

**FLOWERS OF FRANCE: THE ROMANTIC
PERIOD: HUGO TO LECONTE DE LISLE:
REPRESENTATIVE POEMS OF THE NINETEENTH
CENTURY RENDERED INTO ENGLISH VERSE IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORIGINAL
FORMS:IN TWO VOLUMES. VOLUME TWO**

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JOHN PAYNE

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RANK AND FILE.

II.

I.

735906

JEAN POLONIUS.

THE AUTUMN SUN.

When Autumn's well nigh at an end
And all the voices of the gale,
That sighs about the woodlands pale,
Nature's last agony portend,

Bytimes a splendid summer sun
The faded landscape visiteth,
Lighting the woodlands up in death,
Which in their beauty it did shun.

But their fair colours lost have they
And all their birds have taken flight;
Their perfumes all exhaled are quite
And every voice hath died away.

The lake with the delightsome shores,
Whose glass so limpid was erewhen,
Yellow and miry as a fen,
To-day but troubled waters pours.

Yon trunk, that was an elm whilere,
But one dead leaf retaineth now,
That waiteth, lonely, on its bough,
Until the wind it off shall bear.

JEAN POLONIUS.

All over is; the ray divine
Too late to lighten hath begun;
No blade of grass is left nor one
Poor flower to smile beneath its shine.

So, when I shall have seen go by
The vernal blossom of my years,
When all that meets mine eyes and ears
Remindeth me that I must die,

Mayhap unto my age inane,
O'erlate, alas! sardonic Fate
Shall proffer me the lovesome mate
My lonely youth hath sought in vain.

But o'er the roses of my life
The winds of Autumn will have blown,
My blood, alas! have frozen grown
And on my head the snows be rife.

A sere leaf, withering on the spray,
What booteth me that Love, in fine,
With its consoling light, shall shine
And lighten my declining day?

Unto the branches of Life's tree
A fibre scarce shall hold me fast
And glitter shall the sun at last,
My downfall, withered, but to see.

Lonely and sadly shall I fare
And without having lived, shall die;
Nor shall one heart beneath the sky
For love of me have beaten e'er.

Yes, I shall die; and yet too late;
For, ere mine eyes have closed for aye,
I shall have seen the dawning ray
Of what might be a happier fate.

Another to this good, — ah me!
Of birth o'er-tardy, — will be heir.
Another from my hopes will bear
Her who would me have loved, maybe;

And I, mute witness of their joy,
With sombre eyes and dumb repine,
Shall see them pass afar, a-shine
With love and youth without alloy.

Yes, I shall see the happy two
Their breath commingle, as they go,
Eyes asking eyes of what they know
And looks responsive looks unto.

I shall not e'en bemoan my dearth
Nor mourn the loss of charms so dear;
I shall not shed a single tear;
For who would pity me on earth?

I shall but turn my head aside,
That spectacle of happiness
To shun; and if my dumb distress
My heart in sunder have not wried,

God, God alone shall know with me
What the last sigh weighs, that desire
Wrings from a heart with grief afire,
When hope, alas! hath ceased to be.

HYMN TO PERFECTION.

Alas! I have invoked thee from my childhood's days;
Far in the distance dim thou shon'st before mine eyes,
Like one of those great hills, their snowclad peaks that raise
On an horizon vague of clouds and azure skies.

The trav'ler sees them, when the dawn the shadows' screen
Withdraws and when the night again the day succeeds;
He deems them nigh at hand; but many a ravine
Divides him from the goal, which evermore recedes.

Unto the mountain's foot win may be soon or late:
But who might scale its lone eternal summit's stair?
No foot there treads; no bird may thither penetrate;
Only the light of heaven and the winds of the air.

So, unassured, unknown, to me thou didst appear,
Beauty, that from the dawn I've sought of all my days,
The morning hour hath fled; the time of noon is near;
And I, without success, I seek for thee always.

Ne'er shall I win to thee, mount inaccessible!
But that thy radiant peak, afar yet visible,
Goal to my feet and light unto my path doth show.
I shall not win to thee: but thine adorèd light
Th'horizon of my life will have at least made bright
And from the quagmires turned mine eyes of here below.

AT THIRTY.

I.

The distant azure hills of youth
Grow dim and pale, to sight unsure;
Time whirls me onward without rath:
As in a cavern's deeps obscure,
Its light car rolls and bears me still
Over the arch's sombre sill,
That leadeth man to age mature.
Sinister arch, on entering thee,
My spirit straitened is in me.
Mine is the weary pilgrim's part,
At eve, with travel broken down,
Who to the gates comes of a town,
Where nought of dear awaits his heart.
Beneath thy vault how cold and drear
The shade and to my hearkening ear
Sad is the echo, at each pace
That thy wheel wakens in its race.
Come; through the portal strait let's fare!
When it I've left behind fore'er,
Perchance unto my new estate
Myself I shall habituate.

II.

'Tis past! The hand of Time to me
In its book opens a new page;
Henceforward, for ten years to be,
A figure new will mark my age.
With yestereven's set of sun,
A youngling yet, I fell asleep.
Transfigured in my slumber deep,