POEM. THE VALEDICTORY ORATION. PRONOUNCED BEFORE THE SENIOR CLASS OF YALE COLLEGE, JULY 7, 1841

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Poem. The valedictory oration. Pronounced before the senior class of Yale college, July 7, 1841 by Guy Bryan Schott & Donald G. Mitchell

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GUY BRYAN SCHOTT & DONALD G. MITCHELL

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POEM,

BY

GUY BRYAN SCHOTT,

AND THE

VALEDICTORY ORATION,

BY

DONALD G. MITCHELL. '

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CLASS.

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1841.

POEM.

We meet to part! As when some timid bride,
Lingers her parents' long loved forms beside,
Smiles through her tears—half sorrowful, half gay,
Reluctant to be gone, yet loth to stay;
With heart alternate filled with hopes and fears,
Recalls the past, thinks of the dawning years,—
The laughing joys that circled round her home,
The scenes she leaves, the untried scenes to come;
So we, ere wandering from these quiet bowers,
Where Ease and Science strewed our path with flowers,
Pause to survey the moments here that flew,
And pierce that life now opening on our view.

In Fancy's glass a shadowy realm extends,
Where cloud with cloud in shifting drapery blends;
Some dim with mystery, indistinct of form,
Or dark, portentous of the boding storm;
Some bathed in all the iris hues and dyes
Which summer sunsets throw o'er southern skies;
And here and there, their parting folds reveal
Glimpses of gorgeous scenes they half conceal.
It is the Dream-land of the Future, where
Bright phantoms dancing paint the crimson air!
Of rosy joys a smiling train appears,
And scatter wreaths along the opening years.
The cherub Loves there wave their purple wings,
Her golden glories Fortune round her flings;
Ambition dazzles with the crown of state,

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Fame proffers chaplets to reward the great;
And all the sister Muses joyous spread
The laurel-garland for their votary's head.
But at the portals of these spectre-lands,
What guardian-goddess robed in radiance stands?
'Tis Hope her glittering standard free unfurls,
Beams smiles that bless, and shakes her golden curis;
Points to the bright-eyed pleasures blooming round,
And beck'ning bids us tread th' enchanted ground.

Our buoyant souls her winning voice inspires
With youth's warm zeal and ardor's quenchless fires;
With spirits that on eagle pinions soar,
We long this hidden Future to explore;
Pant for release, exultingly resign
These placid shades, seats of the sacred Nine,
And eager press to mingle in the strife,
And bear our destined parts in busy life.

Oh! if on high availed the minstrel's prayer, Your future bright as fancy's dreams should be; Its sky unsullied by one cloud of care, With naught to mar its sweet tranquillity ! But why impatient its new scenes to try? Why wish to speed the parting moment near? 'Twill come full soon to rend each silken tie, That bound us in a band of brothers here. Full soon the world's stern lessons shall be ours-That world for which we've sighed so oft and long, Where Fancy paints a paradise of flowers, And Hope allures us with her syren song. Its cold realities must greet us now, Perchance with icy withering breath, to blight The dreams which gave to youth its beaming brow-. Those fond, fantastic visions of delight!

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When stript of all th' illusions distance lent,

The gilded clouds shall leave life's summit bare,
And sad experience prove the steep ascent
A path beset by peril, grief, and care.
But are there no sweet fountains gushing round,
Whose limpid rills through fields of verdure stray?
Can no cool shades that yield repose be found,
To glad the traveller on his toilsome way?

No, there are none! 'tis all a vale of tears; Life's dreary waste is shrouded deep in gloom-No ray of light the fainting wanderer cheers; There is no rest, or only in the tomb! We dream of bliss and find our dreaming vain-There is no earthly good that will not cloy; Time only turns enjoyment into pain, And shows the bitter mockery of joy! Bright prospects tantalize the dazzled sight, Then in an instant like the mirage fade! Sequestered groves to soft retreats invite, But deadly damps infest their fatal shade. Fair seeming streams of crystal gurgling burst, Through flowery meads that to the brink allure, The waters cannot slake the fevered thirst, The flowers prove noisome and the wave impure! Then do not seek a solace for thy grief, Poor weary wanderer through a world of woe; Earth will not yield thy drooping soul relief, All, all is utter nothingness below !

There are, who, haters of the human kind,
The direct formen to themselves and man,
Thus view the world, in wilful error blind,
And impious question the Omniscient's plan.
O listen not to their insidious strain,

Though genius gild it with Truth's seeming guise,
But rather seek to join their cheerful train,
Who find some good in all that greets their eyes:
Yes, be it ours the brighter side to see,—
Has earth no charms? hath life no poetry?

Go, gaze on Nature's lovely face, Where every moment adds a new, A changing yet undying grace, To scenes that ravish while we view ! Her canopy of blue survey, When like a conqueror glad and bright, The sun brings back the golden day, And wakes the world to life and light; When earth rejoicing in his beams, Sends from her tuneful choirs on high, Her vocal groves and sounding streams, Sweet voices to salute the sky. The genial ray all nature warms; The hills are wreathed in light, the vales Unbosomed ope their hidden charms, To dally with the wanton gales. The little brooklets bounding free, In joy the glad effulgence quaff, And shake their crystal bells with glee, Shout as they leap, and leaping laugh! While on their banks sweet flowers, blushing To see their mirrored forms so fair, Seem listening to the music, gushing From land and wave around them there ;-As softly floating on the air, As if the soul of music, borne Along the dewy wings of morn, Breathed out upon the fitful breeze, Its most entrancing melodies!

Can scenes like these yield no delight?
When earth is fair and heaven is bright,
And all around, beneath, above,
Exult in life, and joy, and love!
O! to the uncorrupted mind,
By feeling and by taste refined,
Nature hath aye a gentle power
To render bright the darkest hour;
Deep in the breast it wins its way,
With silent but resistless sway,
Fills with a kindred calm the soul,
Soothes every sorrow, sets it free
From sordid passion's base control,
And wakes its inward purity.

Perverted his benighted heart, To whom her charms no joy impart; Who passes with unheeding eye, Her revelations coldly by ; And when in gentle beauty dressed, Her milder, softer forms she takes, And seems serenely hushed to rest, Sees naught that soothingly awakes A tranquil pleasure in his breast; Nor in her wild magnificence, When robed in solemn grandeur stern, Feels a controlling, awing sense Of wonder in his bosom burn. His sordid breast can never feel A sympathy for other's weal; Can never with compassion glow, Or melt to learn another's woe. But wrapt in self, apart, and lone, Low groveling in the dust he lies;