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Class Poem.

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The Summer's eve, soft-smiling, dropt still-voiced
Upon the world. The deep, sonorous sea,
That beat the pebbly beach, its roaring ceased,
And but a murmur of its rolling tide
Was borne upon the breeze. I, on the shore,
Reclined, and watched the laughing waters play,
And as the waves came sweeping from the deep,
With strength grown great, I saw far out to sea,
One lift its head, whose sparkling crest the sun,
In parting, flashed with rain-bow tints. On, on—
It swept with dazzling front and smote the beach,
And, surging, crept inevitably on—
High up the shore. It rolled, it broke—was lost—
The sparkling drops that made the wondrous whole
Forever sundered in their fate, or hid
Again, amid old ocean's mighty surge,
Or drunk by burning sands, or the last rays
The sinking sun poured, golden, on the beach.
I turned me thence and sought the lambent sheen,
Flung back to earth from oceans of the sky :
There, hanging crimson bright, a massy heap
Of clouds in richest tints was clothed. The change
On change that swept athwart its breast, each seemed
To blaze a grander flame, till ere its light
Had fled, the parched breeze drank up its life
And swept it from the skies.

The sun gone down,
Grey-footed gloaming gently spread her veil
O'er land and sea and sky, and lo ! against
Its hanging hem, a flight of wild fowl rose,
Clear limned and sharp, and fled to sea with swift,
Far-reaching flight—black hung as hangs a cloud
With thunder laden, for a moment's space—

Then parting, vanished, leaving naught to tell
The story of their swiftly-passing flight.

And as I looked my heart was caught with thoughts
Of an expected day—this day—when all
The bands of equal hopes, and aims, and joys,
That long had made us one—so like the bands
Of that fair table round, which, ages gone,
Was the great model of high chivalry—
Were to be broken. Then the darkness fell.
But the light Summer's breeze still softly wooed,
And the sonorous beat of the full tide,
And one by one the stars came trooping out,
Till, like a swarm of fire-flies prisoned fast
In a great circling net, they spread from pole
To zenith, zenith on to pole. And there
It seemed that the proud wave that swept to shore,
In all the beauty of its rain-bow hues—
That broke into such wondrous wealth of spray—
But sank all shattered, parted, never more
To meet in rhythmic march on any shore ;
The crimson brightness of the sunset cloud
Wiped rudely from the sky ; the flight of fowl
That fled so fair to sea—that one and all
Were types of our fair class on this, its last,
Best day.

We come from myriad homes—spread far
And wide. The happy ties that bind us, are,
Alas ! but transitory ; now, at last,
Their destiny fulfilled, they fall from these,
The hands that found them garlands, never chains.
Into the world we take our varied ways,
No more to gather in these well-known halls—
No more a perfect, an unbroken band ;
We grasp the hands of those we love so well,
With clasp which, loosened, ne'er can be reknit.

Then as this day is last and best,
And as the parting comes ere long,
O, classmates ! for a moment rest,
Before you sing your parting song—
Before you launch upon yon lake,
That lies a burnished mirror bright,
Whose gleaming shores unknown, awake
Mysterious longing and delight—

Or list to fame's sweet siren song,
That rises deep, melodious, strong.

This day, with all its joys, the past
Claims as its own—and memory
Lifts high time's veil, that we may cast
A lingering glance, in harmony,
O'er all the many happy days
That we have passed at Old Nassau,
Where we have joined to sing her praise,
Or shouted loud her glad hurrah !
The last fair jeweled link to-day,
We weld before we pass away.

Not all our days have been so bright ;
Some who were of us are no more ;
Their mem'ry sheds a softer light ;
And we would fain go o'er and o'er
The page whereon their names are writ,
And mark it as the gold'nest page,
Round which a halo seems to flit,
That storm, nor grief, nor time can age,
And find in its eternal youth
A gleam of great, immortal truth.

Each joy, each sorrow closer drew
The golden bands that made us one,
And bound each heart in friendship true,
Till now, at last, our journey done,
The bursting bands seem closer far,
For one short moment ere they part.
The past is ours, naught can it mar—
Whate'er the future may impart,
The brightest days, the gladdest cheer,
Gave Old Nassau, our mother dear.