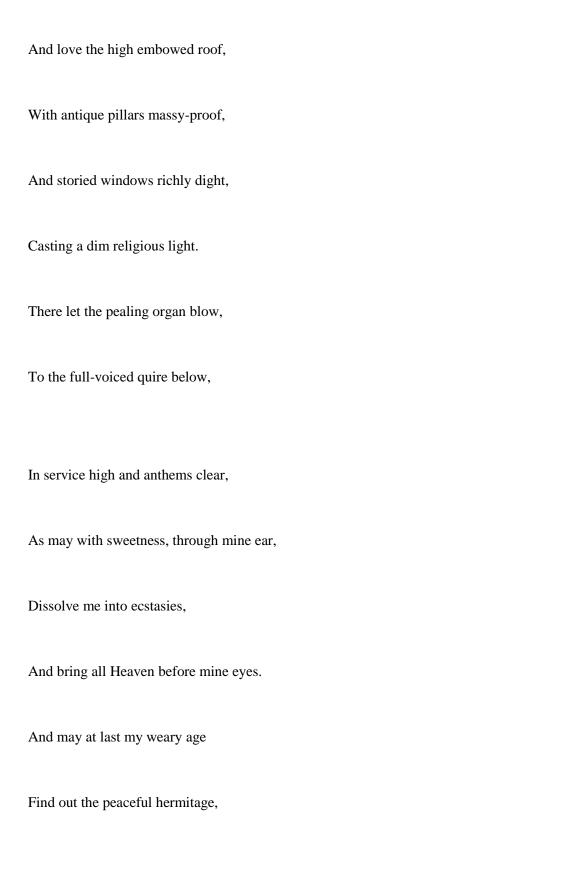












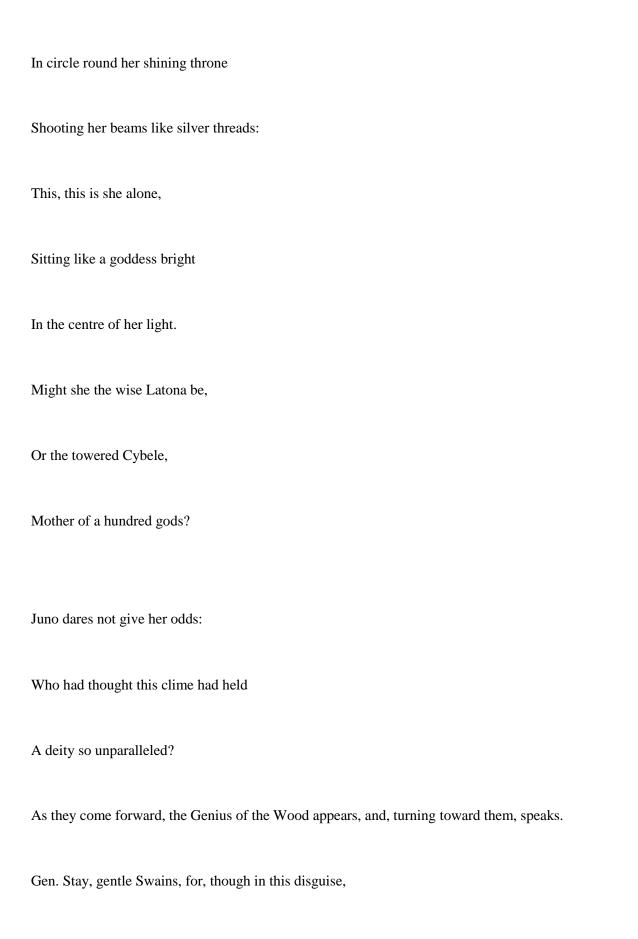
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.
ARCADES

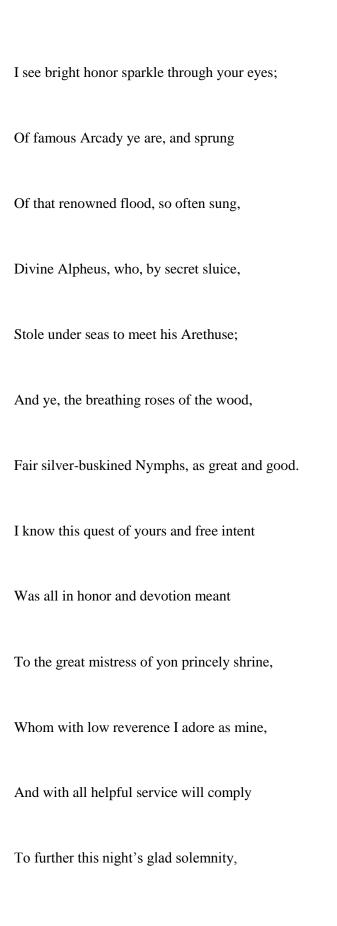
Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:—

I. SONG

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!

What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.
Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:
Less than half we find expressed;
Envy bid conceal the rest.
Mark what radiant state she spreads,





And lead ye where ye may more near behold What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold; Which I full oft, amidst those shades alone, Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon. For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower, To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove; And all my plants I save from nightly ill Of noisome winds and blasting vapors chill; And from the boughs brush off the evil dew, And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue, Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,

Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites. When evening gray doth rise, I fetch my round Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground; And early, ere the odorous breath of morn Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about, Number my ranks, and visit every sprout With puissant words and murmurs made to bless. But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen To the celestial Sirens' harmony, That sit upon the nine infolded spheres, And sing to those that hold the vital shears,

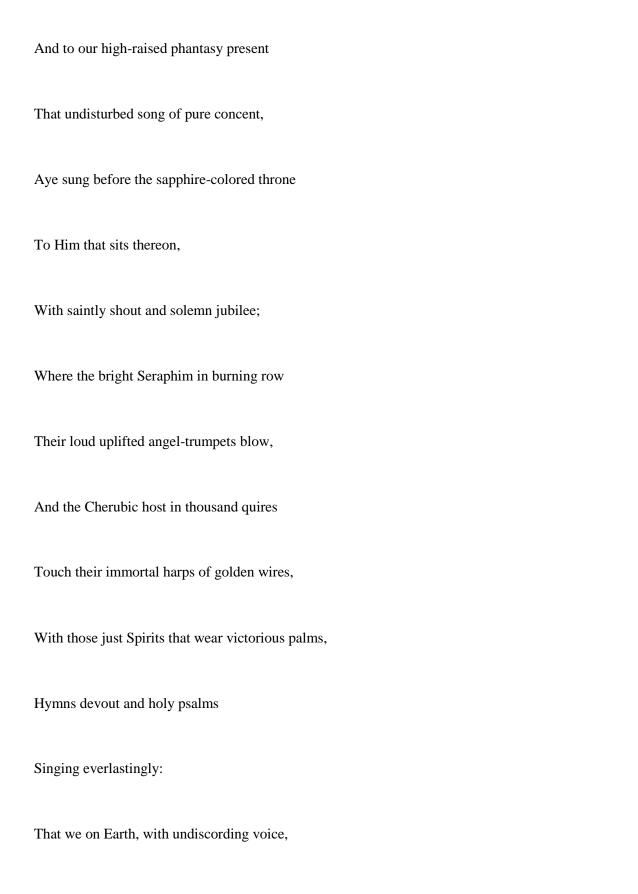
And turn the adamantine spindle round On which the fate of gods and men is wound. Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie, To lull the daughters of Necessity, And keep unsteady Nature to her law, And the low world in measured motion draw After the heavenly tune, which none can hear Of human mould with gross unpurged ear. And yet such music worthiest were to blaze The peerless height of her immortal praise Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit, If my inferior hand or voice could hit Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,

Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.
II. SONG
O'er the smooth enamelled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
Follow me, as I sing
And touch the warbled string:
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof
Follow me.

I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendor as befits
Her deity.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.
III. SONG
Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lilied banks;
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.

From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the Lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.
AT A SOLEMN MUSIC
Blest pair of Sirens, pledges of Heaven's joy,
Sphere-born harmonious sisters, Voice and Verse,
Wed your divine sounds, and mixed power employ,

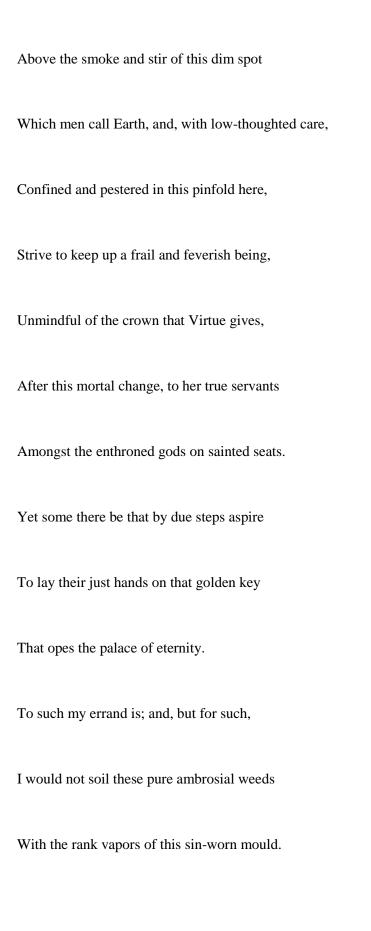
Dead things with inbreathed sense able to pierce;

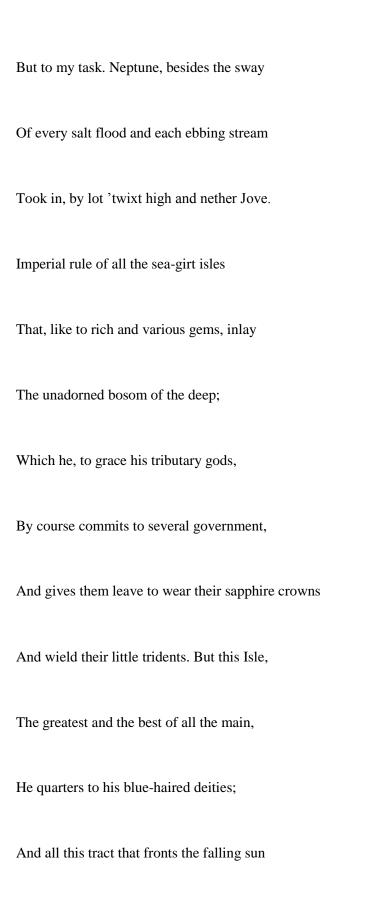


May rightly answer that melodious noise;
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarred against nature's chime, and with harsh din
Broke the fair music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motion swayed
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
O, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God ere long
To his celestial consort us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light!

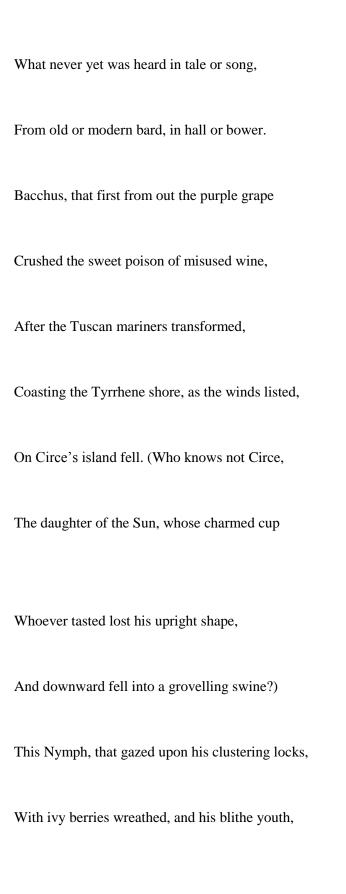
COMUS

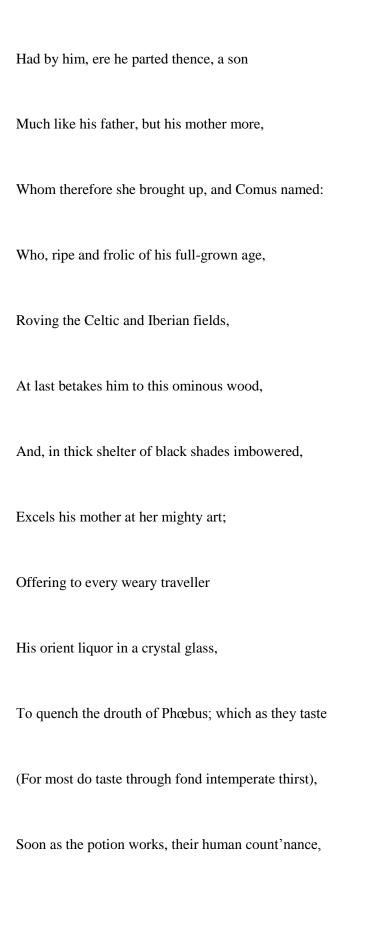
A MASQUE PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634.
THE PERSONS.
The Attendant Spirit, afterwards in the habit of Thyrsis.
Comus, with his Crew.
The Lady.
First Brother.
Second Brother.
Sabrina, the Nymph.
The first Scene discovers a wild wood.
The Attendant Spirit descends or enters.
Spirit. Before the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aerial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air.

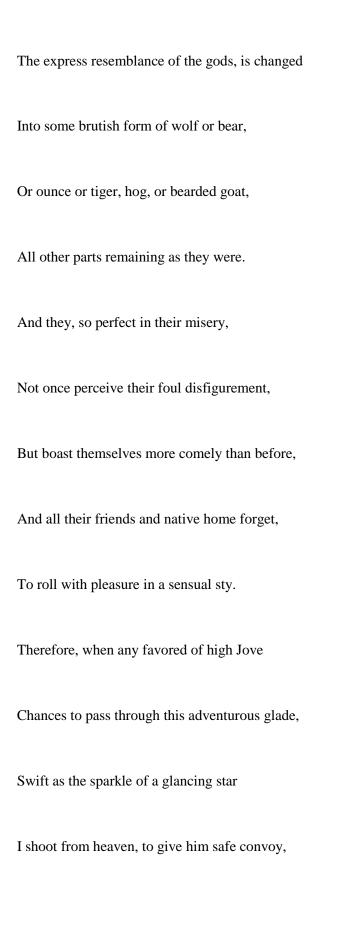


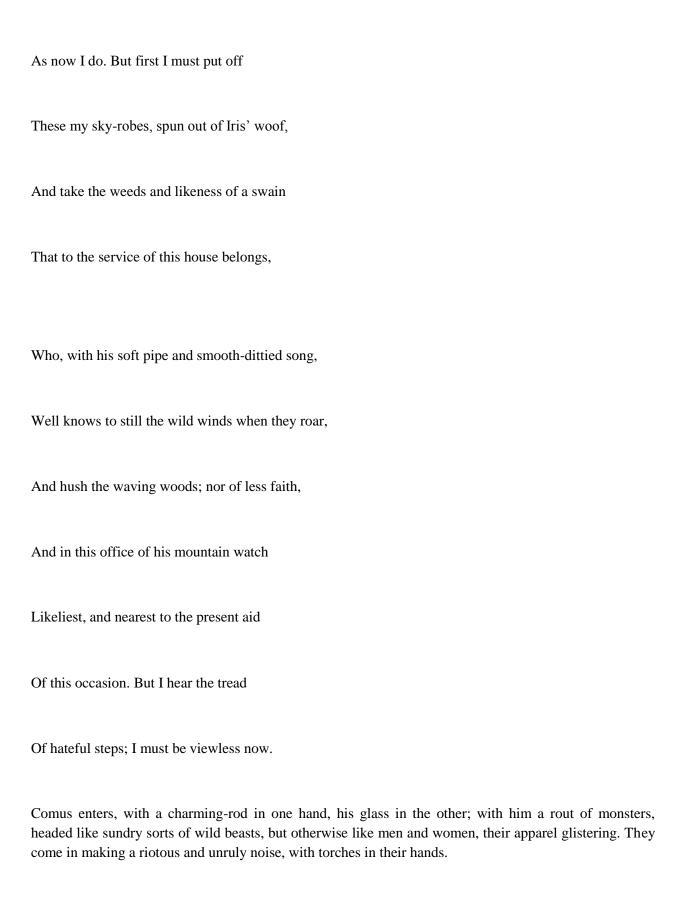


A noble Peer of mickle trust and power Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide An old and haughty nation, proud in arms: Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore, Are coming to attend their father's state, And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood, The nodding horror of those shady brows Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger; And here their tender age might suffer peril, But that, by quick command from sovran Jove, I was despatched for their defence and guard! And listen why; for I will tell you now



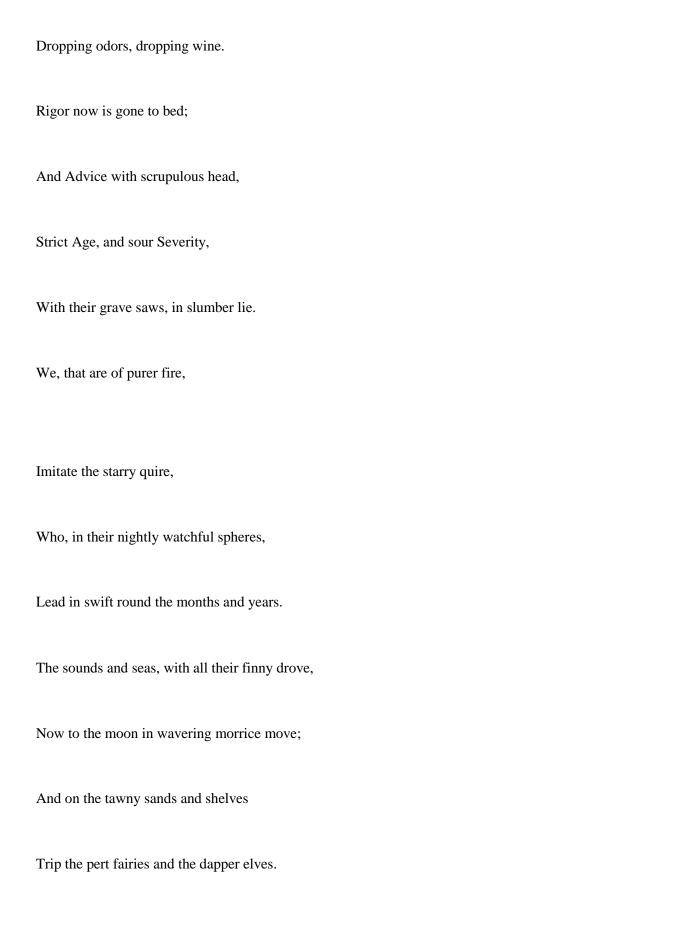


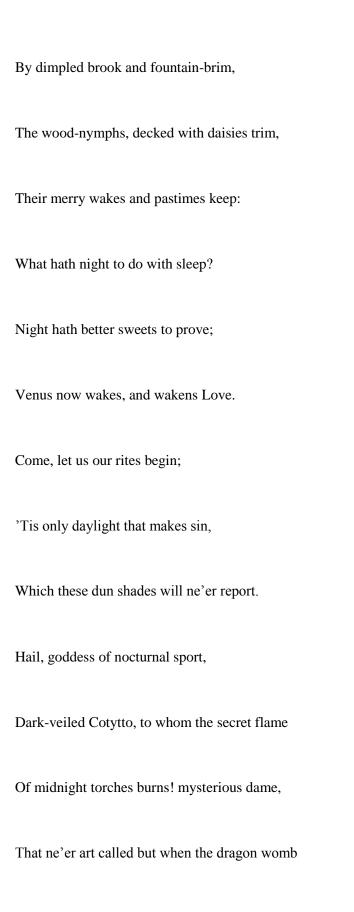


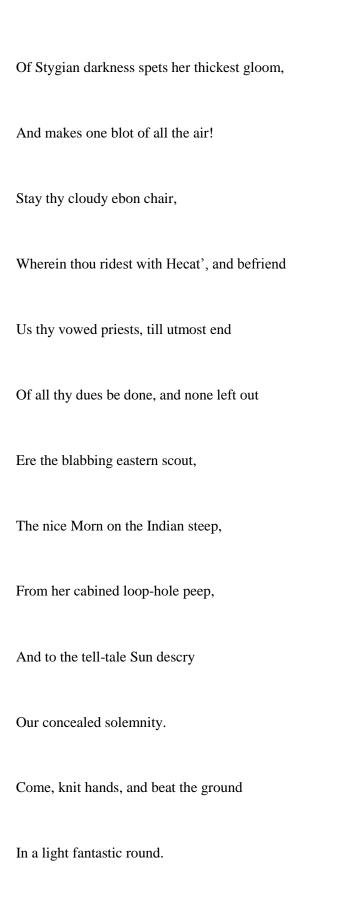


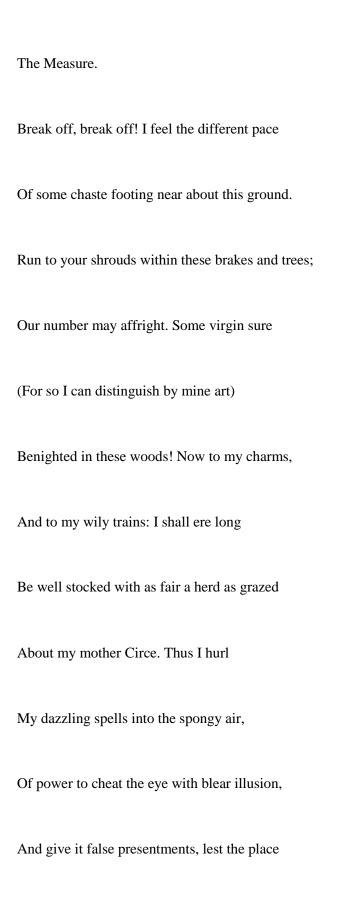
Now the top of heaven doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream:
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other goal
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsy dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosy twine,

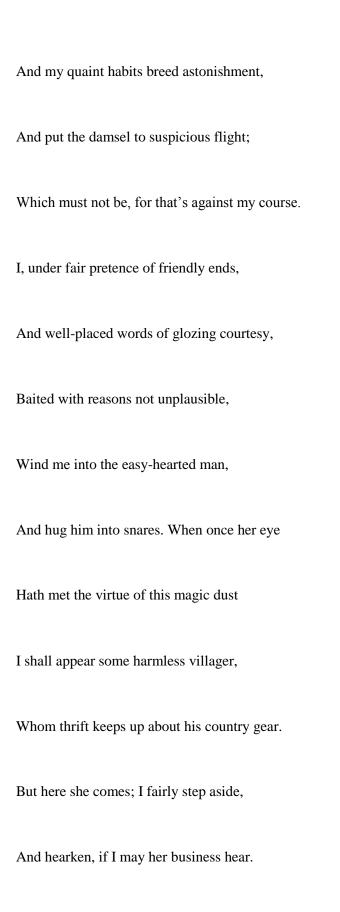
Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold

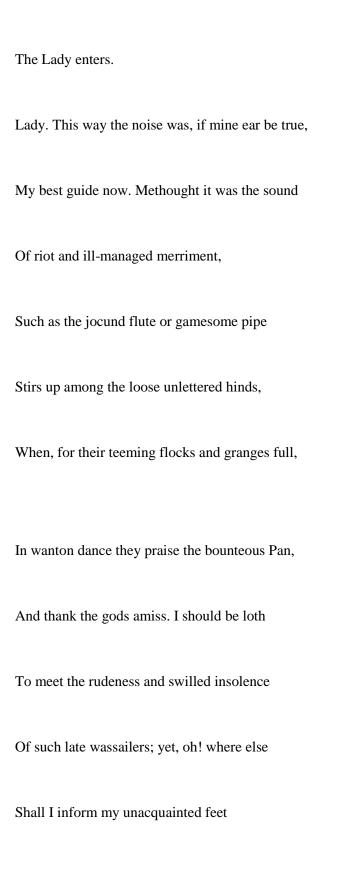


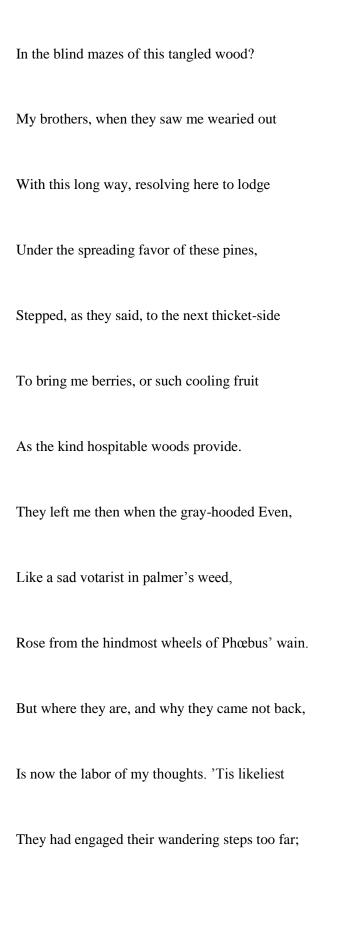


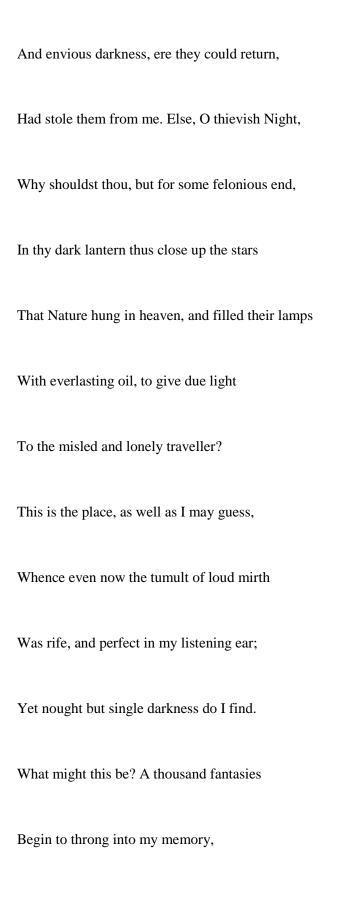


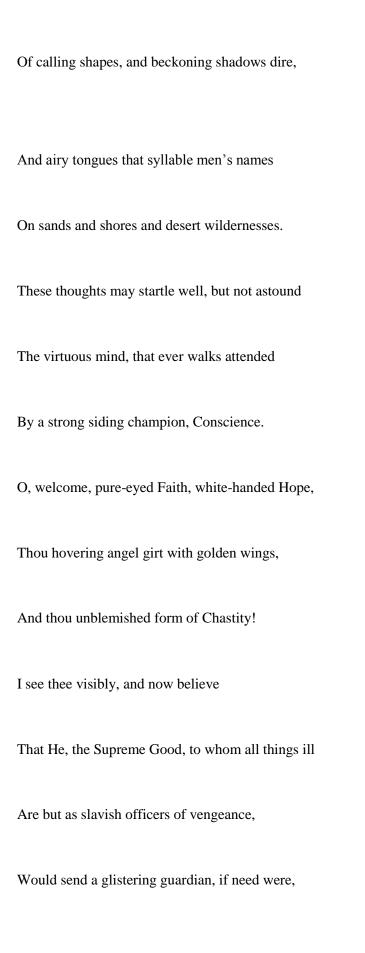






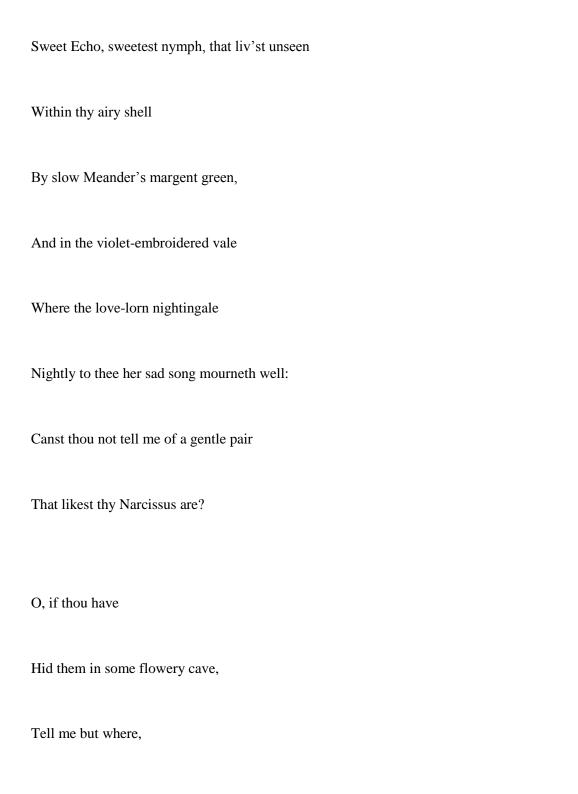




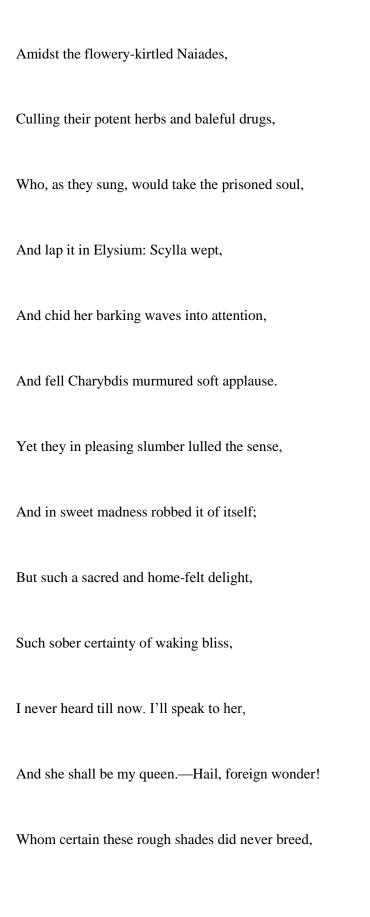


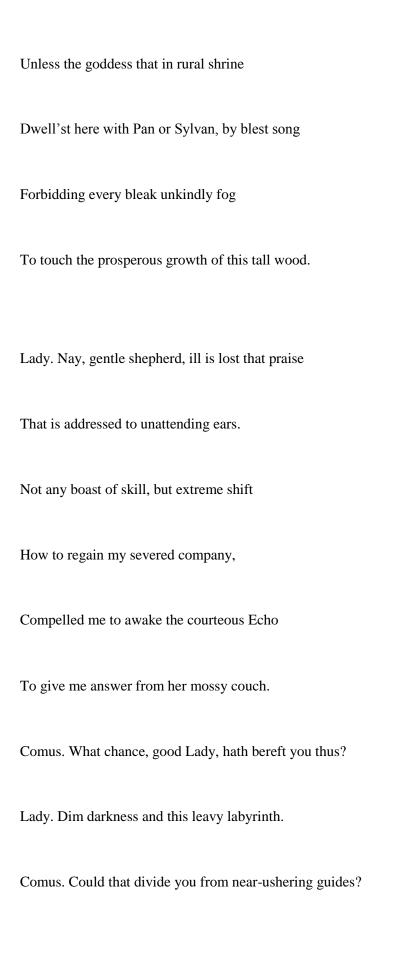
To keep my life and honor unassailed.... Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud Turn forth her silver lining on the night? I did not err: there does a sable cloud Turn forth her silver lining on the night, And casts a gleam over this tufted grove. I cannot hallo to my brothers, but Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest I'll venture; for my new-enlivened spirits Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

SONG

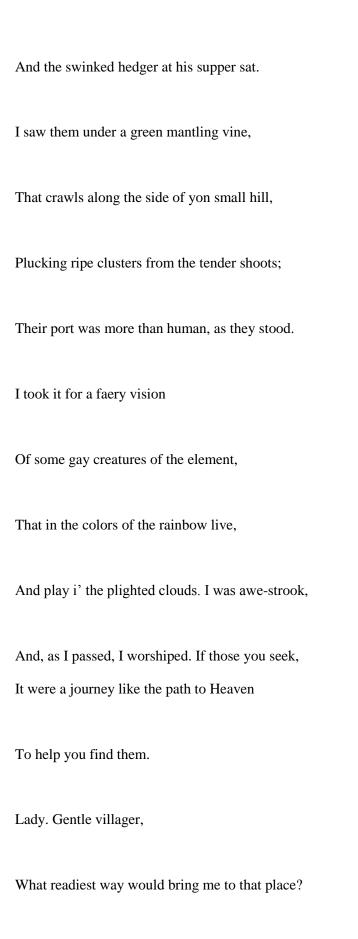


Sweet Queen of Parley, Daughter of the Sphere!
So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies!
Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smiled! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,



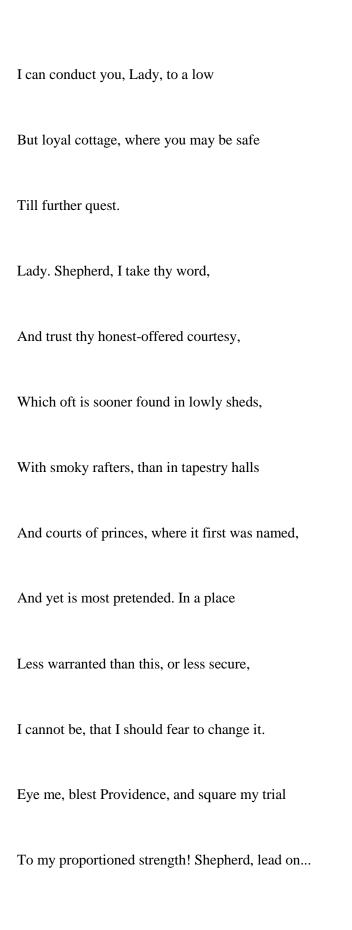


Lady. They left me weary on a grassy turf. Comus. By falsehood, or discourtesy, or why? Lady. To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring. Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady? Lady. They were but twain, and purposed quick return. Comus. Perhaps forestalling night prevented them. Lady. How easy my misfortune is to hit! Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need? Lady. No less than if I should my brothers lose. Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom? Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips. Comus. Two such I saw, what time the labored ox In his loose traces from the furrow came,



Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point. Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose, In such a scant allowance of star-light, Would overtask the best land-pilot's art, Without the sure guess of well-practised feet. Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green, Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood, And every bosky bourn from side to side, My daily walks and ancient neighborhood; And, if your stray attendance be yet lodged, Or shroud within these limits, I shall know Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark

From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,



THE TWO BROTHERS

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades;
Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of some clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levelled rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.

Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes

Be barred that happiness, might we but hear

The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,

Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,

Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock

Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,

'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,

In this close dungeon of innumerous boughs.

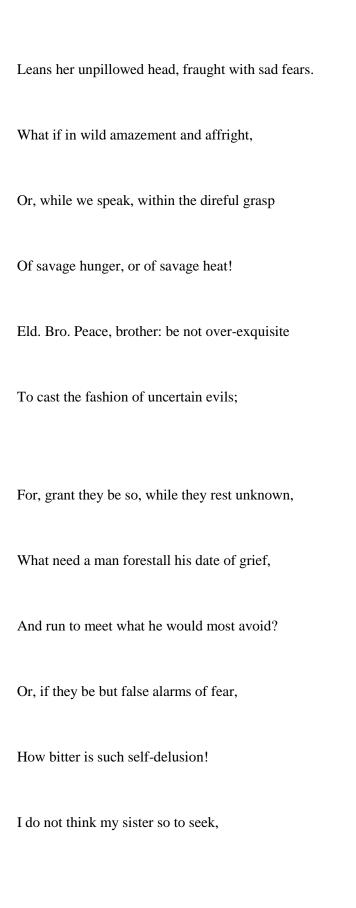
But, Oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister!

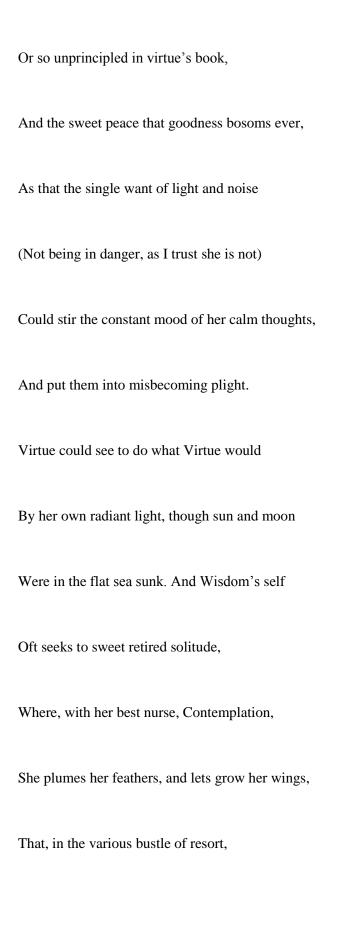
Where may she wander now, whither betake her

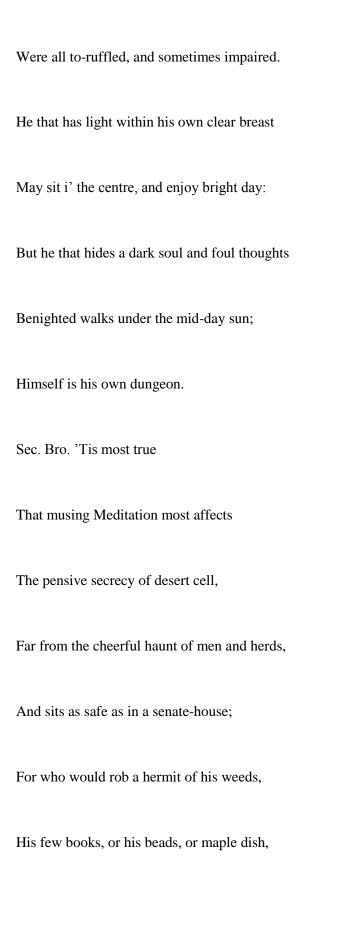
From the chill dew, amongst rude burs and thistles?

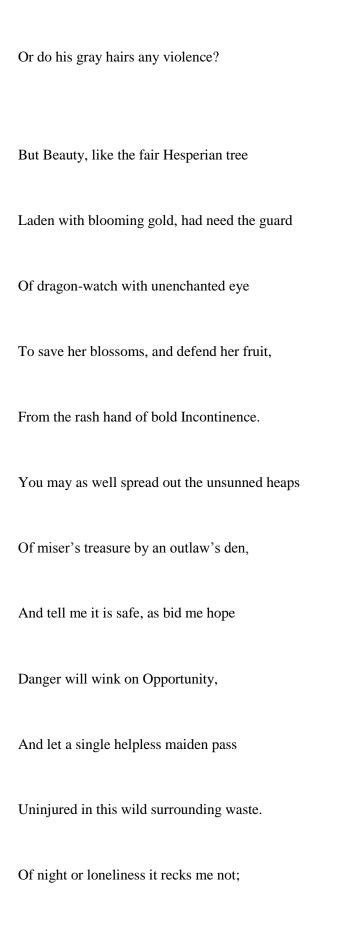
Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,

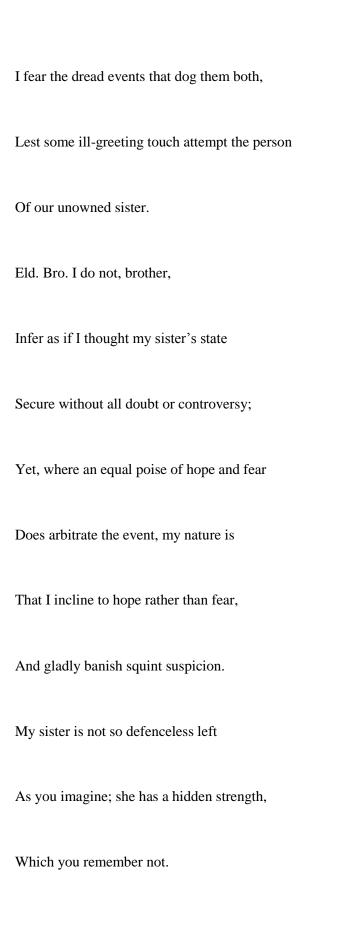
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm

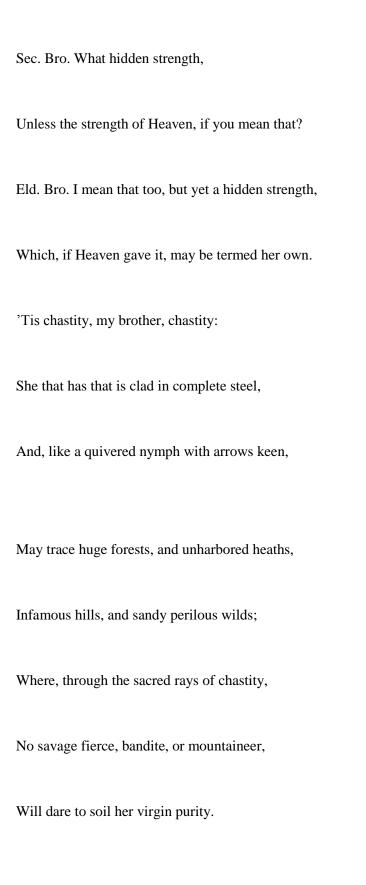


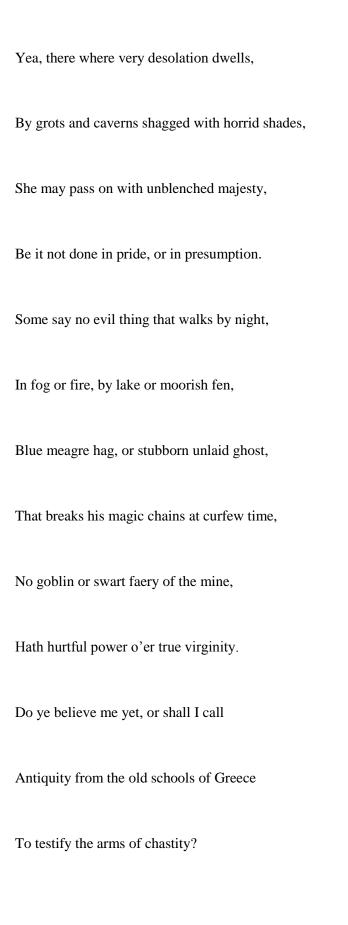




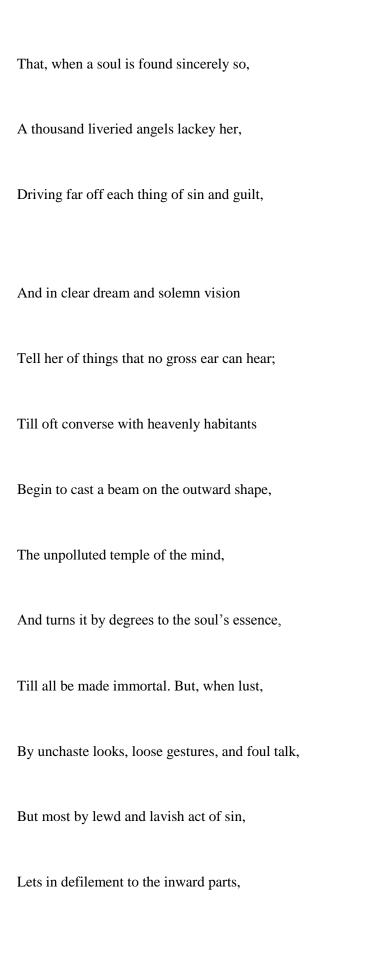


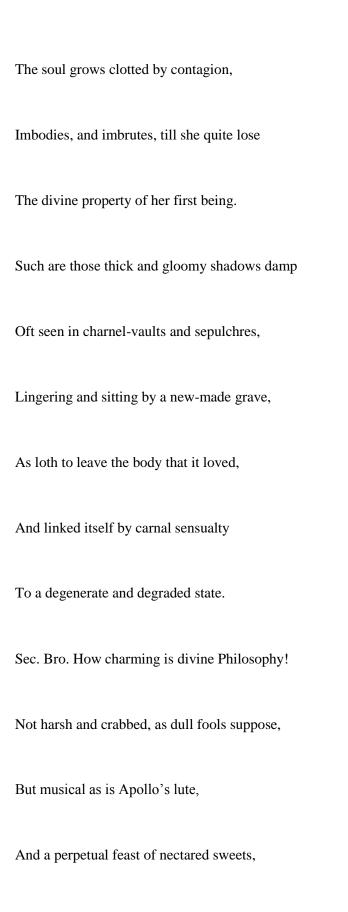


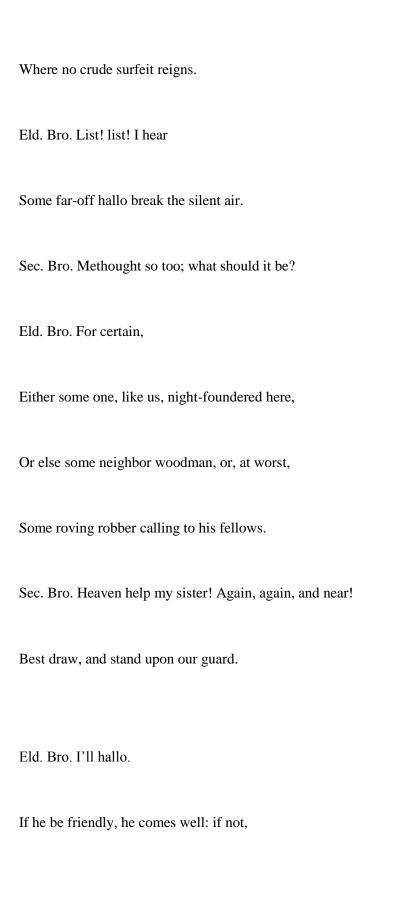


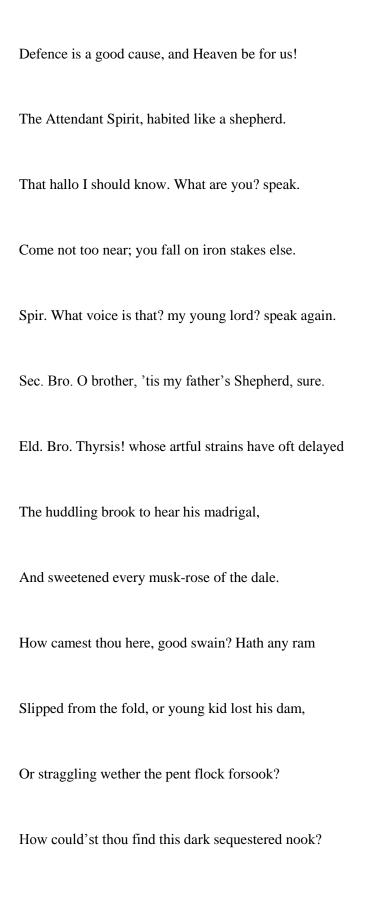


Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen forever chaste,
Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men
Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
But rigid looks of chaste austerity,
And noble grace that dashed brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank awe?
So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity

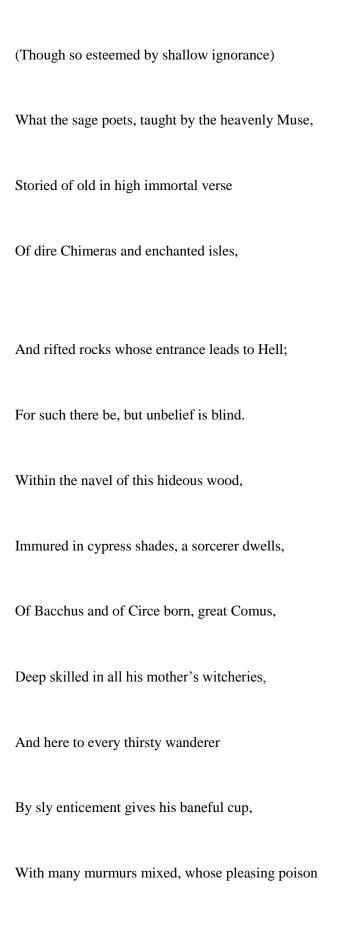


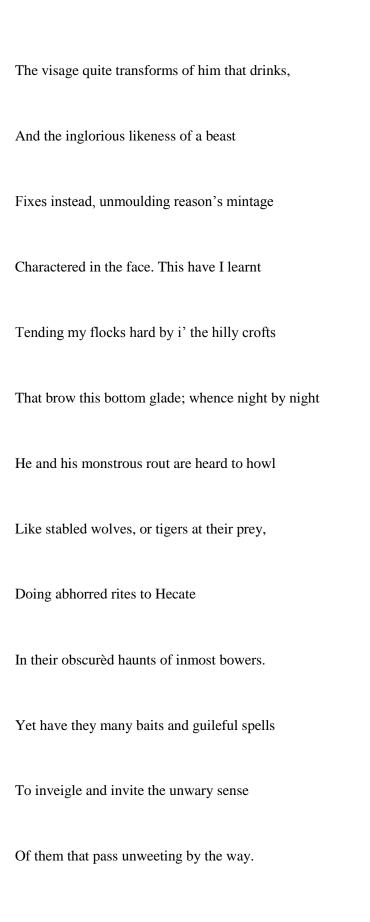


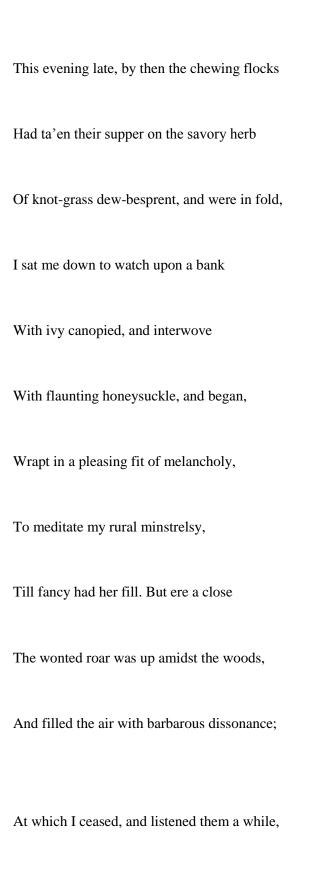


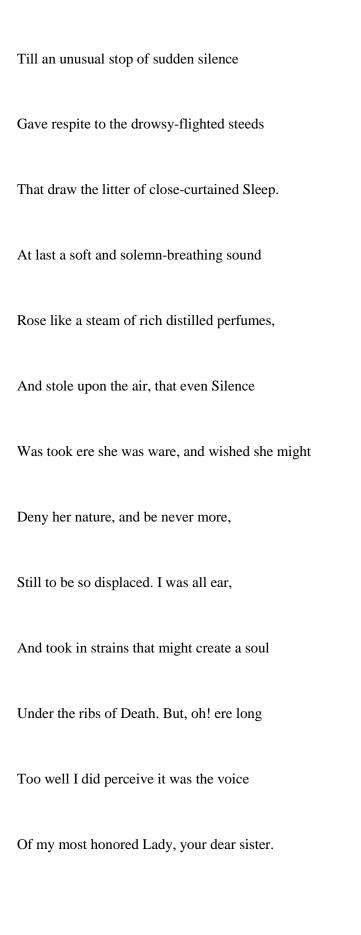


Spir. O my loved master's heir, and his next joy, I came not here on such a trivial toy As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth Of pilfering wolf; not all the fleecy wealth That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought To this my errand, and the care it brought. But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she? How chance she is not in your company? Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true. Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prithee briefly shew. Spir. I'll tell ye. 'Tis not vain or fabulous

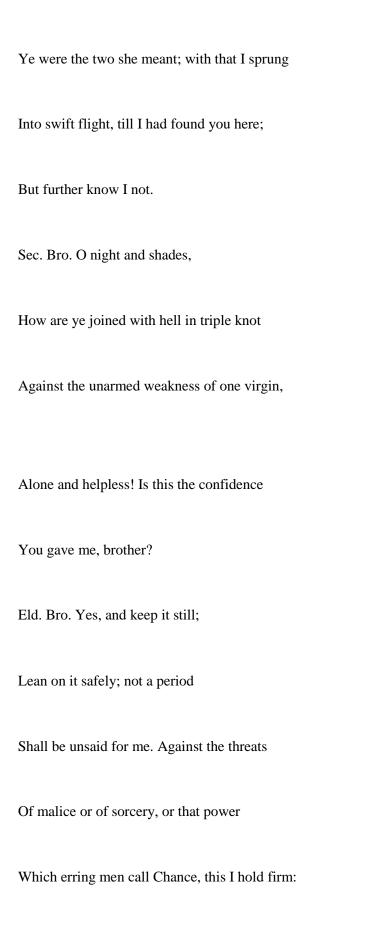


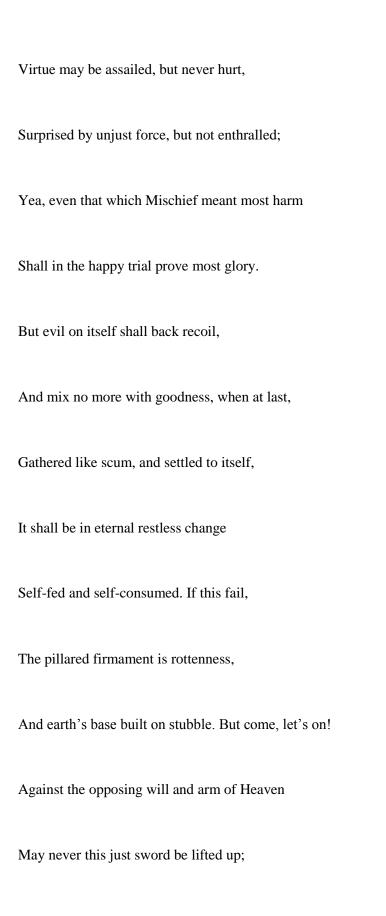


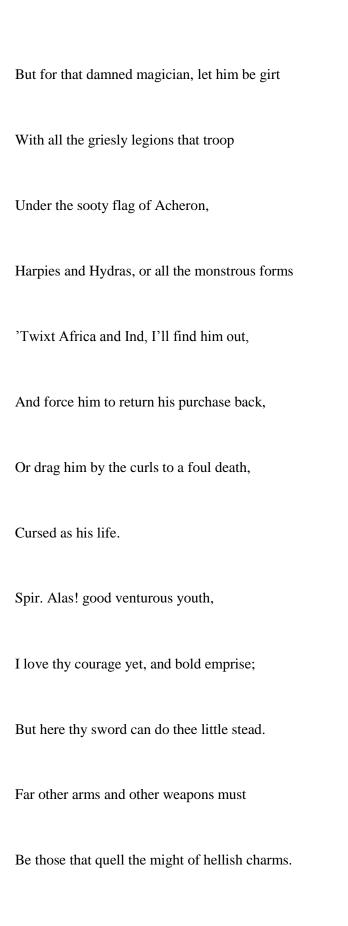


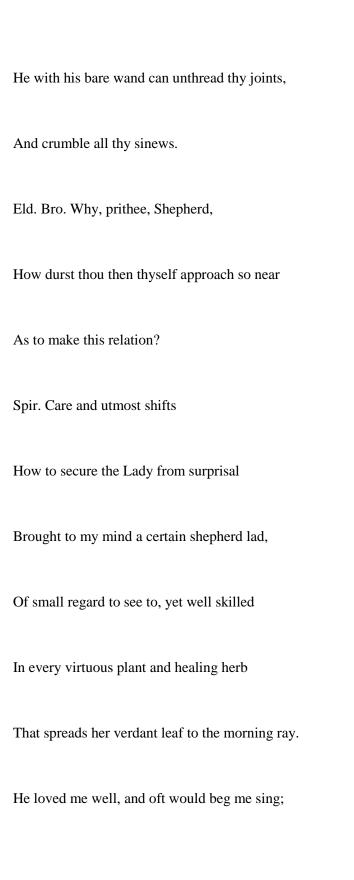


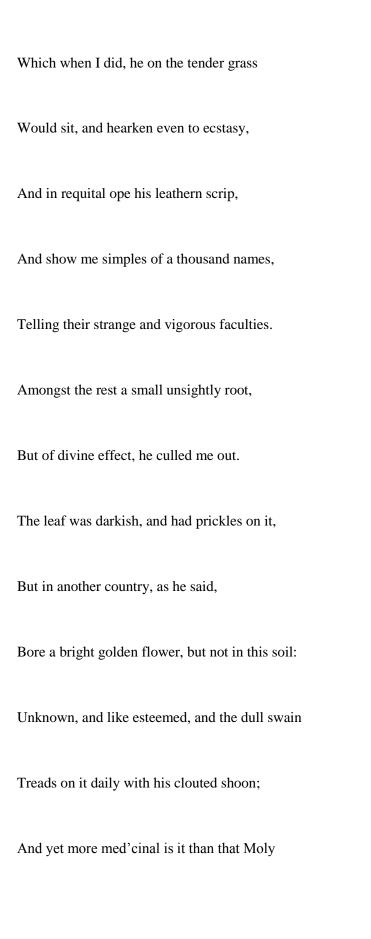
Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear; And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I, 'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!' Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste, Through paths and turnings often trod by day, Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise (For so by certain signs I knew), had met Already, ere my best speed could prevent, The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey; Who gently asked if he had seen such two, Supposing him some neighbor villager. Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed

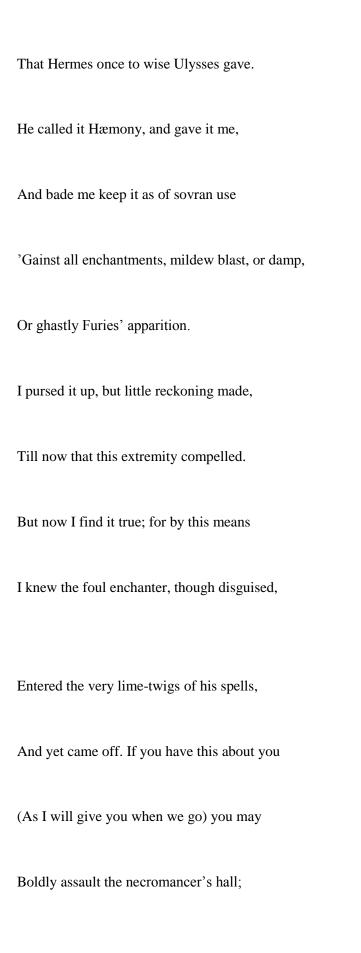


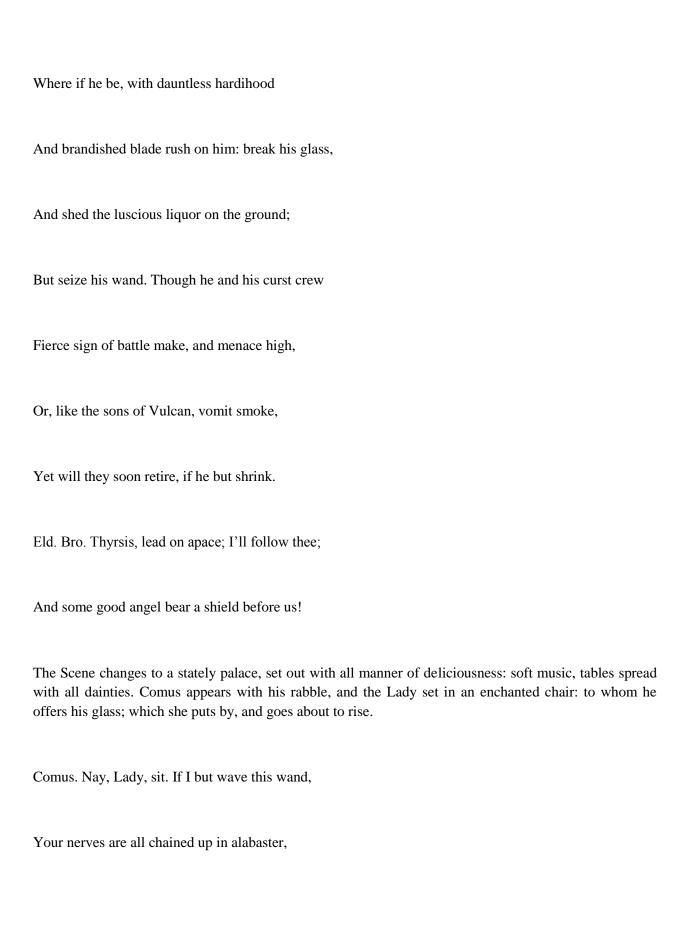


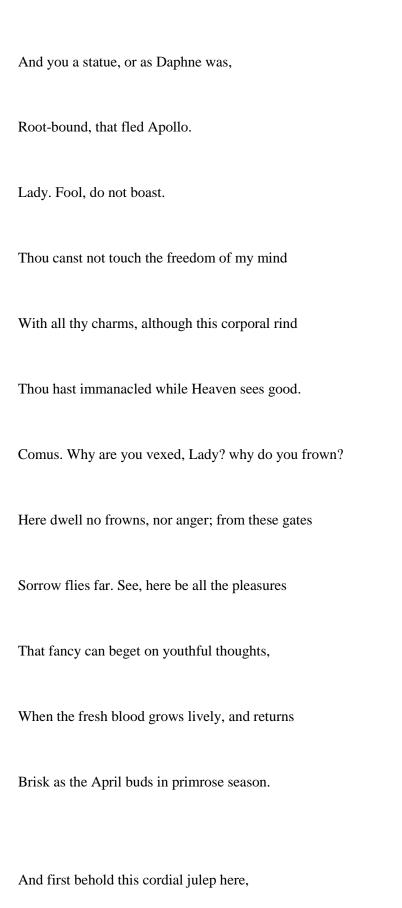


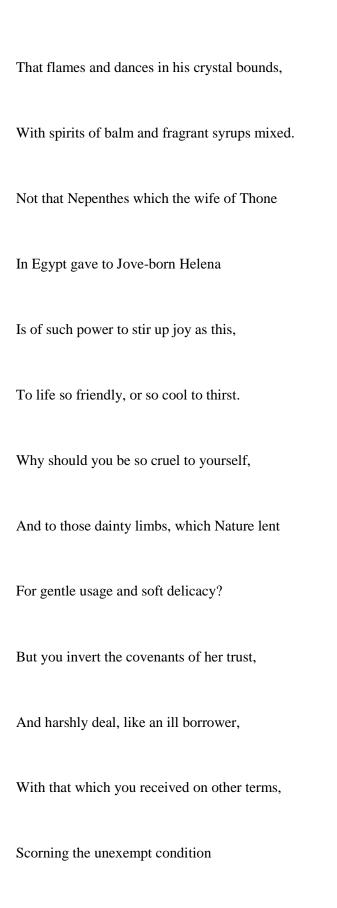


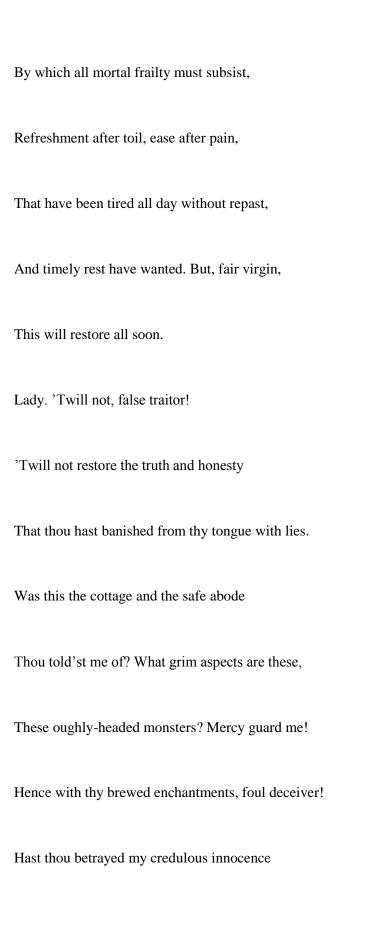


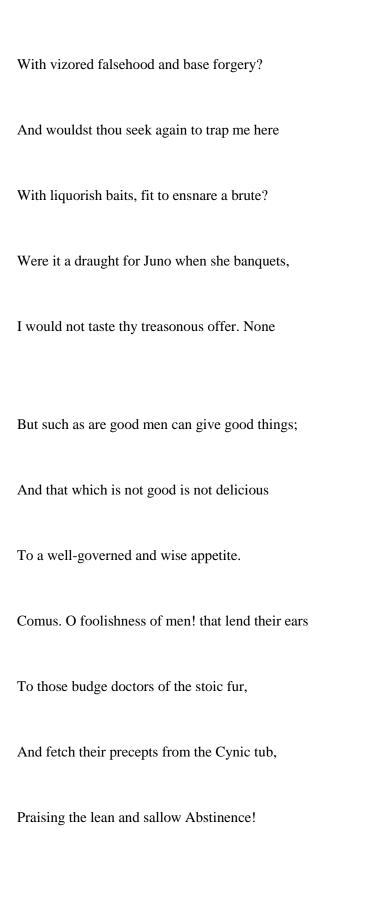


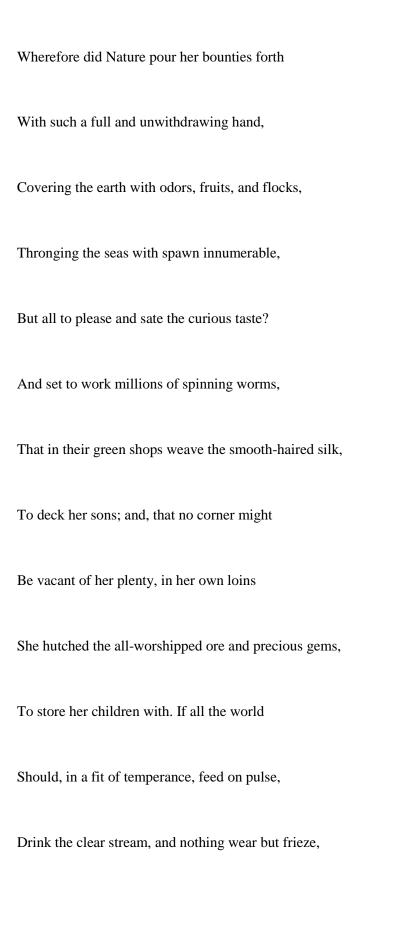


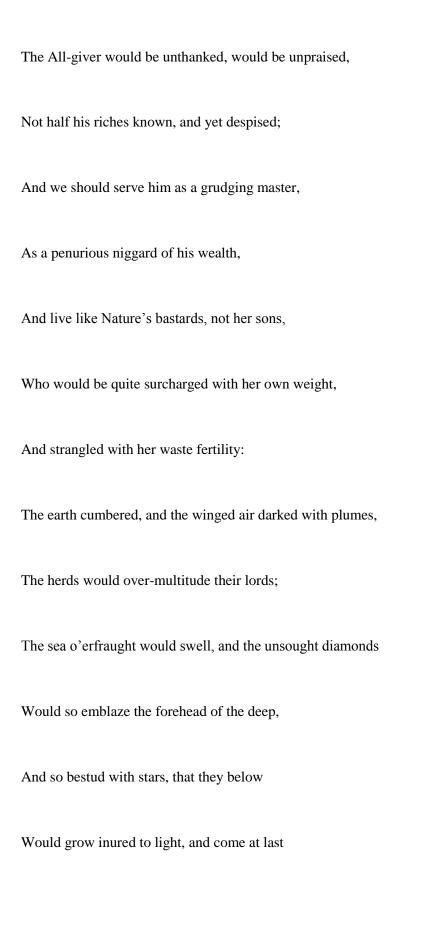






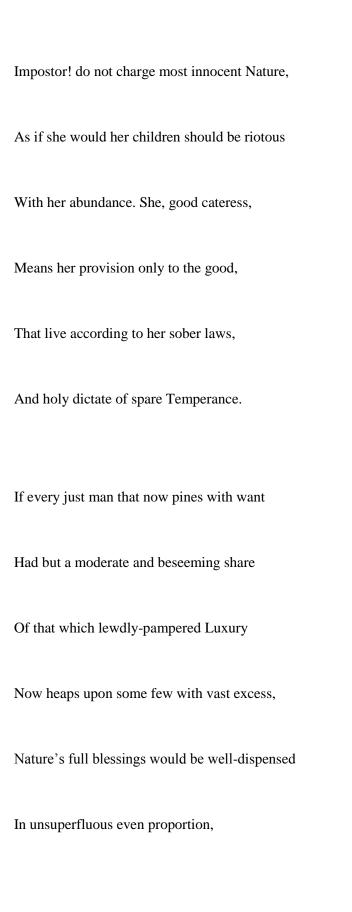


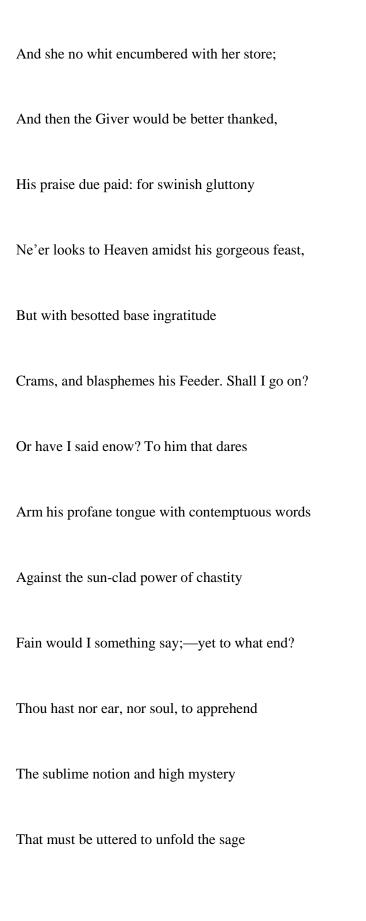


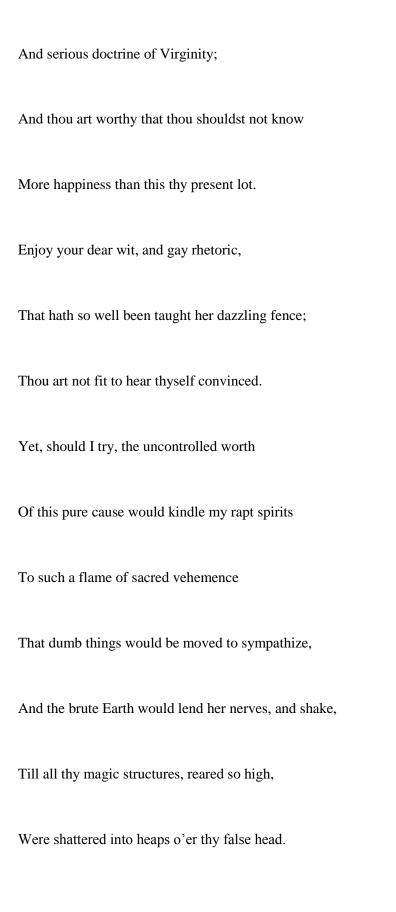


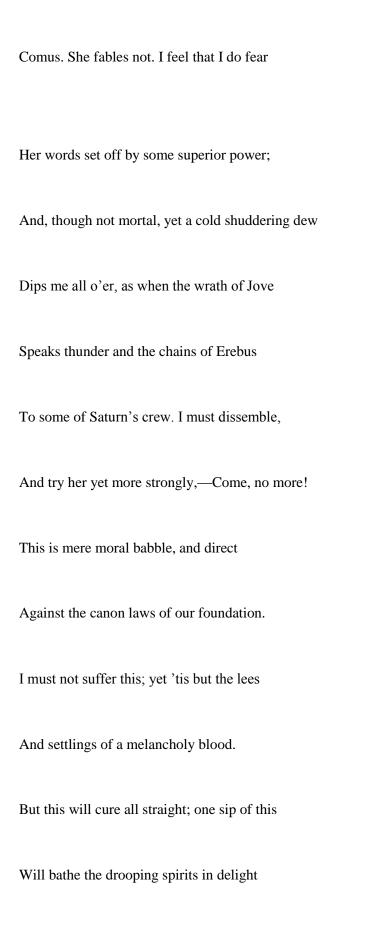
To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows. List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozened With that same vaunted name, Virginity. Beauty is Nature's coin; must not be hoarded, But must be current; and the good thereof Consists in mutual and partaken bliss, Unsavory in the enjoyment of itself. If you let slip time, like a neglected rose It withers on the stalk with languished head. Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities, Where most may wonder at the workmanship. It is for homely features to keep home;

They had their name thence: coarse complexions And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool. What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that, Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn? There was another meaning in these gifts; Think what, and be advised; you are but young yet. Lady. I had not thought to have unlocked my lips In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes, Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb. I hate when vice can bolt her arguments And virtue has no tongue to check her pride.

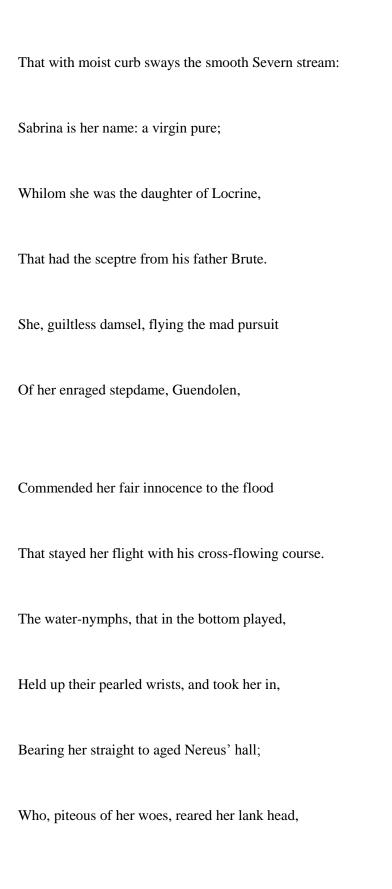






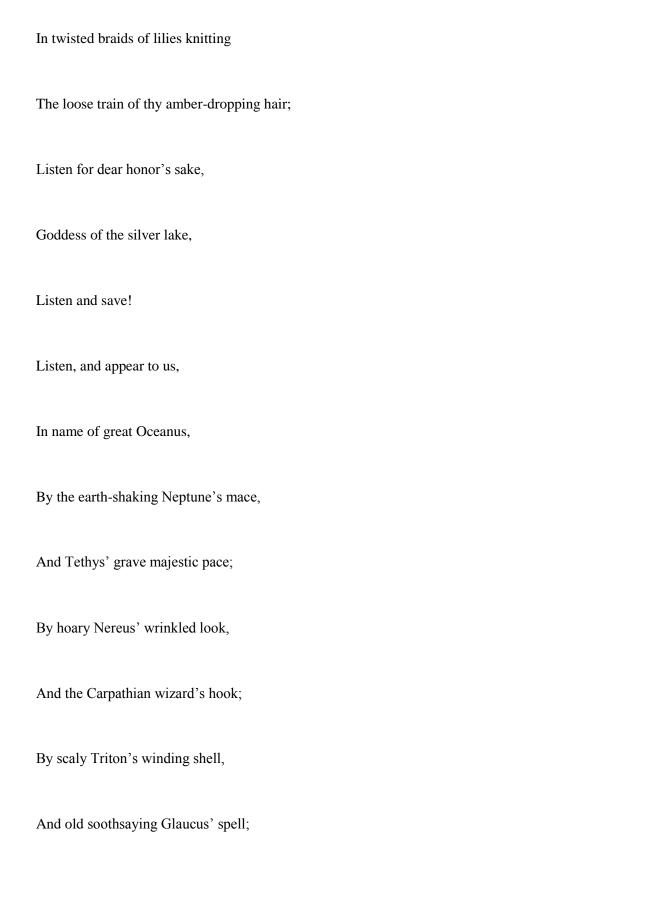


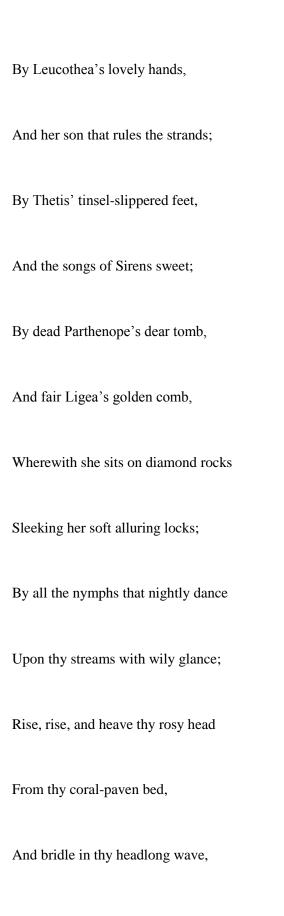
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste
The Brothers rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The Attendant Spirit comes in.
Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatched his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturbed; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,



And gave her to his daughters to imbathe In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel, And through the porch and inlet of each sense Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived, And underwent a quick immortal change, Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve Visits the herds along the twilight meadows, Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signs That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make, Which she with precious vialed liquors heals: For which the shepherds, at their festivals, Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,

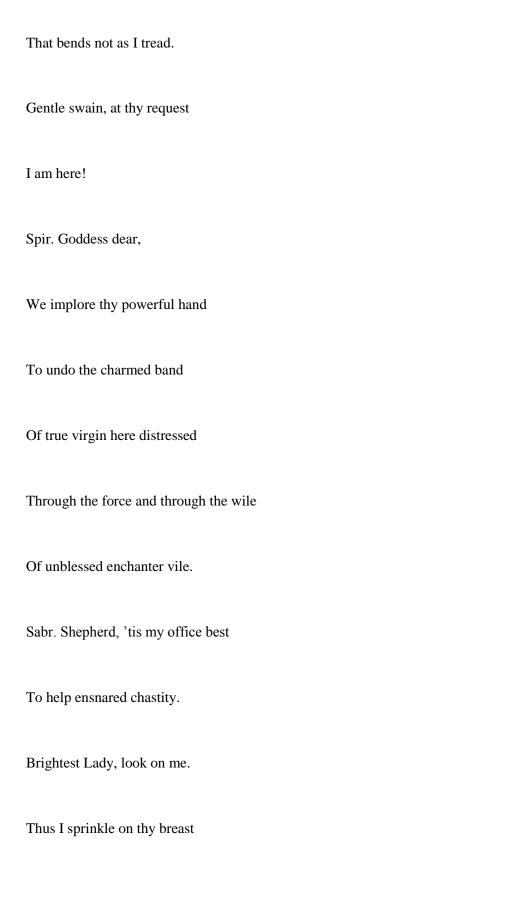
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
If she be right invoked in warbled song;
For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And add the power of some adjuring verse.
Song.
Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,

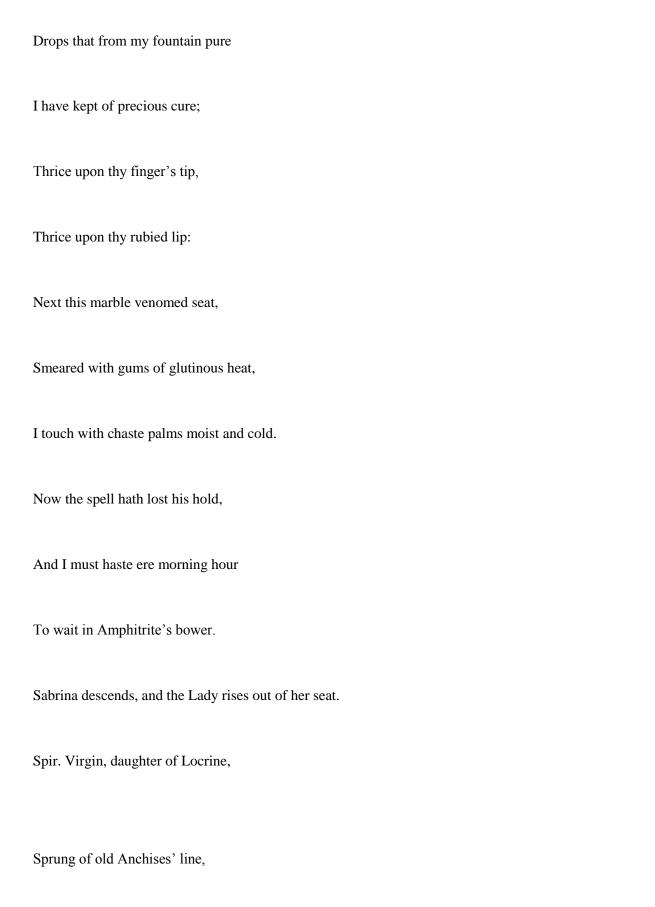


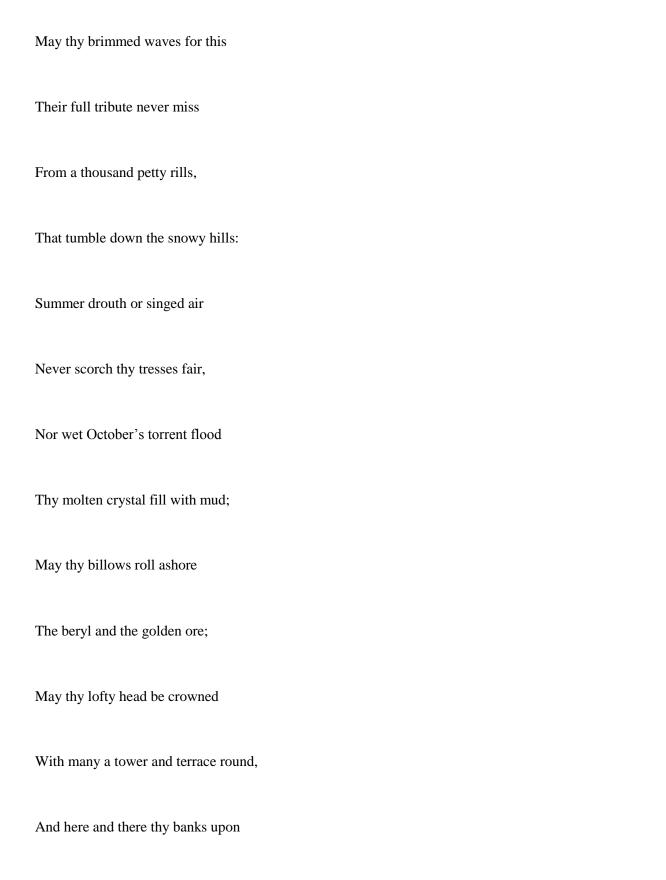


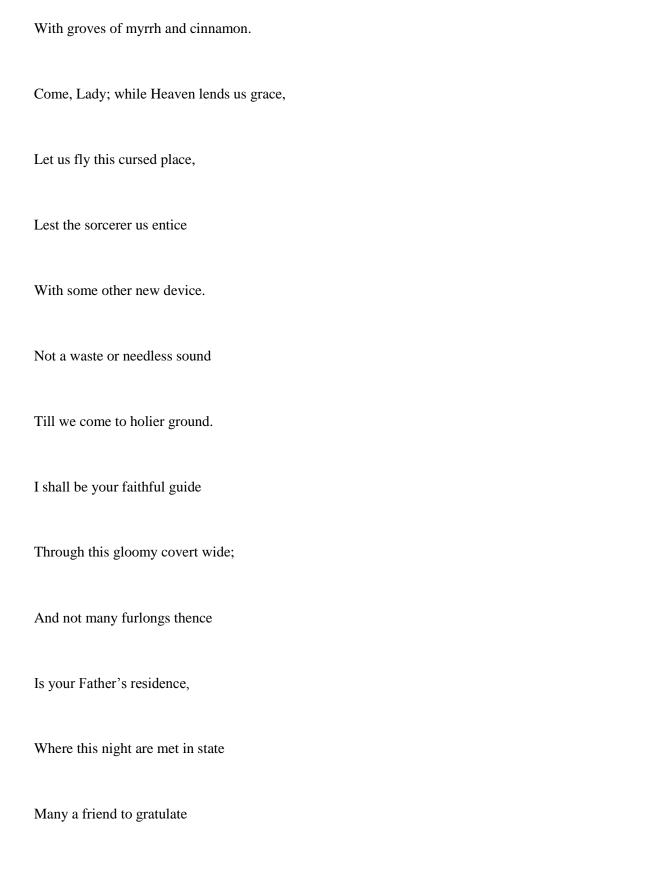
Listen and save!
Sabrina rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.
By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grow the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays:
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O'er the cowslip's velvet head,

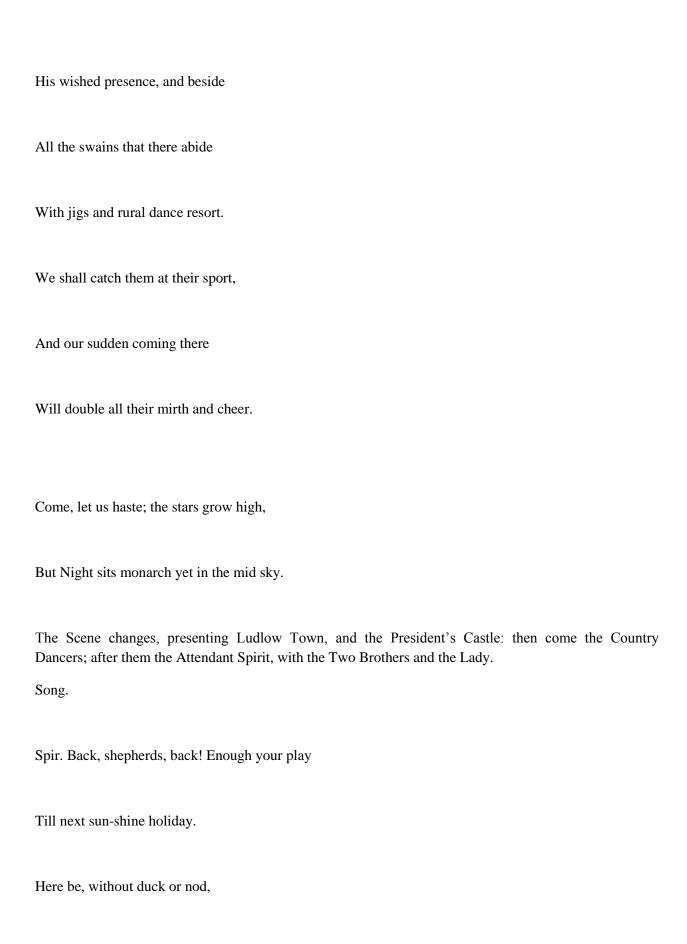
Till thou our summons answered have.

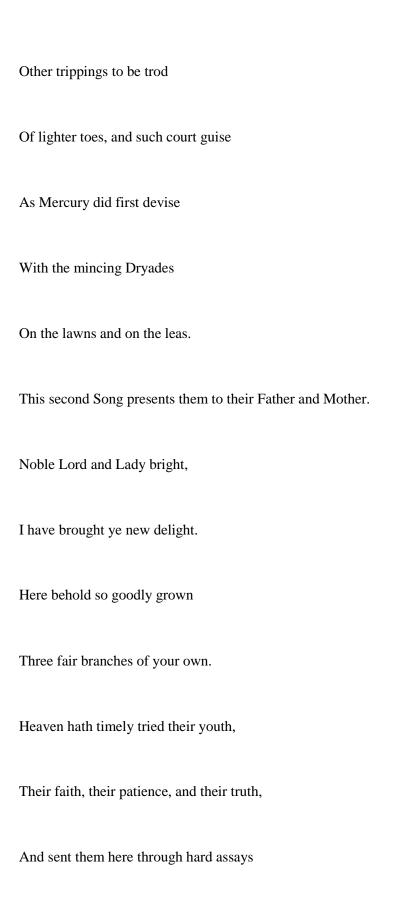


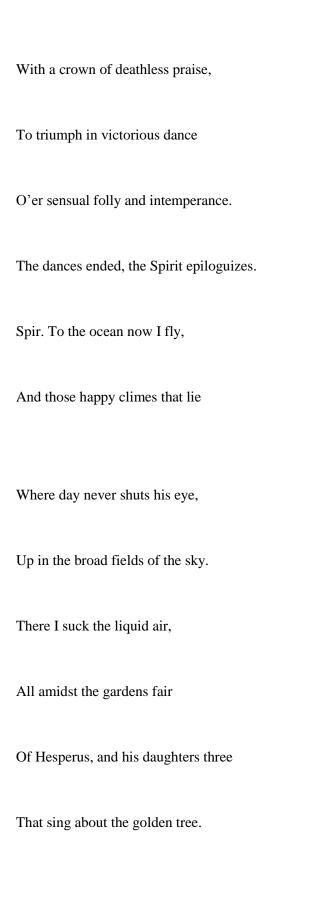




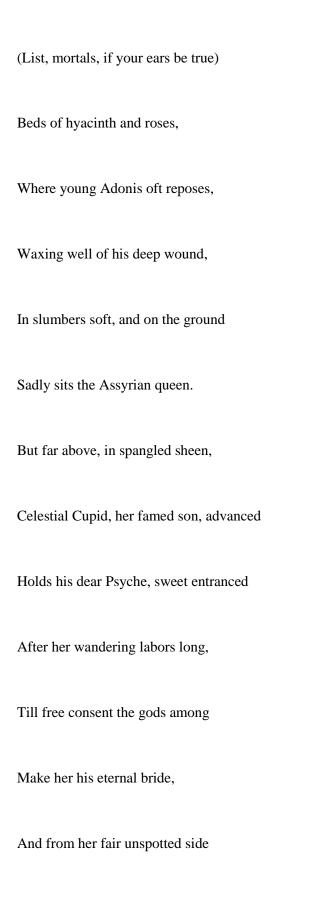


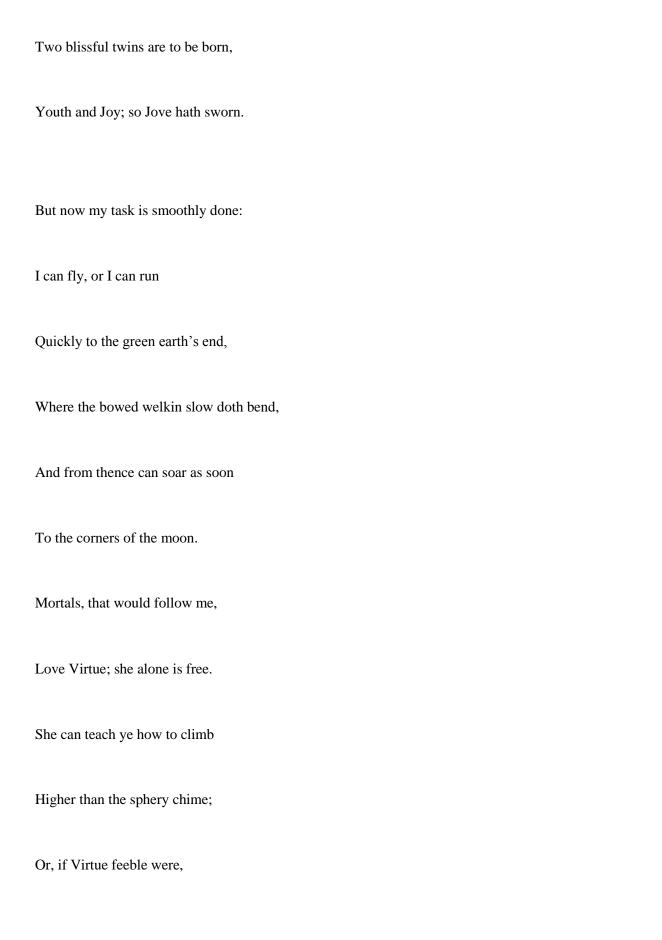






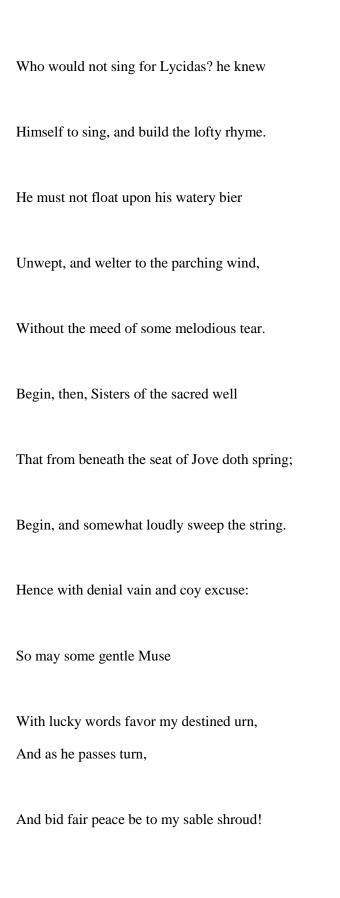
Along the crisped shades and bowers
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring;
The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwells,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hue Than her purfled scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
The stonenes will Lijoun dow

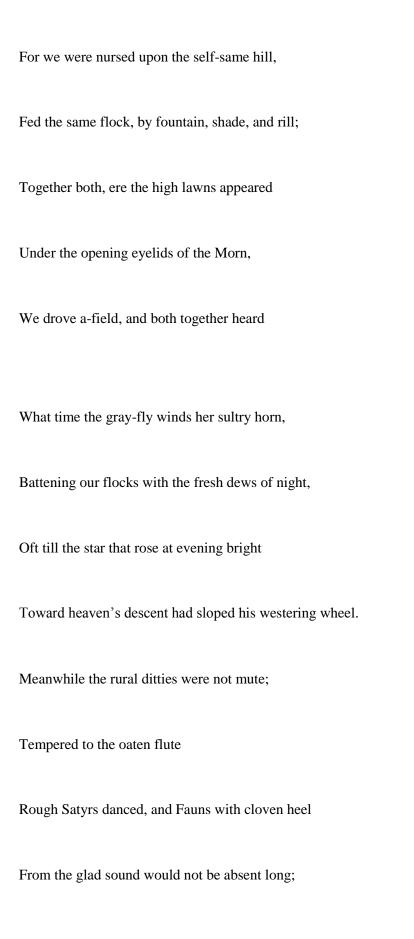


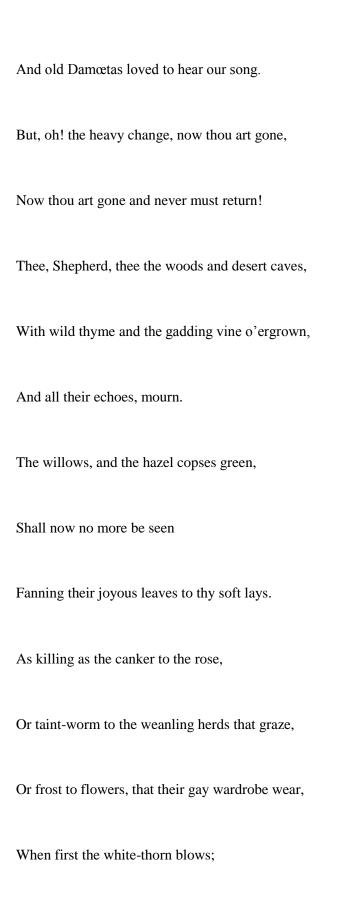


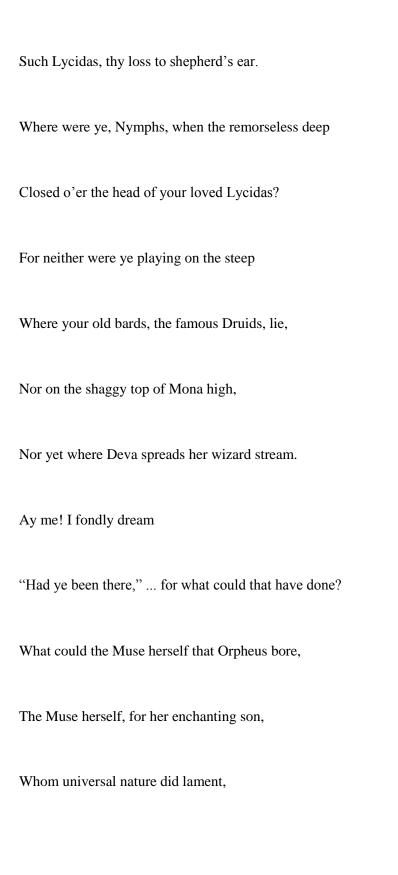
Heaven itself would stoop to her.
LYCIDAS
In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Cheste on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.
Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime

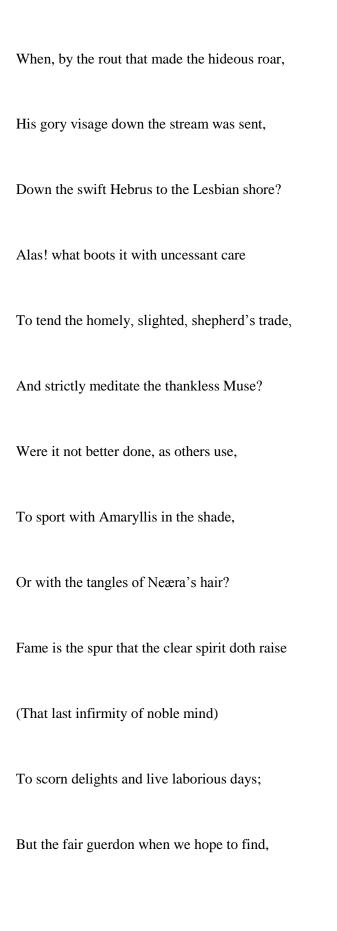
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.

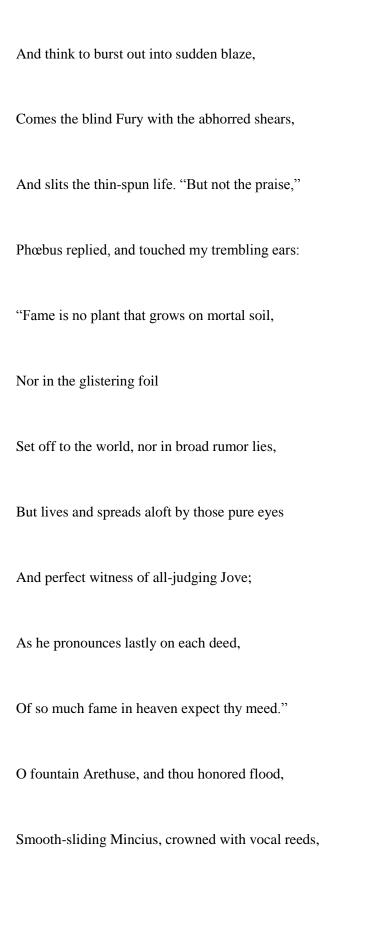


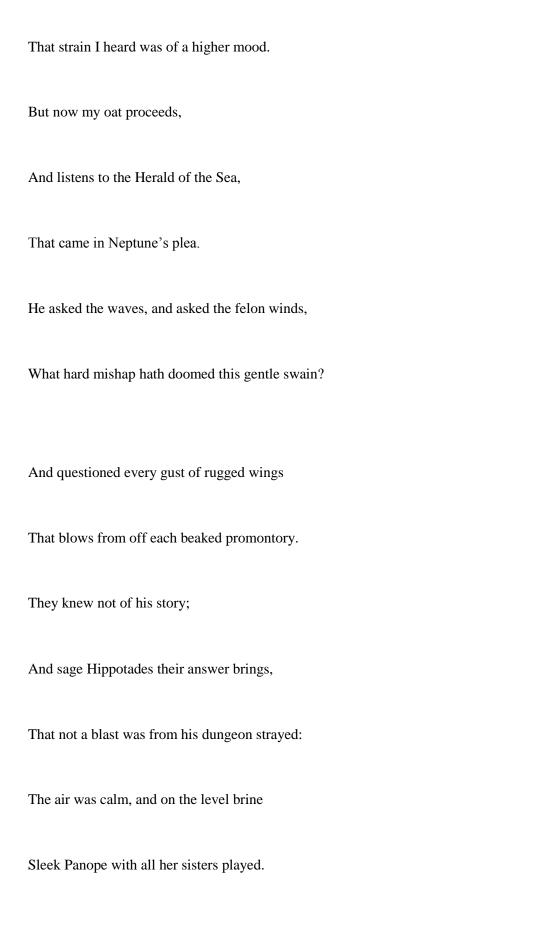


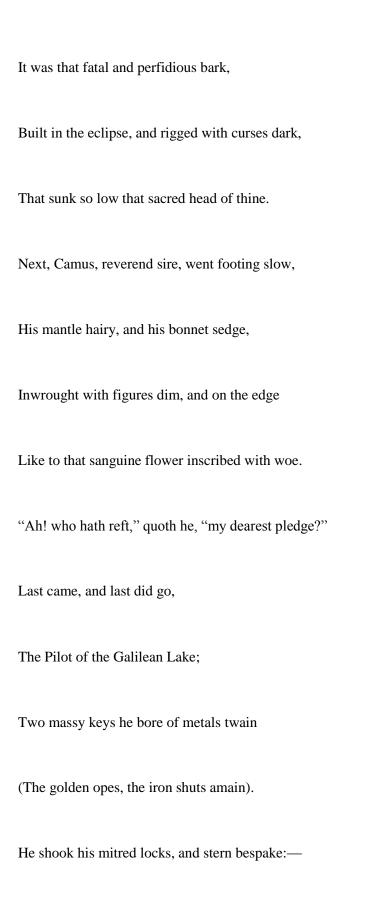


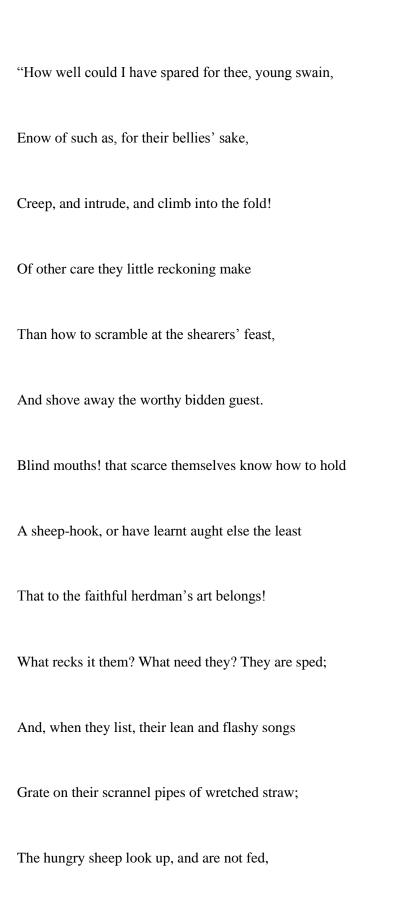


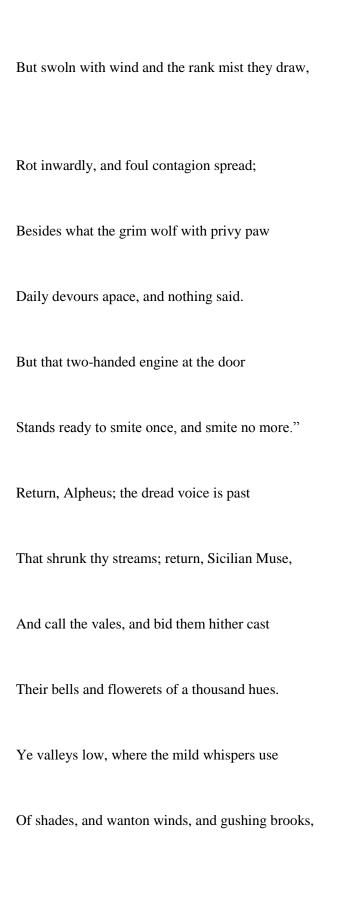


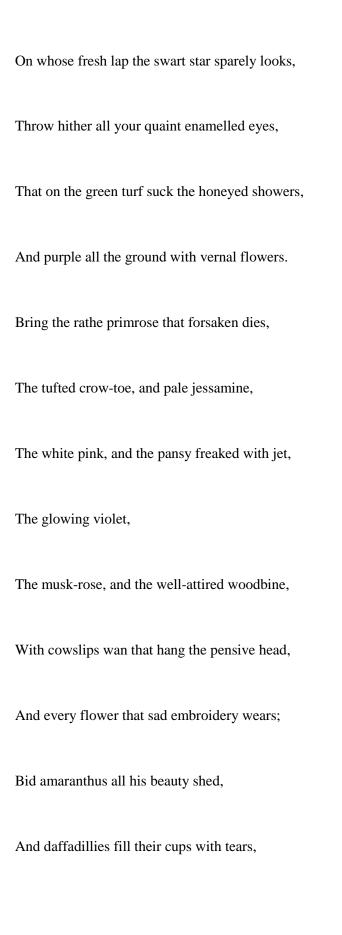


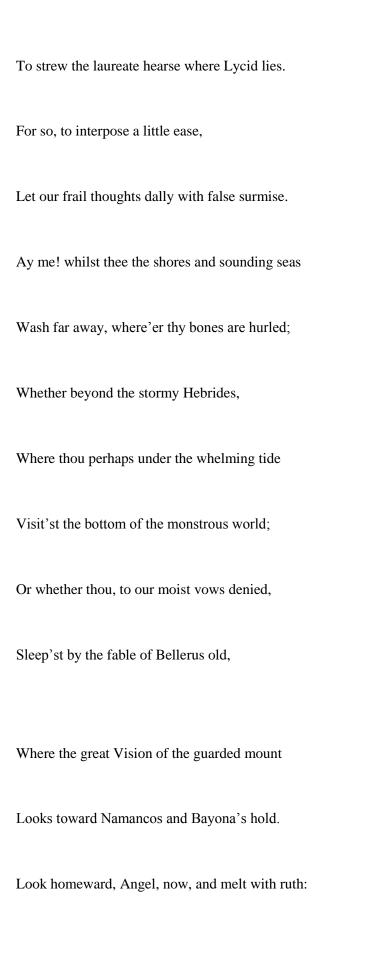


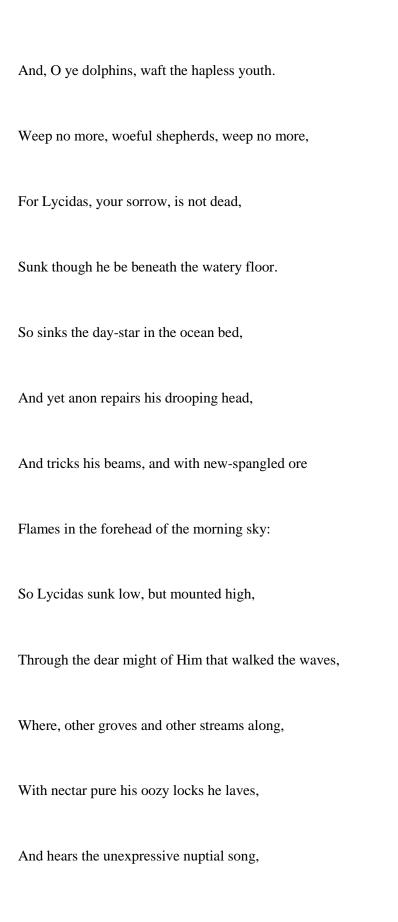


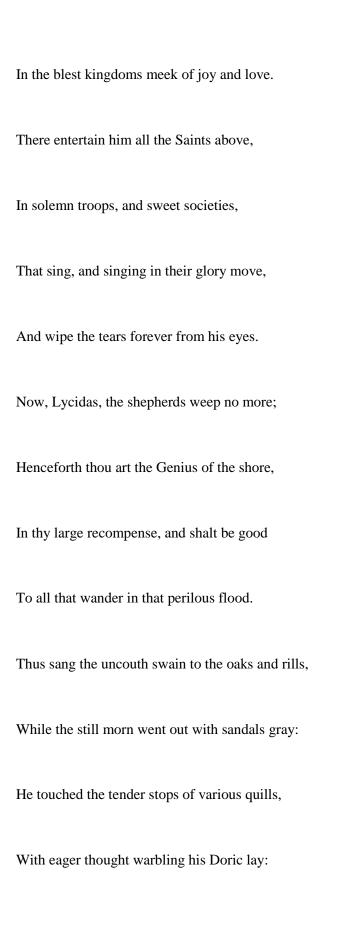






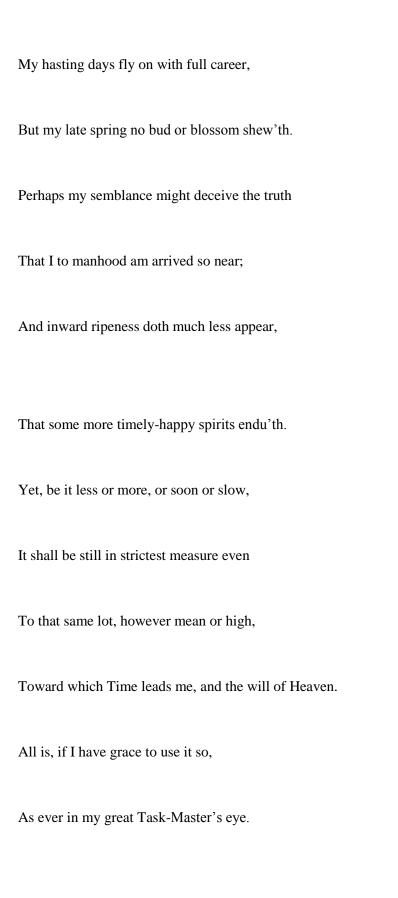






And now the sun had stretched out all the hills, And now was dropt into the western bay. At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue; To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new. **SONNETS** I TO THE NIGHTINGALE O Nightingale that on yon bloomy spray Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still, Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill, While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May. Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day, First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,

Portend success in love. O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom, in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why.
Whether the Muse or Love called thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.
II
ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE
How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!



VIII

WHEN THE ASSAULT WAS INTENDED TO THE CITY

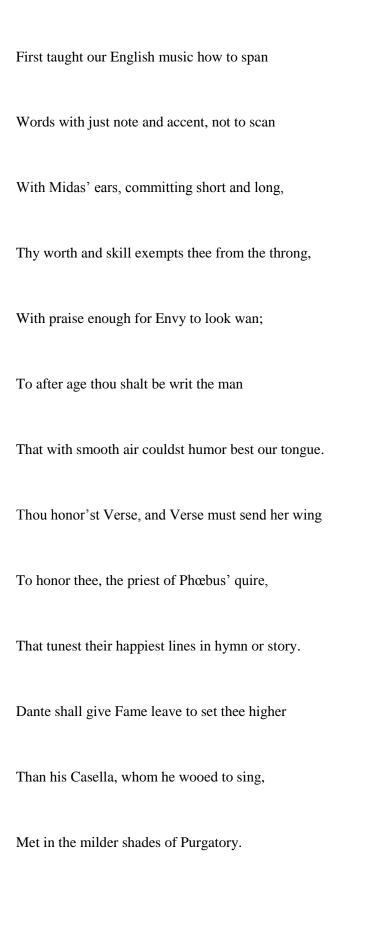
Captain or Colonel, or Knight in Arms,
Whose chance on these defenceless doors may seize,
If deed of honor did thee ever please,
Guard them, and him within protect from harms.
He can requite thee; for he knows the charms
That call fame on such gentle acts as these,
And he can spread thy name o'er lands and seas,
Whatever clime the sun's bright circle warms.
Lift not thy spear against the Muses' bower:
The great Emathian conqueror bid spare

The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
Went to the ground; and the repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.
IX
TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY
Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labor up the hill of heavenly Truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.

Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, Virgin wise, and pure.
X TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY
TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY
TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY Daughter to that good Earl, once President
TO THE LADY MARGARET LEY Daughter to that good Earl, once President Of England's Council and her Treasury,

Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent,
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet:
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate them true
And to possess them, honored Margaret.
XIII
23111
TO MR. H. LAWES ON HIS AIRS

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song



$\mathbf{X}\mathbf{V}$

ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX, AT THE SIEGE OF COLCHESTER

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumors loud that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,

And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valor bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.
XVI
TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, MAY, 1652,
ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL
Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crowned Fortune proud

While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.
XVII
TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER
Vane, young in years, but in sage counsel old,

Than whom a better senator ne'er held

The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirot and the African bold,
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how war may best, upheld,
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage; besides, to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

XVIII

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow

O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway

The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way, Early may fly the Babylonian woe. XIX ON HIS BLINDNESS When I consider how my light is spent Ere half my days in this dark world and wide, And that one talent which is death to hide Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent To serve therewith my Maker, and present My true account, lest He returning chide, "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"

I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best

Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state

Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,

And post o'er land and ocean without rest;

They also serve who only stand and wait."

$\mathbf{X}\mathbf{X}$

TO MR. LAWRENCE

Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son,

Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,

Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire

Help waste a sullen day, what may be won

From the hard season gaining? Time will run On smoother, till Favonius reinspire The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun. What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice, Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air? He who of those delights can judge, and spare To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

XXI

TO CYRIACK SKINNER

Cyriack, whose grandsire on the royal bench Of British Themis, with no mean applause, Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws, Which others at their bar so often wrench, To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench In mirth that after no repenting draws; Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause, And what the Swede intend, and what the French. To measure life learn thou betimes, and know Toward solid good what leads the nearest way; For other things mild Heaven a time ordains, And disapproves that care, though wise in show, That with superfluous burden loads the day,

And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

XXII

TO THE SAME

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied

In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.
XXIII
ON HIS DECEASED WIFE
Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave, Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.

And such as yet once more I trust to have

Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,

Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.

Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight

Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined

So clear as in no face with more delight.

But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,

I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

