

# THE RECLUSE.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

“Oh many a time and oft had Harold loved ;  
Or dreamed he loved, since rapture is a dream.”

BYRON.

Alone, alone—the misty moon-beams rest  
In silent vails of silver on the flowers ;  
Clasped fondly to the wood’s familiar breast,  
The birds are dreaming off the voiceless hours

No, *not* alone—the winds are come to kiss  
The feverish flashing from his furrowed brow ;  
And phantom-memories from the groves of bliss,  
Come gliding through Time’s ivied vistas now.

Most splendid was he in evanished years,  
A form to look on once and ne’er forget ;  
But now his cheek is paled by midnight tears,  
And tangled are the wild, rich curls of jet.

He walked the world and wearied of its glare,  
Then fled to solitude to try *its* spell ;  
Now, by the mournful, haunted moonlight there  
He looks on pictures that he knows too well.

One with a wild, dark eye that seems to flash  
A proud defiance on his shrinking gaze,  
As though the fires beneath the heavy lash  
Would burn his heart for deeds of other days.

And then a stormy cloud of midnight hair  
Sweeps round a brow haughty and dark and high ;  
And such a cheek ! the rose is blushing there  
As richly yet as in the years gone by

“Norma,” he mutters low, as if in fear  
That from a lovely lip now hushed for aye,  
An answer of reproachful scorn he’ll hear ;  
“Norma !” and shuddering then he turns away

Another, with soft curls of golden hue,  
That gently cluster o’er a lily-brow,  
And dreamy eyes of saddest, deepest blue,  
Just such as haunt my lonely musings now.

O’er this he bends and from his clouded heart  
There falls a sudden, silent rain, and cold ;  
He murmurs—“Mary, Mary—still *thou* art  
As loved, as worshiped as thou wert of old.”

Then from the many more he sadly turns,  
And gazes strangely thro’ the skies and air,  
Then quenches the lone lamp that dimly burns,  
And bows down calmly to his wonted prayer