ATALANTIS;

A STORY OF THE SEA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YEMASSEE," "GUY RIVERS," &c.

"'Tis not vain or fabulous,—
Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance,—
What the sage Poets, taught by th' heavenly Muse,
Story'd of old in high immortal verse,
Of dire chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks."

MILTON.

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1848.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The first edition of "Atalantis" was published in 1832. It has been subsequently revised, and, I trust, amended. I am not satisfied that the dramatic form was appropriately adopted, since it leads to expectations which the character of the poem will scarcely satisfy. The advantage of the dialogue consists simply in permitting that diversification of the descriptive portions, which, in a work so purely fanciful, would seem necessary to prevent monotony.—This poem, with those pieces which follow it, belongs to a class, the standards of which are almost entirely imaginative. The reader who looks, here, for the merely human sentiment, will find himself at fault. The province of poetry is too various for the application of laws derived wholly from individual tastes; and he who opens the pages of an author must always be prepared to ascend that mount of vision from which he has made his survey. The highest regions of the ideal, are unquestionably such as belong to the spiritual nature. To this nature, exclusively, verse which is solely imaginative must commend itself. It is not the less human, though it may be more remote and foreign, than that which simply appeals to mortal passions, and the more earthy purposes of man and life.

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ATALANTIS.

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COUNT LEON, a noble Spanish Knight.
MENDEZ CELER, Captain of the Arragon.
OGRE, a slave of Onesimarchus.
Mariners, Demons, &c. &c.

ATALANTIS, a Princess of the Nereids.
NEA, her attendant.
LADY ISABEL, sister to Count Leon.

ZEPHYR-SPIRIT.
TININA, CARETA, NANITA, LOLINE, } Fairies.

ATALANTIS.

A STORY OF THE SEA.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An Islet of the Atlantic Ocean.*

ATALANTIS and ONESIMARCHUS.

Atal. Get thee hence, monster, I defy thee now,
As late I scorn'd thee. Thy base threats are vain,
And thy words idle. All in vain thy pray'r,—
And, in thy promise, do I nothing see
To move my spirit;—nothing to misguide
My firm persuasion, that, so foul a thing
Should have no thought of mine.
Onesi. I prithee, hold!
Be charier of thy feelings;—have a care,
If thou dost love thyself and would'st be free!
Beseems thee not this proud authority
In such condition as I hold thee now.
Look round thee, lovely Atalant!—Survey
My wondrous power, and heed the prison house,
Most fit for thee to flutter in,—not fly!
Thou art my captive, maiden, bound by spells,
Potent as night, that, struggle as thou may'st,
Mock thy best effort, and defy thy hopes.
Atal. Foul tyrant, I despise thee and thy power,
And laugh at all thy threats. I know thee well,

Thy strength, thy spells, thy hatefulness, and all,
That makes thee what thou art!—

Onesi. Dost know thyself?

Atal. Ay, my own weakness, now,—yet nothing fear
Thy greater strength in this my overthrow.

Onesi. Thou fear'dst not this?

Atal. I did not; yet I knew,
Even ere the moment of captivity,
That thou had'st power for this. 'Twas in my scorn,—
In the full feeling of my pride and strength,
Mocking thy gross dominion,—that I grew
Improvident of caution.

Onesi. Yet, beware!
Lest a new lesson counsel thee to fears
Thy scorn believes not now.

Atal. Oh! get thee hence!
Think'st thou I am so shallow, not to know
Thy close impassable limit? Am I not,
Thrice guarded in myself, with power mine own,
Match'd unto thine, and know I not that thou—
Howe'er in captive bound thou keep'st me now,
Having robb'd me of the wand that serves my will,
By a foul trickery worthy of thyself,—
Hast not the might—unless I do forget
My better nature and give way to thine—
A wretched madness, most impossible!—
To graze with licensed breath the idlest hair,
That wantons from my shoulder. Get thee hence,—
I dread thee not, thou monstrous impotence!

Onesi. Hold! or thou wilt impel me unto wrath,
When I would love thee!

Atal. I do not fear thy wrath,
And prat'st thou of thy love, thou crooked game-make,
Thou gross deformity!—how I could laugh
At thy rough gambols in an element
Made for pure spirits, and the delicate grace
Of the angelic youth and morning beauty,—
But that a prison laugh is seemly sad,
And turns into a sorrow.

Onesi. So shall thine,
If thou bethink not oft'ner of thy bound!
Thou art a sprightly and most pleasant child,
But all unlearn'd by crude adversity,
Else would'st thou teach thyself another mood,
And reason in the guise of circumstance.
Wert thou array'd in panoply of war,
With all thy armies on the equal field,
Nought wanting to thy might, thy spoken taunt
Were not unseemly;—now, it hath an air
That ill becomes thy lip and present state.

Atal. And would'st thou teach, O! rare philosopher,
The prudence of compliance with the law,
Of that worst fate, a base necessity?
Why, thou'dst disfigure truth, and all distort
The fairer argument into the foul,
Make right a truckler to expediency
And conjure virtue with the spells of fear,
Till she grows common, a base thing of time,
Having but present office. Thou hast err'd,—
For, but suppose me ignorant of good,
Untutor'd in truth's excellence, and all
That virtue wills to beauty,—*thee* I know,
And know to hate the lesson thou would'st teach.

Onesi. Thou'rt rash, fair damsel, rash and ill-advised!
Beware of what thou say'st—to prudence hold;
Remember, when thy spirit would offend,
Thou art the captive to my greater power.

Atal. Thy greater cunning—thy dishonest guile!

Onesi. And that is greater power, thou simple child;—
And, as thou art a captive, let thy speech
Mate with thy fortunes. I deny thee now
A farther range than suits my jealous mood;
And I shall guard thee well, and watch thy steps,
And check thee when thou trippest. On thy paths,
My slaves, that never close the eye, attend,
And, though thou see'st them not———

Atal. I see them not!—
Thou dost forget my nature and my power;—

Let me but wave my hand thus, with a will!—
What call you this blear imp?

She waves her hand, and OGRE *becomes visible.*

Onesi. Ha! thou base whelp!
Did I not warn thee?—wherefore did'st thou lurk,
Thus nigh, to feel her spells?—but thou shalt learn.
Shall I not have obedience where I rule?
Ho! Runa! Merla! take this sodden slave
And bind him to his pits against the rock,
Till midnight—let the scourge be well applied,
While his shrieks wake the drowsy mariner,
Filling his head with storms, for which they make
Fit music, and foretell!

Ogré. Master, O, spare!
The day grows dark, and the night rushes on,
Long ere the accustomed hour. The cruel scourge
Will torture, and the wrath upon the wave,
Will dash me into madness gainst the rocks.

Onesi. Take him hence! away!

Ogré. Nay, spare me,—'twas my zeal
To serve thee, that o'erstepped. But pardon now,
I err not thus again. Be pitiful!
Merla doth own for me a silent grudge
And will outstretch thy order. He will bind
Both hands and feet, and, with a double thong,
Will tear my flesh, then mock me with keen gibes,
Until I faint, while the cold cavern waves
Do creep about and wrap me!

Onesi. Not in vain:
Though he doth punish thee as thou hast said,
Thou shalt not perish. Hence with him. Ye stand
As if ye did delight in his discourse,
Insolent with himself.

Atal. Oh! thou art stern—
A tyrant 'gainst all nature, that will spurn
The kneeling wretch, but for excess of zeal
Doing thy bidding truly.

Onesi. 'Tis for thee
I punish him, fair Atalant.
Atal. For me!
Onesi. Hath he not hung too closely on thy steps,
Intrusive, watching thee most narrowly
Beyond my will? Shalt thou not be secure
From what offends thee?
Atal. 'Tis thou offend'st me!
Make me secure from thee, and 'gainst thy slave
I shall have instant remedy.
Onesi. Still thus!
Atal. Ay, ever!—while the light lasts of my life,
Thought, feeling, best affection. 'Tis for me
That thou wouldst punish him?—then set him free;—
The wrong that he has done is done to me,
And I forgive it him.
Onesi. It fits thee well,
This ready spirit of mercy which conceives,
And grants the boon ere spoken. Not so me!
'Twere a poor state, and brief the power, if thus,
O'erzealous though it be, each slave should leap,
His bound unchasten'd. Hence with him, away!
The scourge shall lessen his o'er-ready zeal,
And midnight seas, and colds, and biting airs
Shall teach him penitence. [*Ogré is led off.*
Atal. Thou cruel king!
Hadst thou by other qualities of grace
Master'd the heart that feels for thee but scorn,
This merciless act of thine had set it free;
Had robb'd it of persuasion of thy worth
In every office; and, from virtuous meed,
Had pluck'd all fair deserving, that had else
Been yielded by just tribute.
Onesi. Thou wrong'st me;—
And chid'st too harshly the o'ercoming sway,
Which keeps dominion safe, and makes it strong.
Would'st thou not master? Is the woman heart
Unfriendly to the pleasant tastes of power?
I know thee better,—better know thy sex—

Esteem thee as the rest,—born with the love
Of measureless rule,—the will to reach afar,
Plucking down station, putting strength aside,
'Till, in the midst, alone, o'er all thou stand'st,
All fearing, all adoring!

Atal. How thou soar'st!
And this thy aim, how fruitlessly thy rule
Is wasted on the wretched slave that cowers,
Hopeless and still submissive, to his lord.
Onesimarchus, I despise thee more,
That I have seen thee in the wid'st extent
Of thy dominion.

Onesi. 'Tis well! But thou shalt feel,—
So shalt thou better know,—how great the power
Thou mock'st at, in thy ignorance and pride!
And though, unless by wanton will of thine,
I may not gain possession of thy form,
Yet shall I so constrain thee by my arts,
So work upon thy weakness—so forbid
All bent of inclination,—all desire,—
Curtailing every thought that does not tend
To the fierce satisfaction of my want,—
That thou shalt yield thyself in very dread,
Though thy heart loathe me in its secret mood,
And every sense grow outraged at the fate
To which thou still submit'st.

Atal. Oh! shallow slave!
This is thy precious scheme! And there thou stand'st,
With thy red gloating eye stretch'd 'yond its sphere,
Glaring with foul and fiend-imaginings—
Thy lip, that quivers with voluptuous rage,
Thicken'd with vicious fury,—thy scant brows,
Retreating wide and back, with wool o'erhung,
That links thee with the sooty African
Who wallows in thy worship;—there thou stand'st,
Blinded with beastly hope, that thou can'st will
A spirit so pure as mine to leave its sphere,
And come, untended and unlighted, down,
From its bright mansions, to thy pool and cave!

'Till now, my thought had been that, with thy pow'r,
There was a sense to give it dignity,
And marshal thy gross attributes with state
Into considerate order. But not now,—
When I look on thee, so incapable,—
So wanting in that art, which, when it lacks,
Strength is a toiling giant up the hills
That never wins the summit—all my hate
Subsides into a feeling less than scorn,
Which cannot yet be pity. Prithee, go,—
Thou dost but move me to unseemly mirth,
Which yet I would not.

Onesi. Nay! give it vent and words!
Thy wit is lively; thou hast eloquence;
I feel that thou might'st chafe me, were it not
That there will be a season too for me,
When I may answer thee.

Atal. What can'st thou more?
Thou hast done all in stealing me away
From mine own kingdom with thy felon arts:
And this shall find its punishment ere long,
For, even now, in Mergevan, my town,
I do, by precious instincts, see the array
Of thousands, whom my brothers, to the war,
Will haste with meet decision. Thou, methinks,
Hast proved their arms before;—a little while,
The proofs shall be renewed,—and what shall then
Be thy fond refuge, when their mighty powers
Descend on thee to battle?

Onesi. Let them come!
I shall be ready then—am ready now!
Thou speak'st with a rare confidence, but know,
I took thee not, thus boldly, from thy realms,
'Till I had meetly, with commissioned force,
Prepared for all thy battles. Thou forget'st
The strength I bring—the powers that, in a trice,
From farthest ocean I can call at once,
Where the deep thickens to a bed of reeds;
And from the kings that o'er the whirlpools sway,

Gathered to my allegiance, by a blast
Upon the shell I bear within my hand.
Thou seem'st to have forgotten too, methinks,
That, by my single arm, thy mother's first,
And thy own brother, fiercest of them all,
Fell, like an infant, impotent, o'erthrown!
What though I lost the conflict, did ye gain?
Was not your city of the rocks destroy'd
By the wild waves, which, in my wanton mood,
O'erwent and left them prostrate;—while thyself,
An infant then, rock'd in a purple shell,
'Twixt two obedient billows, scarce preserved,
Wast borne away, affrighted, in the arms
Of thy most humble follower. This, methinks,
Thy memory lacks, and I repeat it thee,
Not for the glory of mine own exploit,
But to remind me of the groundless hope
On which thou build'st for safety.

Atal. It is well!
Thou hast chosen for thy wooing a fit style,
And most judicious, when that thou relat'st
Thy bloody traffic with myself and mine.

Onesi. Thyself hast moved me to 't.

Atal. I blame thee not,
Rude monster, for the evil thou hast done,
And sought beyond thy utmost power to do!
'Tis in thy nature. There is on thy front
The character of the beast. Thy savage eye,
Fixed in thy bloated and unmeasured face,
From which it glares like some red, baleful star,
Upon a dismal, dusk, unspeaking blank,—
Has mark'd thee strongly. Labor as thou may'st—
Speak, like thy shell, in music—let thy words
Be like the honey dews, that, on the rocks,
Nursed in the hollows, nightly fall from heaven,
A solace for the storm-bird and the gull,—
Yet art thou fatal to the spells thou hast
And bafflest thine own art. Thou can'st not change;
The beast is high o'er all, a monstrous mock,

In contradiction of itself and strength—
So that the very sweets that thou may'st own
Grow poisonous in thy use.

Onesi. O, thou dost well,
And wisely, urging me to anger thus,
'Till thou dost dissipate that kindly sense,
At variance with my spirit, which my love,
Bids live in thy behalf. Dost thou not fear,
That, vex'd by thy sharp mock and wanton speech,
My love shall grow to hatred?

Atal. Be it so!
I heed thee not—thy anger scorn, not fear;—
Thou art of those, being the foe to truth,
That art, when friendliest, most inimical,—
And dost most harm in doing seeming good,
And art most hateful, most injurious,
When most professing love! I fear thee not,—
Though by an active cunning—and yet less,
By active cunning than mine own neglect,—
Gaining the advance upon us, thou hast made
A prisoner and dire enemy of one,
Who, in another chance, and other time,
Had never made so little of her thought,
To waste it on thee.

Onesi. Wilt thou nothing, then,
To gain thy freedom? Thou wilt surely smile,
Look pleased in some small sort, and speak him well,
Whose power alone can free thee.

Atal. Trust not that!
I shall be free by other means, and soon!
I barter not my grace for mine own right;—
Lest that the gift, misused, grow valueless!—
Thou hast no boon in all thy store and might
Which I can give thee thanks for. In myself
The means of freedom rest.

Onesi. [*Aside.*] Ha! in herself!
I snatch'd from her the pow'rful wand which made
The elements do her bidding. What remains?

Atal. A power, which as it teaches me to know

The secret thought thou speak'st not, cannot be
Wrench'd from my firm possession.
Onesi. We shall see!
Thy instincts may declare my thought, but cannot
Avail to give thee freedom. All in vain
Thy hope, whether within thyself it be,
Or in the armies which thy brothers raise—
Here, powerless in the conflict, useless all;—
For, in the air, I've thrown a circling spell,
Borrow'd from night and silence,—which, being gross,
Far grosser than the elements which make
Your finer tempers, ye may not withstand!
This will resist them! Into this, who comes,
Not fitted like ourselves to meet its power,
Blinded and shorn of strength, falls feebly down,
And straight is thrall'd forever. All around
Our island limit, where the ocean breaks,
This element is scattered;—like a wall,
Shutting out all invasion,—closing all,
Within, from commerce with the realm without!
Thus art thou girdled now. Denied thy wand—
Which, in yon rock, within a mystic frame,
Moulded by midnight spells, in halls where rule
Thousands of spirits dethroned, I have encased
And seal'd with magic, and the mighty word
Given me at creation as a spell,
That consummates my will;—thou can'st not break
The narrow circle of thy prison bound,
And taste the finer element, whose breath
Might bring thee to thy power.
Atal. Thy prudence well
Has counselled thee of dangers thou must dread—
Dangers best studied in thy strong defence
And wily combinations. But thy art
Is shallow like thy power. A little while,
Watch as thou may'st, the wand is mine again,
And whatsoe'er its faculty, be sure
It shall be raised against thee. Thou shalt be
O'erthrown when most secure; and, like the bird,

Slain by its stronger fellow, as thou saw'st
Upon the morn I fell thy prisoner,
Even from thy topmost pinnacle struck down,
Thy fall shall mate thy arrogance of flight,
Beneath the lowest, low. How should my soul,
Strong among giant spirits, hark or heed
Thy profferings or thy threats? What can'st thou do
To bend my purer nature unto thine,
In base extremity, unless I yield,
Wanton, and shorn of the true woman strength,—
Which finds best nutriment in innocence,
And lives mature in its own delicate essence,
A power in due degree with chastity,—
To meet thy brutal want and foul desire,
Thou that art foulest! Thou hast 'vantage won,
And when I slept thou waked'st; and I now,
For a brief season, suffer that I slept,—
That, the condition of all negligence,—
When, with a subtle and dishonest foe,
Such as thou art, in certain neighborhood,
We should have watch'd with armament prepared,
And every weapon bright, and high rock lit,
Kindled with sea-spar into ruddiness!
So had'st thou shrunk away, scared by the blaze,
Cowering, with backward terror, 'till the sun
Thy nature's dread, thy great antipathy,
Leaping from off his billowy bed at morn,
No cloud about his brow, and strong from sleep,
Drives thee, with glittering shafts that never fail,
Blinded and bellowing to thy marshy gulphs.

Onesi. Dost thou exult, and is my fate so sure,—
And shalt thou have thy liberty so soon,
As thou dost fancy? Then, a gentler speech
Had better graced thy lips as conqueror,
Over the feeble foe thou can'st not fear.
But let me win thee to some fair constraint
Of seeming amnesty. A truce awhile,
To this so keen and profitless retort,
Which keeps us thus asunder. Let us each

Heed reason from the other. Thou hast said,
With hope 'yond expectation, that thou look'st
For soon and certain help. I see not this
Present or in far prospect; nor beyond,
In the imperfect future, can I frame
The aid thou look'st for from thy tribute realms.
These things affright me not as once before,—
My kingdom as it is, all well prepared
To keep its own, and conquer, right or wrong.
Its barriers shut out hope from thee, unless
Thou swerv'st my settled feeling, which thou may'st
By seasonable yielding—so shall both
Our anxious purpose win;—thy freedom thou,
And I, the sweet accomplishment of that
Which flames desire within me! Well I know
My power can go no farther than thou will'st,
In this so dear condition,—but thou art,
My prisoner still—and that may move thy wish,
Not capable of liberty unless
My will shall break thy fetters. Hear me then,
Since this our opposition.

Atal. Speak? I hear!

Onesi. Become my bride,—nay, patiently!—smile not—
My Queen, if better lists thee. On my throne,—
Thou hast beheld its state,—of emeralds made,
Each one a crowning and a marvellous gem,
Set round the spacious bosom of a shell
Torn from a fierce sea monster—one who bore
The miracled wonder on his glittering back,
And battled for it as became its worth,
Nor lost it ere his life;—thy hand shall wield,—
Fit hand for such a rule!—a sceptred wand,
Pluck'd from an ocean cave of farthest Ind,
By ancient giants held,—a pillar'd spire,
Of holiest sapphire, which at evening burns
Deeper than ever sun-light, and around
Lights up the sable waters many a league,
From sea to shore, 'till the scared 'habitants
Fly to their cover in the wood, nor dream

How sportive is the sway of that Sea-Queen,
Who rides the waves and makes them smile by night.
Atal. Oh! wonderful! most wonderful!
Onesi. Dost scorn?—
But let me not be angered. Hear me still.—
These are but shown thee to declare the fruit,
The effect, perchance, but not the source of might,
So fertile as is mine. But thou shalt know,
That, of the full division of these seas,
One part of which thou hold'st, the great'st is mine;
My realm the wid'st; and, of the numerous powers
That hold dominion in these provinces,
Most are to me as tributary bound,
Sworn to my bidding, subject to my will,
Compell'd for peace and war! These, if I bid,
I gather such array, as leaves my power
Unmatchable by all the tribes that swarm
Thy cities, when the starlight wakes the dance.
Atal. I know not that! The kingdom which I hold
Though in extent less spacious, is not less
Proportioned to the incidents of war!
Thou hast wide realm of sea, but scattered tribes;
Can'st gambol hugely when the waves are smooth,
With uncouth legions; but when sounds the gong,
Struck sharply on our headlands, they go down,
Sudden, in search of shadowing slime and reeds,
Forgetting all their state and mocking thine,
Indifferent where they hide. Thou may'st o'ercome
The sluggish monster, that, upon the deep,
Slumbers at noon-day,—winning, with his life
The useless glitter of his cumbrous shell;—
But, for becoming enemy, thou hast
But little armament of serious force,
Save, as I said, in fraud and stratagem.
Art answer'd?
Onesi. Would'st thou more?
Atal. No!—But say thy thought!
Oeesi. Meetly indulgent for a captive maid.—
I will proceed, and leave thee to decide,

Whether a free and queenly mistress, thou,
Ascend'st a monarch's throne and shar'st his rule,
Strong in sustaining majesty and pride,
Or, vainly chafing at thy prison bar,
Rav'st for the freedom that but mocks thy sight,
In gleams of blessed sky, or sudden breath
Of zephyr from the seas, or glimpse of wing,
Lustrous in noonday sunlight, that thou see'st
Disparting the white clouds!

Atal. Go on! Go on!

Onesi. Three princely cities own my single rule,—
Hamlets unnumbered,—homes that, scatter'd wide,
Hath each a mighty circle for a court,
Might clasp your utter empire. Plain and cave
Are thus made rich in dwellings for a tribe.
Each rock hath its high palace. Not a wave
Spans its receding billow but o'erswims
Some golden habitation; where the light,
A mitigated splendor, like the moon,
Without its chill and solitude, comes down
From empires where a thousand suns abide,
Struggling with rival splendors to inflame
A thousand realms like ours. There, subtle gems,
With glories such as starlight flings on earth,
Adorn the innoxious serpents, that for aye
Through the long hours, with toil that mocks fatigue,
Nightly replenishing their founts of light,
Trail through the giant groves, and meet in vales
Whose lavish wealth, in absence of the sun,
Still recompense his beams. There shalt thou see
Rocks, in their own gifts precious, at the stroke
Of wondrous masters, spring to palaces;
And, at a word, as thou hast cause to know,
Fair islands, flush with flowers, and rich in airs
Of most persuasive odor, break the deeps,
And gather in the sunlight. And again,
Even at the will of him whose sovereign power
Thou mock'st at in thy mood, evanishing,
Forget they had existence;—cheating thus

The gaze of simple mariner, who dreams
That, towards evening, he beholds the land
And cries it to his fellows,—who straight cheer
The hungering hope within them, while they spread
The broad and yellow sail, and urge their prows,
To find at last,—so wills my cunning art—
Some hazy cloud, that hangs with mocking skirts
Where slept the wooing land as night came down.

Atal. Ay, thou art all a cheat! 'Tis like thyself
To mock the weary heart, and still to vex
The sick soul's expectation. But thy power,
As thou describ'st it in thy fairest speech,
And most imploring aspect, moves not me,
And wins me not in wonder or in love.
The simple mariner who needs the barque,
Which, in their reckless mood, the waves may wreck,
And wanton winds destroy, affords, methinks,
But little trophy, with his bleaching bones,
On desert sands, and isles beyond thy gulph,
To him who conquers thus, even by a will,
Without the joy of conflict. Spare, I pray,
Thy farther story. Breathe, and let me breathe,
Some purer air than that which from thy lips
Assails each wholesome sense with sickliness.

Onesi. Wilt thou not hear me?

Atal. Can I else than hear,
Close girt as my poor fortunes find me now?
Wer't in my will, thou should'st play orator
To things of thy own fashion, not to me!
Thy jewel-headed serpents, the huge beast,
Thou rid'st to war, and whom, when met by foes
Thou can'st not baffle here, thou send'st to land,
To trample down the cities of the tribes
That only wet their feet within thy waves,
To bring down ruin on them. Go to these,
And tell them of thy prowess and thy wealth!—
Nor these, nor thee I heed, and would not hear.

Onesi. Thou bind'st thy fetters faster with each word!—
But ho!—That signal breaks my farther speech.

Here are new captives. Prone upon our isle
Comes some adventurous barque that must be stay'd,
And punish'd for its crime. We must not have
Thy presence mock'd with such vile things of earth,
That know not of the rarest beautiful,
Such as adorns thy virtues—makes thy form
Itself a virtue of the beautiful,
That spells all best affections at a glance,
And makes them slaves forever. I must speed
And save thee from these wretches, who shall taste
That pow'r which thou defy'st. But now look forth,
And see the great ship shatter'd into foam;
Fierce, rending wings among its cloud broad vans,
And mounting billows darting up its sides
To drag it down to ruin. Lend thine ear
To the wild music of their cries;—their shrieks
That the storm mocks, and the ascending seas
Stifle in their own murmurs!—It will need,
Fair Atalant, I leave thee:—yet, ere day
Hath fully, in the chambers of the deep,
Ta'en off his pinions;—ere this gentle eve,
With eyes of ever-dropping dews, hath shut
The sweet unmurmuring flow'rs,—and bade the night
Summon upon her realm the spirit airs
That all subdue to silence—the voiced things
Of myriad elements and agencies,
That breathe beneath the moon—I shall return
To seek thee with a hope;—ah! not in vain,—
Eager for fitting answer to that pray'r
That else must be the stern authority
Of will that breaks resistance. 'Till that hour,
Thou hast for calm reflection;—let it teach
A sweet response of sympathy to mine,
And love as yielding soft as mine is fond;—
Else, let thy fear ———

Atal. Thou know'st I have no fear!
Get thee hence, monster, to thy work of dread,
Since pray'r may never move thee. Thou'st no art
To work upon my terrors. My spirit is made

Of essence far more confident than thine.
Rather thou tremble, that, as I am pure,—
For so the ruler that we all obey
Hath will'd it—and most haply will'd it too—
I may command to use the spirits who rule
O'er the unclouded seasons—those who glide,
Through the illumined mansions of the night,
Teaching the stars their watches—those who sway,
With melodies of power, all elements—
And of the zephyr from the south and west,
The voice that comes with morning, and declares
The hour when day shall droop,—can call a spell
To dissipate the darkness, and dispart
Thy blackest shapes of storm.

Onesi. When thou art free!

Atal. Alas! that I were free,—then should'st thou feel,
And fly, and learn to spare!

Onesi. Now, I despise
And, as you speak their agencies, defy
The entire realm of air, the stars, and all,—
Your spirit of the south and of the west,
Your voice of night and morning, and their spells;—
Your tiny tribes, your coral queen—the hosts,
Myriads of lesser power and feebler wing,
That make your choice dominion—all I scorn!
And, but that mine own want would have thee grace,
With milder seeming this same pray'r of mine,
I should devote thee, heedless of the youth,
The glory and the beauty of thy form,—
Which, to mine eye, foul as you deem its make,
Stands up, a rich perfection, born to shine,
In any world of loveliness, the first—
To the same ruin and destruction sure
Thou hold'st for the most hateful enemy.
I love thee not to pleasure thee, or give
A satisfaction craved. I please myself,
And nothing care for others. I play not
The wary hypocrite, but speak my thought,—
My will, even as it rises to my thought;—

Nor seek I for thy love, but only seek
For such equivalent as may suffice,
In love's own absence, my enamored sense.
Thou hear'st me !—and thou know'st me ! It is well !
Be wise while thou art wary. I depart. [*Exit* ONESI.

Atal. Ay, go, thou loathsome ! Thou hast fill'd the air
With foulness, and my breath is scarce more free
Than the poor form thou hast fetter'd by thy fraud !
Thou, as thy menace, from my thought depart
I scorn thee and defy thy utmost power !
Thou hast no art to win me to thy will,
And, until I, forgetful of myself,
Do so declare me, thou can'st never bend
My spirit to thy purpose. I behold,—
Though in what shape it come I may not see,—
My liberation sure. Awhile, awhile !
Sweet patience in my circumscribéd bound,
Give me thy succor. Ere the moon shall soar
Thrice from her saffron chamber—ere the winds,
Sporting thrice round the red embodied day
Shall win him into smiles with melodies—
And, ere the wing'd stars, through the misty vault,
Gleam thrice upon the troubles of the night—
I shall be free this monster's pestilence.
Come hither to me, Nea. Thou, at least,
Art spared me, and he knows not—shallow king !
That knows not his own power, and little dreams,
Of captive but the one. Hither to me,
And let my sad eyes freshen with the sight,
The picture of the gentler clime and race,
In thy perfections, damsel. Wake thy shell,
And with a sweet song from its purple depths,
Call up the happier fancies that preside
O'er the dear hopes we see not. Let me lose
The turbulent thought within me !

A Voice. I am here, mistress.

SCENE II.—*The Same.*

ATALANTIS, NEA.

Atal. Thy sweetest song, my Nea,—
Such as he sings, the spirit of the shell,
That brooding in his billows never sleeps,
For longing of his home, and still who hears
Its voices, breathing ever sighs of love,
In echo to his own, by ocean's marge,
Telling of purple islets in the deep,
Where first he won his wings and whence his voice.

SONG OF THE SHELL-SPIRIT.

I.

I am of the sprites of ocean,
  Dweller there, the gentlest one,
And I take my airy motion,
  When the day is done;
It is mine, the voice that rouses
  All the lovely tribes of sea,
From their tiny coral houses,
  Glad to wake with me.

II.

When the sun, in ocean sinking,
  Leaves to fairy power the earth,
When the night stars, slowly winking,
  Bid the winds have birth;
Gently o'er the waters stealing,
  Mine's the song that sweetly flies,
Wooing to one common feeling
  Ocean, earth and skies.

III.

Loveliest of the zephyr's daughters,
  Born to breathe in bloom and shine,
I con still the angry waters
  With a breath of mine.
Not a stronger spirit rideth
  O'er the rolling waves than I;
Not a lovelier shape abideth
  'Neath the tropic sky.

Atal. Sweet is the air thou sing'st! Ah! would 'twere true!
Would that our spirit of the shell had power,

Such as thou brag'st of;—it were easy then,
Flung by our billows on this sultry isle,
To conjure up a service at his wings,
Might give us present freedom. Thou hast themes,
Might better suit our state than this which mocks,
Our hearts' best wishes. One of these, my girl,—
Some ditty of old romance, such as our realm—
A spacious province, where the wand'ring thought
And wilder'd fancy, erring, may be lost—
Owns without limit. Thou can'st meetly sing
Of bearded-white Ogrear, the giant-king,
Who, with the music of his magic horn,
Subdued, and to his pastures midst the rocks,
Guided the monster first, which, in itself,
Is a huge mountain, rolling on the deeps,
Unconscious of his load, though on his back,
Rode the old wizard's tribe—his giant sons
And daughters, an unnumbered family,
That sung in concert to the old man's horn,
Until the monster, drowsing in his path,
Yielded himself, as fast fix'd as an isle,
Through the long summer's day. This were a theme,
Might make us half forgetful that we weep
As fettered as was he. And other themes,—
The gloom that hangs above the prison house,
Might challenge something from thy memory,
More kindred to the touch of mournful thoughts.
Let thy song teach us of the coming hour,—
Sad time,—when on the perilous journey bent,
We pass the untravell'd valley, till we find,
That other province of delay,—that home,
Of temporary refuge, dark or bright,
As suited to the service we have done,
In past conditions;—other seas, perchance,
Unvex'd by contact with rebellious power,
Such as offends us here;—a happy realm,
Whose provinces are lit by countless smiles,
From the benignant presence of a God,
Whose will is born of love!—or, saddest thought,

Descending from our grade, in baser shape,
Doom'd in the mansions of sea-weed to dwell,
Thence only darting, under cruel impulse,
And chasing, with a terrible agony,
The wild and staring mariner, grown weak,
And hopeless of the shore, his straining balls,
Shall never more encounter.

Nea. None of these!—
Too sad thy fortunes now for themes so sad.—
But I would rather from my memory call,
Some of those ditties sung in happier days,
Which thou hast bid me thrice and thrice repeat,
And ever with the tear within thine eye,
Which spoke thy pleasure—when, upon the close,
Thou did'st, unconscious, with mine own chime in
The murmurs of thy melancholy voice,
Till the vex'd waters, wroth with overflow,
Subdued their sullen crests, in service rapt,
And, at thy feet, in murmurs like thine own,
Grew captive to our song. There is one strain
Methinks might glad thine ear, of Coraline—
One of those gentle damsels of the groves,
Whom sometimes we see sporting on the isles,
Amidst the flowers, when first upon the sky,
The moon's bright sickle glows. She taught it me;—
It tells of loves, and how they love, and speaks
So truly of the passion, that meseems,
It must have first been wrought within our cells,
And borrowed by these warblers of the wood.

Atal. Sing, if it speaks of love. Such song, methinks,
Must only make more hateful our constraint,
Upon this loathsome isle. I hearken thee.

SONG OF CORALINE.

I.

Be at my side when the winds are awaking,
Each from his cave, in the depths of the night;
Fly to our groves, till the daylight comes breaking,
Fresh from the east with his tremulous light.

When the stars peer out in the blue deeps of even,
  When the crowd is at rest, and the moon soars apace,
Silent and sad, through the watches of heav'n,
  Be thou, beloved, at the love-hallow'd place:
  Come in thy beauty and lightness,
    Bright-eyed and free-footed, O! dearest one, come,
  Filling the dark wood with brightness
    And crowning the green hill with bloom;—
Such bloom—the heart-chosen for thousand sweet groves,
As is dear to the wood-nymphs and born of their loves.

II.

In the spirit of beauty, bewitchingly tender,
  Fly to my bosom, beloved of my heart;
Thy lip bearing sweetness, thine eye giving splendor,
  Thy smile shedding rapture wherever thou art;
And while the pale moon-light is round and above thee,
  While the leaves twinkle soft in the breeze o'er thy brow,
Hear, dearest rose of my heart, how I love thee,
  And treasure, sweet spirit, my vow.
  Come! while the night-gems are glowing,
    Each in his orb, over forest and sea,
  Less glory, though bright in their beauty, bestowing
    Than that which now hangs about thee.
Fly to me, blest, in this gentlest of hours,
Outshining the planets, outblooming the flowers.

Atal. Thy song delights me not—nay, not thy song
That fails, the softness of thy linked words,
Or melody of thy music;—in my heart,
Lies the defect of sweetness—which comes not
To take the shadow from our prison-house.
It is the captive's spirit that complains,
Not Atalantis.

Nea. Would I could cheer thee, mistress.

Atal. Thou shalt, my Nea.—Speed thee round this isle,
And mark what thou behold'st. 'Tis not in thee,
To shrink from contact with the heavy earth,
Its damp and vapor. But to us, who are
Wrought of more delicate matter, all is gross
That yields this monster tribute.

Nea. We've some range,
Sweet mistress! and I prithee wend with me,
As near we may, the borders of the sea,
Looking toward our province. Better airs

Methinks, will come to cheer us into smiles,
From waters that we loved; and newer hopes,
As we look out upon the waste beyond,
Will freshen us with strength. Along the sea,
Some little range is left us. There we may,
Call up sweet fancies from our dreams of hope,
And feel the wayward spirit wake to life,
Surveying the blue waters and our home!

Atal. I'll go with thee! I pine for the sweet airs
Of my own Mergevan.

Nea. They'll seek us out,
With loving consciousness of that we seek.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*The Ocean: the islet of* ONESIMARCHUS *in the back ground—a ship in the distance, approaching. The Zephyr-Spirit rides upon the billow.*

Zephyr-Spirit. It is a gallant vessel, and it bends,
To the new islet of Onesimarch;—
That bigot and most brutal arbiter
Of eighty leagues of ocean. He hath rear'd,
In the past day, these undetected rocks,
Whose subtle currents, by his strategy,
Will suck the unconscious vessel to the snare;
Baffling the untutor'd mariner, whose skill
Might vainly hope escape, within the jaws
Of this dread artifice. Now, in the deep,
Will I dispose myself; and, by my art,
Conceal'd in folding billows, in the guise
Of green-hair'd maid of the waters, with a song
Still gently studied to invade his sense,
Will teach him of the danger he may 'scape
By seasonable flight. A human voice,
'Tis mine to mingle with these ocean tones,

And, by a sweet mysterious sympathy,
That ever still its benefit declares
To the unslumb'ring instinct, will I teach
The error of his prow. Haply, by this,
His way he may regain, and newly trim
His prone and headlong sail, that, steering thus,
Must soon encounter with the treacherous rocks,
That hunger for their prey. And, to my wish
Of swift concealment from his eager sight,
A sudden cloud is spreading o'er yon heap
Of crested waters. There will I imbed
My many folds of form, while, with my voice,
I frame a music for this mariner,
Not to beguile him with fresh fantasies,
But wake him to the peril in his path.

[*Scene changes to the deck of the ship. Count* LEON *musing at the side.*

Leon. [*Solus.*] I have been drowsing sure,—yet what a dream,
So strange to earth, so natural to romance ;—
And such wild music ;—hark !—it comes again.

SONG OF THE ZEPHYR-SPIRIT.

I.

I have come from the deeps where the sea-maiden twines,
In her bowers of amber, her garlands of shells;
For a captive like thee, in her chamber she pines,
And weaves for thy coming the subtlest of spells;
She has breathed on the harpstring that sounds in her cave,
And the strain as it rose has been murmured for thee;
She would win thee from earth for her home in the wave,
And her couch, in the coral grove, deep in the sea.

II.

Thou hast dream'd in thy boyhood of sea-circled bowers,
Where all may be found that is joyous and bright,—
Where life is a frolic through fancies and flowers,
And the soul lives in dreams of a lasting delight!
Would'st thou win what thy fancies have taught to thy heart?
Would'st thou dwell with the maiden now pining for thee?
Fling away from the cares of the earth, and depart
For her mansions of coral, far down in the sea.

III.

Her charms will beguile thee when noonday is nigh,
  The song of her nymphs shall persuade thee to sleep,
She will watch o'er thy couch as the storm hurries by,
  Nor suffer the sea-snake beside thee to creep;
But still with a charm which is born of the hours
  Her love shall implore thee to bliss ever free;
Thou wilt rove with delight through her chrystalline bow'rs,
  And sleep without care in her home of the sea.

Leon. Most sweet indeed, but something in the spell,
Proclaims it cold. Even were the precious love,
Such as this music speaks of, 'twere enough
To palsy passion in the human heart,
And make its fancies fail.—My Isabel.

Enter ISABEL.

Isabel. What wraps you thus, sweet brother? Why so sad,
When thus so trimly speeds our swanlike bark
O'er the smooth waters? But a few days more,
We tread the lovely island that we seek,
Whose bow'rs of beauty and eternal spring
Recal the first sweet garden of our race,
Before it knew the serpent. Dost thou sadden,
That thus we near those regions? Art thou sick,
Dear brother, that such vague abstraction creeps
Over your eyes, that seem as 'twere in search,
For airy speculations in the deep.

Leon. Thou'rt right!—An airy speculation sure,
Since I can nothing see to speak for it
And tell me whence it comes.

Isabel. What is't thou mean'st?

Leon. A moment,—stay! Now, as I live, I heard it
Steal by me, as the murmurs of a lute
From thy own lattice, Isabel.

Isab. What heard'st?—
What is it that thou speak'st of?

Leon. A strain of song,—
That crept along the waters from afar,
Softly at first, but growing as it came

To an embodied strength of harmony,
That spoke to all my joys. It bore a tone
Slight as a spirit's whisper, born of love
In aspiration,—such as innocent youth
Acknowledges at first, ere yet the world,
Has schooled it by its sorrows to caprice.
'Twas like thy own sweet music, Isabel,
When out among our Andalusian hills,
We play'd the dusk Morisco for a while,
Grown wanton in the moonlight with the flowers
That seemed to sing us back. Oh! thou should'st hear
To sadden with its sweetness.

Isab. Thou hast dream'd!—
Whence should such music come?

Leon. Ay! whence indeed,
But from some green-hair'd maiden of the deep,
As still our legends tell us, such there be,
That, sitting on the edge of lonely rocks,
Midway in ocean, loose their flowing locks,
And, with strange songs, discoursing to the waves,
Subdue their crests to service.

Isab. As the tale
Of Nicuesa pictures. Would'st thou hear?

Leon. Sing it my Isabel.

Isab. 'Tis something like
Thy fancy,—nay, has been the making of 't,
While thou wert dreaming. But thou did'st not dream.

BALLAD.

I.

'Mong Lucayo's isles and waters
Leaping to the evening light,
Dance the moonlight's silver daughters
Tresses streaming, glances gleaming
Ever beautiful and bright.

II.

And their wild and mellow voices,
Still to hear along the deep,
Every brooding star rejoices,
While the billow, on its pillow
Lull'd to silence, sinks to sleep.

III.

Yet they wake a song of sorrow,
  Those sweet voices of the night;
Still from grief a gift they borrow,
And hearts shiver, as they quiver
  With a wild and sad delight.

IV.

'Tis the wail for life they waken
  By Samana's lonely shore;
With the tempest it is shaken,
The wide ocean is in motion
  And the song is heard no more.

V.

But the gallant bark comes sailing,
  At her prow the chieftain stands;
He hath heard the tender wailing—
It delights him—it invites him
  To the joys of other lands.

VI.

Bright the moonlight round and o'er him,
  And, O! see, a picture lies
In the yielding waves before him,—
Woman smiling, still beguiling
  In the depths of wondrous eyes.

VII.

White arms toss above the waters,
  Pleading murmurs fill his ears,
And the Queen of Ocean's daughters,
Heart alluring, love assuring
  Wins him down with tears.

VIII.

On, the good ship speeds without him,
  By Samana's lonely shore;
They have wound their arms about him,
In the waters,—ocean's daughter's,
  Sadly singing as before!

Leon. Unhappy Nicuesa!

Isab. Such his song,
And, with the ocean murmur in thy ears,
Thy fancy, in thy dream, has made it thine.

Leon. I did not sleep or dream, my Isabel;—
I heard this wondrous music, even now,

When first I summon'd thee. I grant it strange
That it should syllable to familiar sound,
Boyhood's first fancies, of fair isles that lie
In farthest depths of ocean,—jewell'd isles
Boundless in but imaginable spoils,
Such as boy-visions only can conceive
And boyhood's faith admit.

Isab. And still thou dream'st!—
Thy boyhood's legends and thy boyhood's faith,
Grown fresh beneath the force of circumstance,
And the wild fancies of this foreign world,
Still carry thee away,—'till thou forget'st,—
As still the wisest may,—the difference,
'Twixt those two worlds,—the one where nature toils,
The other she but dreams of.

Leon. 'Twas no dream!
It comes again! Now hark thee, Isabel—
It is no murmur of the deep thou hear'st!
It hath a voice not human,—not unlike—
And sings, as still a spirit might do, that wills
To do humanity service. Hark!

Isab. I do!—
Yet I hear nothing.

Leon. Sure, I did not dream!
'Twas like the zephyr through a bed of reeds
Sighing as 'twere at cheerlessness of home,
In the approach of winter.

Isab. Oh! no more!—
Thou art too led astray by idle thoughts,
Dear Leon;—dost possess thee of the hues,
Shed by the passing cloud, and mak'st thy heart,
Still the abiding place of hopeless fancies
That waste thy strength of will. Thou art too prone
To these wild speculations.

Leon. Hear it now!
My fancy trick'd me not,—my sense was true,—
It comes again, far off, and very fine,
As the first birth 'twixt silence and his mate,
The mother of the voice. Now, Isabel,—

Thy ears are traitors if they do not feel
That music as it sweeps by us but now.
Isab. I hear a murmur truly, but so slight—
A breath of the wind might make it, or a sail
Drawn suddenly.
Leon. Art silenced? It is there!

ZEPHYR-SPIRIT.

In the billow before thee
My form is conceal'd—
In the breath that comes o'er thee
My thought is reveal'd—
Strown thickly beneath me
The coral rocks grow,
And the waves that enwreath me,
Are working thee wo.

Leon. Did'st hear it, Isabel?
Isab. It spoke, methought,
Of peril from the rocks that near us grow.
Leon. It did, but idly! Here can lurk no rocks
For, by the chart which now before us lies,
Thy own unpractised eye may well discern
The wide extent of the ocean—shoreless all;
The land, for many a league, to th' westward hangs,
And not a point beside it.
Isab. Wherefore then,
Should come this voice of warning?
Leon. From the deep:
It hath its demons as the earth and air,
All tributaries to the master-fiend
That sets their springs in motion. This is one,
That, doubting to mislead us, plants this wile,
So to divert our course, that we may strike
The very rocks he fain would warn us from.
Isab. A subtle sprite—and, now I think of it,
Dost thou remember the old story told
By Diaz Ortis, the lame mariner,
Of an adventure in the Indian seas,
Where he made one with John of Portugal,—
Touching a woman of the ocean wave

That swam beside the barque and sang strange songs
Of riches in the waters;—with a speech
So winning on the senses, that the crew,
Grew all infected with the melody,
And, but for a good father of the church
Who made the sign of the cross and offer'd up
Befitting pray'r, which drove the fiend away,
They had been tempted by her cunning voice
To leap into the ocean.

Leon. I do, I do!
And, at the time, I do remember me,
I made much mirth of the extravagant tale,
As a deceit of the reason;—the old man
Being in his second childhood, and at fits,
As wild, in other histories, as this.

Isab. I never more shall mock at marvellous things;
Such strange conceits hath after time found true,
That once were themes for jest. I shall not smile
At the most monstrous legend.

Leon. Nor will I!—
To any tale of foreign wonderment,
I shall bestow mine ear nor wonder more;
And every image that my childhood bred,
In vagrant dreams of fancy, I shall look,
To find, without rebuke, my sense approve.
Thus, like a little island of the deep,
Girdled by perilous seas, and all unknown
To prows of venture, may be yon same cloud
Specking, with fleecy bosom, the blue sky,
Lit by the rising moon. There, we may dream,
And find no censure in an after day,
Throng the assembled fairies, perch'd on beams,
And riding on their way triumphantly.
There gather the coy spirits. Many a fay,
Roving the silver sands of that same isle,
Floating in azure ether, plumes her wing
Of ever-frolicsome fancy, and pursues,
While myriads like herself, do watch the chase,
Some truant sylph, through the infinitude

Of their uncircumscribed and rich domain.
There sport they through the night, with mimicry
Of strife and battle,—striking their tiny shields
And gathering into combat; meeting fierce,
With lip compress'd, and spear aloft, and eye
Glaring with desperate purpose in the fight;—
Then sudden—in a moment all their wrath
Mellow'd to friendly terms of courtesy—
Throwing aside the dread array and link'd,
Each, in his foe's embrace. Then comes the dance,
The grateful route, the wild and musical pomp,
The long procession o'er fantastic realms
Of cloud and moonbeam, through th' enamour'd night,
Making it all one revel. Thus, the eye
Breathed on by fancy, with enlargéd scope,
Through the protracted and deep hush of night,
May note the fairies, coursing the lazy hours,
In various changes, and without fatigue.
A fickle race, who tell their time by flow'rs,
And live on zephyrs, and have stars for lamps,
And night-dews for ambrosia; perch'd on beams,
Speeding through space, even with the scattering light
On which they feed and frolic.

Isab. A wild dream!—
And yet, since this old tale of Diaz Ortis,
That moved our laughter once, is thus made sooth,
Perchance, not all a dream.

Leon. Yet, may we doubt!—
There may be something in this marvel still
Of human practice. Man hath wondrous powers,
Most like a God;—that, with each hour of toil,
Perfect themselves in actions strangely great.
Some cunning seaman, having natural skill,
As by the books we learn hath oft been done,
Hath 'yond our vessel's figure pitch'd his voice,—
With gay deceit of unsuspected art,
Leading us wantonly.

Isab. It is not so;—
Or, does my sense deceive? Look, where the wave

A perch beyond our vessel, grows in folds
That seem not like the element. Dost see?

Leon. A marvellous shape that with the billow curls,
In gambols of the deep, and yet is not
Its wonted burden; for, beneath the waves,
I mark the elaborate windings of a form,
That heaves and flashes with an antic play,
As if to win our gaze.

Isab. Again—it sings.

ZEPHYR-SPIRIT.

I.

By the planet at whose bid,
I must close the heavy lid,
Ere the hour that wings my flight
I unfold me to your sight,
That your wondering thoughts may find,
Something to awake the mind;—
To arouse ye with a fear,
Do I sing and wanton here;
Sing with sorrow lest too late,
Ye awaken to your fate:
Hearken to my voice and fly,
For the danger lurketh nigh.

II.

Deem me not a form of ill,
Free to lure and injure still;—
Mine's the gentler task to save
From the perils of the wave.
When thou feel'st the tempest's shocks,
I send breezes off the rocks;
When the ocean's calm as death,
From me comes the tradewind's breath;—
For my essence is not made
Of the cold and gloomy shade,
But of gentlest dews of night,
And of purest rays of light.

III.

Heed me then, and turn thy prow
From the rocks that wait thee now;—
Close beneath thee, do they sleep
In the hollows of the deep;
And thy sail is truly prone
Where the yellow sand is strown;

And no human pow'r can save
From the terrors of the wave,
Smooth, and gently gliding, now,
With a whisper, round thy prow;
In an hour and all is o'er—
Thou wilt hear my voice no more.

Leon. 'Tis passing strange, and it were well to rouse
The master to this marvel. What, ho! there!
Hark ye, good Mendez Celer, lend awhile
Your presence here on deck.

Enter MENDEZ CELER.

Mendez. Who summons me?
Ha! brave Don Leon, but thou look'st as wild,
As thou hadst spoke some monster of the deep,
And shipp'd his tidings in a sea of foam.
Had'st thou but weather'd awhile the Indian seas,
As I have done, where, from his fiery steep,
El Norté plunges headlong o'er the seas,
Smiting the billows with his scourge of wings
'Till their gray scalps lie flat, methinks thine eyes,
That find a wonder in each hour of change,
Would soon grow slow to marvel.

Leon. It may be,—
Yet there's a marvel here to challenge well
Thy old experience in these wizard seas.
Here swam a voice that spoke to us in song
Of most prevailing sweetness. There it rose—
Even from yon heap of waters, which thou see'st
Still stirring with an action not their own,
Unlike the rest of the ocean. Thou may'st note
Where the sea rises and the billows toss,
Still swelling in strange folds. 'Tis there it moves,—
From thence the music came.

Men. What said the song?
A ditty of the marvellous love, I ween,
The girl of the ocean bears thee—was it not?

Leon. No, in no wise!—the tones it used were soft,
And the words gentle, and the music sweet,
But yet it spoke no love and ask'd for none.—

It rather told of danger to our barque;—
Of rocks in certain and near neighborhood,
And shoals and sands, that close beneath our prow,
Are lurking to ensnare.

Men. Bah! good Don Leon!
'Tis, as we say in Palos, a poor devil
That goes without his brimstone.—A dull cheat
Who when he shows his hook forgets the bait.
Your sea-girl was a young one. Mark me now,
There is no land—no single spot of shore
Whereon a plank or spar might lie at ease,
Within a five day's sail of us. I've been
Some fifty years a mariner, and scarce,
In all that time, have been from off the seas
A month or two, at farthest, at a spell;
And this same route o'er which we travel now,
Comes to me as my nightcap or my prayers—
I put not on the one, nor say the other,
Yet both are done, the thanks to Mary Mother,
And I am none the wiser.

Leon. It is strange
That we should hear this music!

Men. Not a whit.
I've oftentimes heard from the Portuguese—
I'm rather one myself, belike you know,
My father having stray'd, at a wrong time,
From Lisbon to my mother's house at Palos,
And then it came about that I was born—
(Nothing ill-graced to Lady Isabel;)
And, as I say, it is a standing tale
With the old seamen, that a woman comes—
Her lower parts being fishlike—in the wave;
Singing strange songs of love, that so inflame
The blinded seamen, that they steal away
And join her in the waters; and; that then,
Having her victim, she is seen no more.

Leon. And is it deemed, the men thus wildly snared
Become a prey and forfeit life at once?

Men. So must it be; and yet, there is a tale

That they do wed these creatures; which have power,
So to convert their nature, as to make,
As to themselves, the sea their element;
And have a life renew'd, though at the risk
And grievous peril of their christian souls,
Doom'd thence unto perdition.

Leon. And you then
Think nothing of this warning?

Men. By your grace,
Surely, I hold it the wild lustful song
Of this same woman. She has lost, perchance,—
Since death must come at last who comes to all,—
Her late companion. Would you take his place?
If not, wax up your ears, and sleep secure,
There's nought to fear, and sea-room quite enough.

Shock—the ship strikes.

God, and thou gracious Mary, what is that?

Ship strikes again.

We're in our certain course—what may this mean?

Leon. The vessel strikes—she strikes again and shivers,
Through all her frame, as if convulsed with horror,
She felt herself the pangs we soon must feel!
The devil speaks truth, for once, good Mendez Celer!

Men. Oh, holy Mary, and thou gracious shield
Gentle Saint Anthony, lend us now your aid;
Speak fairly to the waters—see us through
This sad deceit. Below there—hands aloft!—
Ho, Juan! trim the sail,—out with the lead—
Helm down, Pedrillo—Hernan—luff yet more.
Jesu! She rides again—we yet may swim!

Vessel strikes heavily upon the rocks.

It is all over!. To your prayers at once!
There is no longer hope, nor chance of life,
Unless from the good saints and Mary Mother,
We may have mercy and sweet countenance!

[*The master takes a leaden image from his hat and prostrates himself before it. Storm rises.*

Gracious Saint Anthony, for fifty years
We've voyaged in company, and now,
I pray thee, in this strait, that thou forsake not,
Thy ancient comrade. To thy use I vow—
If thou wilt man our yards, and trim our sails
And lift our ragged keel from off these rocks,—
A box of Cadiz candles ——

Leon. Be a man!
Rise, Mendez, to the peril and the storm.
Let us do something for ourselves, nor ask
The smiles of heaven upon our fears alone.
Shall we but crouch and perish, with no stroke
Made for our lives! For shame, sir—ply your men;
Nor with an idle pray'r which the waves mock
And the winds laugh at, show our feebleness.
If there be land so nigh, as by our glance,
The eye may seem to conjure, we may try,
The little we can do, to save our lives.
The boats—get out the boats!

Men. In vain—in vain;
No boat may live in such a sea as that.
Look at this surf, that chafes like a wild beast,
And ramps, like something mad, upon the rocks.
This is the strangest chance I yet have known:—
By the chart we are in the open sea,
And here we meet with land, where land is none.
A moment since, and the whole sea was calm,
Now boils it like a cauldron—and the winds,
That late were almost breathless, now exclaim
In wrath, and yell like fiends above the sea.
Oh, Mary Mother, in this strait befriend!—
To thee, to Jesu, and the saints alone,
May we now look for mercy!

[*Storm increases. Ship strikes with increasing violence.*

Leon. So we perish!—
The ship is parting! We must try the boat,
Whate'er the peril from the raging sea!
Better, thus struggling in the embrace of strife,

To meet the fatal enemy, than thus,
With idly folded arms and shivering fears
That mock the very passion in our prayer
With broken utterance most unmeet for heaven,
Await him feebly here. Ho! man the boat.

Isab. Leave me not, brother, for a moment now!
There's not a pressing danger, or I do
Greatly mistake the courage in your eye,
That hath no touch of terror in its calm,
And looks the strength of safety.

Leon. Yet, there is,
Dear Isabel, a danger of the worst,
Now pressing on our lives with terrible wrath,
That needs the soul's best fortitude and hope
To meet with manhood. We may yet escape,
So, take you heart. Look not with such an eye,
Or I may fail at this most perilous hour,
And sink into the woman. Be all firm,
And like our mother, dearest,—nor grow weak,
When I do tell you that the chances gather
Against our fondest hope.

Isab. And is it so?—
And you and I, dear Leon,—both so young,
So fond,—so full of life's best promises,—
Thus sudden cut from all—the loved, the loving,—
And by a fate so terrible.

Leon. Still hope!—
Since combatting the fear that ushers death,
We little feel his shaft. Whatever haps,
Be firm, and cling to me. Keep close at hand,
And, with the mercy of God, through every chance,
Dear sister, I devote myself to thee.

Isab. I know thou wilt!—I will be at thy side,
Nor trouble thee with my terrors.

Leon. Noble girl!
My safety shall be thine;—and if I fail,
'Twill somewhat soothe the pang of that sad passage
That still we go together. We have lived,

So truly in one another from the first,
And known no sense of pleasure, not inwrought,
With twin affection in our mutual hearts,
That 'twill not move our chiding when the fate
Strikes both in one, and with a kindly blow,
Secures 'gainst future parting.

Isab. I'll not chide!
I will be firm,—and yet I dread the rage
And rushing of the waters. How they roar,
And lash themselves to madness o'er our bows!
I dread me, Leon, that my senses fail!
Mine eyes grow blind—I see thee not—Here, here!
My brother, leave me not.

Leon. I'm here with thee?

Isab. Dost hear me when I speak,—dost hear me, brother?—
I cannot hear myself. My voice is gone,
Drown'd in that horrible coil of storm and billow
That fain would wrap us all. That crash!— [*Shrieks.*

Leon. Hither!—
I have thee, poor unconscious!—child of sorrow,
That hast no farther feeling of thy wo!
Make way there.

Mariner. The boat is ready, masters.

[*The vessel parts. The seamen enter the boat. Leon lifts Isabel into it.*

Men. Delay not now for me—bear off, bear off,—
I go in no new craft—my log's complete.
This is my ninetieth voyage, and the last,
Though not the longest or most fortunate.
I cannot leave the ship—it is our creed—
Till she leaves me. We've sailed together long—
And if I 'scaped the present, would not much
Survive her reckoning. Bid me well at home,
And say the manner of my death to all.
Tell old Bertiaz, should you ever make
The shore I never more shall touch again,
(He owns the vessel), that the "Arragon"
(Too fine a name for such a fate as this,)

Is Arragon no longer. You may say—
'Twill do me good in my grave—I died in her.

[*They leave her—she goes to pieces in their sight.*

SCENE II.—*The Boat.*

Mariner. There, she goes down,—the master still in her;
I see him on a spar, and—now he sinks.
Pull there more freely, boys. The swell she makes
May trouble us greatly. Fiercely, all at once,
Mark you, Don Leon, how the waters leap,
And the seas whiten. These are ugly rocks.

Leon. The billows rush on madly, as they were
Some battling armies. These are cruel waves,
That, fastening on our sides, still clamber high,
More like the forms of demons, dark and dread,
With fiend malignity and bent on wrath,
Than billows of the ocean. We shall scarce—
Unless good fortune and the blessed saints
Look kindly on us—overcome the space,
Growing as we o'erleap it, that, between,
Now keeps us from yon islet, which I mark,
Dim, in the distance, o'er the swell in front.
Pray ye, strike full your oars and all at once,
Cheerly and bold, becoming fearless men;—
And, if we live, God's blessing on your service,
But lack, ye shall not, your reward on earth.
My arm grows weary with the weight upon 't
Of this most precious burden; while a cloud
Like a thick pitchy wall, right in our way
Rests heavily on the waters, and denies
That I should see beyond. Give way, like men,
And enter the deep darkness unafraid.

[*The boat disappears.*

SCENE III.—*The ocean waste.*

Zephyr Spirit. Now, terribly to the waters comes the form,
Of that fierce savage and malignant king,
Onesimarch. Behind him gathering rush,

Clouds of his brutal followers, clad in wrath,
Howling for prey. Beneath their vexing spells
The deep boils like a whirlpool, and the waves,
So lately still and placid, wrought to rage,
Leap up about the poor ill-fated barque.
Now grappling to her prow, they drag her down,
The billows rushing in; and, wrapt in each,
Some of the monster's followers, well conceal'd,
With fierce and furious might, impel her down;—
Now mount her bending sides, now strike with force
Their own, against her weak and shrieking ribs—
Tear up her planks, and rushing through the space,
Rend her broad back, and o'er the flinty rocks
Drag the too yielding keel until it parts.
Onesimarch, himself, a hungry fiend,
With darker powers endow'd, with sulphur arm'd,
Hurls a perpetual lightning, which distracts
And dazzles the weak eye. He shapes their course,
And guides the tribute legions; working new joys
From out the wrongs he doth, for his own sense,
And for that potentest of all the fiends,
By whom his power is wrought. And now, they chant
A song of terror in the drowning ears
Of the wild seamen, cutting off all hope
That manhood may achieve against its fate.

SCENE IV.—*The Same.*

Storm. Flight of Sea-Demons, singing.

I.

Fly, let us fly,
Through the perilous sky,
Angels of terror and tumult on high;
As the ship glides
Through the treacherous tides,
Break down her bulwarks and rush through her sides.

II.

Why, tell us why,
Breathing the sky,
Should they still offer orisons on high;

Why should they pray,
Creatures of clay,
Whose hope is a fancy, whose life is a day.

III.

Forth, lo, where forth,
Rides from the north,
The prince of sea-demons, the monarch of worth;
Here, at our need,
With the storm for his steed,
The dreadful in might and the matchless in speed.

IV.

Come, brothers, come,
Join for their doom,
While the Tempest-God rolls on his storm-beaten drum;
Mortals prepare,
For the hour is near,
When ours is the triumph and yours the despair.

CHORUS OF DEMONS.

From the regions south and the regions north,
Mount ye, and speed ye, and hurry ye forth;
From where the sun fails, in the putrid gales,
Launch ye abroad on your shadowy sails;—
Onesimarch leaps, from the fathomless deeps,
Where still as the prince of the demons he keeps;—
Darkening the skies as onward he hies,
To the doom of the mortal, with terror he flies;
Haste ye and come, join in the doom,
Rousing your legions in tempest and gloom,
We feast on the terrors of man, and we cheer,
With a triumph that grows with his grief and despair.

[*Demons pass onward.*

SCENE V.—*The Boat.*

Mariner. Master, we strive in vain.
Leon. We can but die.
Mar. Why toil for it?
Leon. As one who strikes his foe,
Though conscious that he battles without hope,
And dies in the brave conflict.—Ha! she stirs.
Isab. [*recovering.*] Horrible sounds are rushing through mine ears,
More like the cries of demons, mad for blood,

Than the hoarse billows and the roaring winds.
They dart into my brain, and seem to shout,
Triumphant, oh, my brother, o'er our fate; —
Speak of the sorrow in our father's halls,
That, with an anguish, far too great for speech,
Grows dumb and scorns expression. Could we live—
But live to see him once!—oh, bear me up;—
Desert me not, dear Leon, but entwine,
Closely, thy arm around; nor let these waves,
That seem impatient of their midnight feast,
Suck me into their black and ravenous jaws.

Leon. Doubt me not, Isabel, in this dark hour!
Think'st thou I could desert thee, precious sweetness,
To whose frail nature and too delicate youth
Sweet elements should minister with love,
Not hunt with hate. I have thee in my arms;
Will hold thee, while they have their hold in life,
And I have thought and sense to will the struggle
That wards the final danger from thy breast.
But, cling to me, my sister.

Isab. Will I not?
Why should we think of death?

Mar. It comes! It comes!

[*The boat strikes and goes to pieces.*

Leon. Isabel,—sister!

Isab. [*faintly afar off.*] Here, Leon, here!

Leon. Oh, Jesu! lost!

[*Scene closes.*]

SCENE VI.—*The Ocean waste.*

Zephyr-Spirit. 'Tis done! The strife is over. Hope is none!
These cruel demons triumph, with a rage
That mocks at mortal strength. Prone to the deep,
I watch'd that hungry slave, Calemmia, seize,
Conceal'd in a dense billow, on the prow;
And, all despite the seaman's sturdy stroke,
The helmsman's firm direction, and the cheer

Of that strong human impulse, which did grow,
Upon the sight of land, into a hope;
Drag her among the sharp rocks, while the surfs
Beat her to pieces. She is scattered far—
A spar floats on the wave—a single oar,
Cast high among the sands, alone has reach'd
The mocking shores that wreck'd them. Yet, not so!—
I mark a floating form that struggles still,
With a most human love of life, afar.
Him may I succor, and, with safety now;—
The legions of Onesimarch, being done
Their toil of terror, have, for newer spoils,
Wrapt in a gathering cloud, departed hence,
Leaving all calm again. Curl'd in this wave,
I will beneath him glide, and bear him up;
'Till, on the shore, beyond the ocean's swell,
He rests in safety. I can do no more—
Since, in gross contact with the heavy earth,
I lose the subtle power that makes my gift,
And forfeit, of the light ethereal nature,
The buoyant spirit that supplies its wing.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The islet of* ONESIMARCHUS.

ATALANTIS, NEA.

Atal. This islet hath no quality of joy,
Fair to the sight, or fragrant to the sense,—
No beauty that upon its surface glows,
No treasure that within its bosom sleeps;—
It is the foul'st deception—all is gross,
And tainted with that sinborn leprousness
That marks the soul who will'd it into birth,

And raised its treacherous rocks along the deep.
No innocent beast hath dwelling in this clime,
No valley blooms with verdure. Not a flower,
Gems the bleak sands, that, barrenly spread out,
Pain the unsatisfied and wandering eye,
That, seeing nought else, grows weary. Not a bird
But, as he flies above, subdues his voice,
And, panting in his silence, quickens his wing,
Having a nameless terror. The foul taint
That poisons all things in this tyrant's sway,
Takes from them all their virtue. Not a shrub
Breathes fragrance to the breeze, whose whisper'd plaint
Would woo it still to fondness. Not an air
Enters these bounds, but flags and settles down
Clumsy and wingless; and the very stars,
Do seem to leave their places in the heavens,
Looking down on it. Even we, who are
Of a tenacious temper, yielding nought,—
If that our hearts be pure and souls be firm—
To the capricious influence,—we lose
Something of that refined and subtler sense,
Which gives us power to meet and match the sway
Of his low cunning and detested art.
How heavy is this silence! What a spell,
Comes, with the sullen muttering of the winds,
Now sweeping from the waters; and, how sad
Are the faint murmurs of yon moaning sea,
In the far distance chiding, as in grief,
For some new stroke of sorrow. All things yield—
So it would seem—a something to the spell,
That makes his power, and keeps us captive here;
Wrapping us in a circle, not to move,
Or strive, lest it undoes us. The shrill scream
Of one poor gull, that, o'er the whiten'd foam,
Hung with gray wing suspended, breaks no more,
Fitfully on the ear;—and all of life,
Seems resolute to pay its offering now,
To that dread silence, which, in human sense,
Makes up the all of death!

Nea. Even as thou say'st!—
'Tis a sad spot, fair mistress; sad for us,
That have been wont, in finer element,
To drink the nurture of a better lot.
Ah! how unlike the sweet life of the light,
Blessing the fair dominion thou hast lost;—
Lost for a season only,—yet too long,
Since such a dwelling as we find perforce,
Subdues the heart to sorrows not its own,
Which still must bide in memory. I feel
How dreary is the labor of restraint,
This watching, waiting,—when my wonted use,
Would have me winging an unlicensed flight,
Now in the embracing air, now through the deeps,
Disparting their white billows night and morn,
With no more pause than to adjust my plumes,
Ruffled by zephyrs; then, with fresh device,
Soaring in wilder progress,—sea and sky,
Our ample field, and the delighted tribes,
Their habitants, come forth to share the chase.
Atal. And lack'st thou now all wonted qualities—
Thy dance, thy song, whose melodies can make
The mad seas sleep when wildest, while the winds
Hold up their cloudy vans to hear thy lay!
Hast thou no strains to fit these drowsy hours
With wings of light and fragrance, while the thought
Grows wanton and forgetful of the grief
That burden'd it with gloom? Methinks,
'Twere in thy happy spells of verse to find
Some carol of our own domain, to take
The impatient soul, and in delicious dews,
Steep the fine sense to sweet forgetfulness.
Sing me some ditty from our Mergevan,
While every flower, in gardens of the past,
Our hands have ever gathered, the young page,
Whose name is Memory, faithful to his task,
Shall bring anew to joy us in our need.
Give me the song the Flow'r-Spirit once framed,
When, through our gardens, far beneath the sea,

Wall'd in by wildest waters, we pursued,
For the first time, the summer festival.

SONG OF THE FLOWER-SPIRIT.

I.

I am the spirit that sleeps in the flower,
Mine is the music of fragrance that flies,
When silence and moonlight are dressing each bow'r,
That blooms in the favor of tropical skies:
I win the bird with new melody glowing,
To rise with the zephyr, and warble his strain;
And mine is the odor, in turn, that bestowing,
The minstrel is paid for his music again.

II.

Sorrow comes never where I am abiding,
The tempests are strangers and far from us rove,
I woo the zephyrs too hurriedly riding,
And gently they linger and fill us with love.
They pause, and we glow in their winning embraces;
They drink our warm breath, rich with odor and song;
Then hurry away to their desolate places,
And look for us hourly, and mourn for us long.

III.

We were born of the dews, and our destiny found us,
Embraced by a sunbeam, all budding and bright,
On its wing, came from heaven, the color that crown'd us
And the odor that makes us a living delight.
And when the warm glories of summer stream on us,
Our winglets of silk we unfold to the air;
Leaping upward in joy to the spirit that won us,
And made us the tenants of dwellings so fair.

Atal. The ocean hath no calm like what is here—
And, if the waters might unfold to us,
There hath been recent strife upon their waves.
Here come its tokens. These are broken spars
From some tall ship, that lately sped along,
As oft-times I have seen them, with a grace
And majesty, becoming in a queen,
Ruling a thousand seas. It is a game,
Onesimarch delights in, to destroy,
The goodly creatures that do dwell in them—
Shaped like ourselves, though little taught to cope,
In knowledge with ourselves. Inferior things

Of lower grade, who, when we have become,
The tenants and possessors of a realm,
Now far beyond our state, shall rise to ours,
As we enjoy it now. But what is here,
Grasping a shaft and lifelessly spread out?
[*Seeing the body of* LEON.

Nea. One of the creatures of that goodly barque,—
Perchance, the only one of many men,
That, from their distant homes, went forth in her,
And here have perish'd.

Atal. There is life in him;—
His bosom swells, methinks, beneath my hand,—
With fitful pulse—most faint—now here—now gone!
Alas! I fear it may not come again.
How very young he is—how beautiful—
Made with a matchless sense of what is true,
In manly grace and mortal elegance;
And features, rounded in as soft a mould,
As our own, Nea.

Nea. His eye unfolds.

Atal. Ah!
Stand aside, girl, and let me look on him.
I see not that he wakes.

Nea. But now he did.

Atal. Alas! he sleeps in death! How pitiful
That one so young, and princely in his port,
Should fall so soon a victim. He hath been,
I doubt not, a great noble with his people.
How should it be that such a form as this,
So lovely and commanding in its aspect,
Should rank below the people of our race?
Methinks he is a creature, that, in life,
Might stand compared with any of our chiefs.

Nea. At least, in outward seeming.

Atal. And this speaks,—
Where still the brow is lofty, and the form
Familiar, in erect and graceful carriage,—
For that which guides within.

Nea. He looks well;—

Yet may he be a thing of seeming only,
Wanting in all that higher sense of soul,
Which makes the virtue of true excellence.
Atal. Oh! I am sure there is no want in him;
The spirit must be true, the sense supreme,
The soul as far ascending, strong and bright,
As is the form they do inhabit in
Breathe on him, Nea; fan him with thy wing
And rouse him, if thou canst. Oh! could I bring
The life into his cheek. Stay, yet awhile;—
Now, while his senses sleep, I'll place my lip
Upon his own—it is so beautiful!
Such lips should give forth music—such a sweet
Should have been got in heaven,—the produce there,
Of never blighted gardens. [*Kisses him.*
Leon. [*starts*] Cling to me—
Am I not with thee now, my Isabel! [*Swoons again.*
Atal. Oh, gentle sounds—how sweetly did they fall,
In broken murmurs, like a melody,
From lips, that waiting long on loving hearts,
Had learn'd to murmur like them. Wake again,
Sweet stranger! If my lips have wrought this spell,
And won thee back to life, though but to sigh,
And sleep again in death,—they shall, once more,
Wake and restore thee.
Nea. You arouse him not.
Atal. Alas! should life's string, overstrained, be crack'd,
No more to be reknit, I forfeit peace
Forever,—never more to hope for joy
In any life that follows.
Nea. Oh! my mistress,
This passion of grief—
Atal. Nea, now at last,
I feel that I do love! The sudden fire
Kindles at last, where never yet before,
Its spark found nurture. If it be in vain!—
I, that had scorn'd the suppliant before,
I too, must be the suppliant for a love,
That's born without a hope. The lesson comes

Too late, and I have but to weep o'er dreams
That have no waking promise for the heart,
And leave it but to tears. Alas! alas!
[*Throws herself upon* LEON.

Nea. Oh! yield not thus, my mistress, to a passion
That never can be blest. The best of love
Still teaches sorrow as his natural gift,
More sure than precious.

Atal. Know you ought of love?

Nea. As of a power that 's best esteemed in fancy,
In which he more abides than in the heart.
Love's but an artful tyrant. He first wins
By the most servile flatteries. He can stoop
The better to ascend; and pliant grows,
When most the secret purpose in his soul,
Makes him unyielding. Pleasant is his prayer;—
He will discourse you in the dove's own note,
Cooing and plaining, with such murmur'd sweets,
That pity learns to take the place of doubt,
And paves the way for trust. But, wait awhile,
And soon his habit changes. He grows apt,—
Learns the new lesson his condition makes,
As readily as the old; and, sure of power,
Firm, with free footing walks, where late he crept.
Then, see you heed the master;—who will now
Claim, for his right, that which he lately sued,
As the poor meed of charity; and thus
Step by step upward, with insidious art,
And cunning most unequal'd, doth he rise
Until you find your neck beneath his foot,
And you become his slave, who once was yours.

Atal. Oh! terrible,—where heard you this of love?

Nea. From many teachers.

Atal. Did they know him well?
They slander him, methinks.

Nea. They suffer'd first!
Our minstrels note him thus!—Our maidens taught
By many a hapless lesson, thus describe,
His art and empire. They do further tell,

Beyond his tyrant habits, that his sweets
Are few and failing. Painful, do they say,
Are even the creature's pleasures, since they wake
Such doubts and dread misgiving for their loss,
As even their joys can't equal. The sick soul,
That grieves with love's delusions, evermore dreams
Dreading its losses. It forever makes
A gloomy cloud to gather in the sky,
And glooms the spirit. Looking far beyond
The glory in its gaze, it sadly sees
Countless privations, and far-coming storms,
Shrinking from what it conjures. Let them say
Green youth and greener maidens, as they may,
Of love and of his raptures:—for my part,
I hold him a disease—a very ache,
And ague-fever, sore and troublesome;
Apt caller forth of tears, and wails, and plaints,
And then of colds, and heats, and phantasies—
Realities most mournful, and, forsooth,
Imaginings, whose strange complexions be
Not a whit kinder. Love's a sorry slave,
And a sad master. As a slave, he steals
The jewel of our nature, and its lights,—
The heart and its affections;—which, having got,
He straight assumes the master:—they, in turn,
Being his willing instruments and doom'd,
When that the tyrant of his play grows sick,
To be the creature's victims at the last.

Atal. I cannot think this truly said of love!—
The minstrels do belie him, much, methinks,
For envy of his conquests; and, the maids—
They only do complain, whom he doth slight.
They never knew his nature. They, perchance—
Since what is winning still hath counterfeits—
Have seen some subtle semblance of his form,
His true spirit all being wanting; and were made,
Haply, the victims of some wanton art,
That hath betray'd them. It were wisdom poor,
And a most sad philosophy, to scorn

The blessing, as in nature's exigence,
It might grow forfeit. Better, with this rule,
Not live, since in the end we all must die.
Though there be doubts that love may yet be lost,
Still let me love;—the very doubt but shows
The worth of the possession. Not for me
The sway of kingdoms only. In my heart
There still hath been a void—a vacant place,
That ever seemed to crave some image there,
Set up for worship. 'Till this happy hour,
The shrine hath been unoccupied and cold;
Now, doth the warmth of a divinity
Suffuse the reluctant nature, and I glow
In the superior consciousness of hopes,
That fill me with devotion. Here is one
Might teach me wherefore this.

Nea. He breathes again;
There's life within him yet.—His lips, they part
In murmurs:—he will live. Shall we now leave him?

Atal. Leave him, dost thou ask? alas! my Nea,
I cannot if I would! His image takes
Possession of the waste place in my soul,
And fills me with himself. Whether I go,
Or stay,—the fates forbid that we should part;—
And known, perchance, and loved too late, he still
Has grown to such a presence in my thought,
That, though I lose him in the hour that finds,
I lose him not from love. Still, let us call
The life into his cheek. Some water bring,
Scooped out from yonder fountain near the sea.
Now, fan him with thy pinions. See, his lips,—
Again they part, how sweetly!—and again,
I stoop to press them with my own that burn
With a strange fervor never felt before.
He wakes,—Ah! me, he wakes! His eyes unclose,
With a dim beauty. As they open, mine
Sink to the sands. I feel his glances still,
Stealing and searching through my throbbing heart,
Until it hath no secret. Doth he speak?

What says he, my sweet Nea?
Leon. [*Struggling to his feet.*] Nay,—no more!—
Ah! sister is it thou? That terrible thought
That thou wert swallow'd in the ravenous sea,
And the waves over thee! I saw thee sink—
Beheld thy outstretch'd arms—heard thy wild cry
For succor, that I strove in vain to give,—
And, struggling in the surf, 'gainst cruel hands,
That kept me from thee in the fearful hour,
I yielded thee as lost.—I have thee now—
We shall not part again. [*Embracing* ATALANTIS
Atal. Ah!—
Leon. [*Discovering her.*] Who art thou?
Where is my sister—give her to my arms;
Why dost thou keep her from me when I call?
Atal. Oh! look not thus upon me, gentle youth:
I have not done thee wrong.
Leon. My sister?
Atal. She—
I know not.—
Leon. Alas! alas! for me!—I am alone.
Atal. Oh! not alone, for though we know not her,
The sister thou hast lost, we'll seek for her,
And strive to bring her to thy love again.
We too will love thee, if thou'lt suffer us,
And claim thy love in turn.
Leon. Where am I then?
Oh! tell me, noble lady, tell me true,
What is the shore we stand on—where the ship
That bore us—the old master, and the men,—
And over all of these, the precious maid,
My sister, whom I swore to save from harm,
While strength was in my arms to strive for her.
Alas! that I am here, with life and strength,
And she—thou look'st as thou hadst love and truth,—
Spare me these pangs—withhold her not from me,—
I shall not sink into an agony,
Joy-troubled at her sight. I'm strong to bear,
This happiness, if thou hast it to bestow,

And take my blessing for it. Give her me!

Atal. Alas! thou plead'st to me, dear youth, in vain;
I know not of the gentle maid you seek.
Thou only, of the creatures of the ship,
Hast found the refuge of the shore.

Leon. She's gone,—
And I survive her! How can I survive?
With what a terror she entreated me,
Never to leave her; and I pledged my soul,
If I had power to save, she should not sink,
Or I should share her fate. My Isabel!
I could not save, and cannot now survive;—
I come to thee,—I come! [*Rushes toward the sea.*

Atal. Forbear! Forbear!
Oh! be not not thus the murderer of thyself,
When heaven's own voice hath ordered thee to live.
For my sake as for thine! I kneel to thee.
Do not this wrong unto thyself, I pray,
Nor to the memory of the maid thou griev'st,
Who, if she loved thee, never could be blest,
At this, thy woful sacrifice. Oh! hear!
Let me implore. Thy sister yet may live,
Cast on some other isle, as thou on this.
We'll seek her hence together, with a hope
That we may find her on the yellow sands,
And win her back to life.

Leon. Oh! sweet thy words!
I will believe thee, lady, with a hope
That comes on golden pinions; for thine eye
Tells of a true sense prompting thee to speak,
In mercy, with a blessing won from truth;
While in thy voice a delicate music lies,
Spelling all sympathies that fill the heart.
Say, who art thou?

Atal. My name is Atalantis.
I am a Princess of the ocean waste,
But now a prisoner on this cruel isle,
Which, raised by magic from the hidden deep,
Wreck'd thee and fetters me. I have the sway

Of a large ocean empire which, in sight,
Extends beyond the sight, and far beneath
In winding ways and valleys of the sea.
I keep no state, but, as a captive, pine
In sight of my own kingdom, in the power,
Of a dread monarch of the demon race,
A mighty potentate who keeps me here,
Seeking my love.

Leon. How fell you in his power?

Atal. 'Twere a long speech to tell you of our realms,
The sway that's mine and his respectively,
And the slight space betwixt us; or to dwell
On the opposing powers we each possess:
It is enough, sweet youth, that yesternorn,
I and this maiden, o'er the quiet sea,
Idly disporting in our innocence,
Pass'd from our own dominions into his;
When, straightway he,—being ever on the watch,
And all unmatch'd for cunning—rais'd this isle,
At once, beneath us. In this sudden strait,
Frighted, I cast aside my magic wand,
Without which, I am nothing; and, with joy,
Knowing its powers, this monster seized it then,
And keeps me now his captive, close fenced in
By thickest spells, which, circling all this isle,
And having with our fine sense deadly hate,
We may not pass, unless he wills it so,
Or I regain my wand. Could that be done,
Its pow'r is such that I could sink this isle,
And, with one stroke in air undo the spells
Of his foul-brew'd enchantment.

Leon. It is strange!
Methinks, I wander in the Arabian tale,
And wear the enchanted ring.—This demon king—
Where is his castle where he harbors now?
I would behold him, and do battle for you.
I am a knight of Spain, well known in arms,
And wear the honors of the noblest courts,
Shining in Christendie.

Atal. The arms you wield,
In fight with such as he, would nothing serve:
He deals in subtlest magic, and receives
Spells from gigantic spirits. 'Twas his pow'r
Aroused the storm that overthrew your barque;
And now, on like employment bent, he speeds
Afar upon the ocean, with a host
Of most malignant followers in his train,
Rank for destruction. Could I get my wand,
In which a power of mightiest strength abides,
I'd battle him myself, and drive him back,
And whelm the barren isle which keeps us now!
Nay, more than this,—if that thy sister sleeps
Beneath the waters,—though I may not win
Her spirit back to life—with that same wand,
We both may penetrate the tumbling waves,
Without or hurt or harm,—with vision free,
To find her gentle beauties where they rest
On quiet beds of flowers beneath the deep.
There, with our magic art may we enwrap
Her fragile beauty in protecting spells,
That still her eyes shall shine as when in life,
Her cheeks still glow with love's own red,—her lips,
Though they no more with many a tone of joy,
Made soft by feeling, whisper in your ears,—
Still look the sweetness they have ever worn,
Keeping the wonted freshness that they knew,—
When first they grew to thine. This shall we do,
And more, that nothing that thy sense may seek,
Shall lack to make her lovely.

Leon. Gentle Queen,
If this be so,—do with me as thou wilt,—
I am thy slave,—thy slave!

Atal. Rather I thine!
If thou wilt love me, this will I perform;
Nay, though thou love me not, I still will do it,
For love I have for thee.

Nea. [*Aside.*] No more a Queen!
How doth she yield herself unto this power,
Forgetting her dominion.

Leon. Gentle Queen,
Shall we not get possession of this wand?
Methinks that I could do 't. But let me hear;
Teach me the way!—I shall not fear to meet
This monster, though with magic panoplied
And all foul arts. Trust then the toil with me,
I am a soldier of the holy cross,
And do defy the fiend and all his works.

Atal. 'Tis a brave spirit, but here can little do,
Save to adventure.—This, indeed, is much!—
Magic must baffle magic. 'Tis for thee,
Still to procure this wand, which thou can'st win,
When I have arm'd thee with some little pow'r;
Thou being of earthly essence, with no fear,
From contact with the all-infectious spell,
Girdling the island round. Within yon rock,
That hangs precipitous above the deep—
That should be far beneath it—by him raised,
With sudden conjuration, at a word—
Sealed in with spells, and in a curious vase,
Itself a spell, the treasure lies enshrined.
These charms, to me, were nought, could I but reach,
The chambers where they lie; for, with this ring,
Which now upon thy hand, I place from mine,
I may command all seals, and bid them break.
Onesimarch knows this, and trusts them not;
But placing an earthborn taint upon the air,
He doth restrain my footstep.

Leon. Let me go—
I will achieve the adventure, or will die.

Atal. Not yet—it were in vain that you would pass,
With your enfeebled strength, the threatening gulfs,
Of leaping waters, that, between this isle,
And the high rocks you aim at, spread themselves.
We must seek other aid—and, what are these,
Auspiciously, that gather on the sands,
In the fine haze of moonlight?

Nea. Fairy tribes,
That, sporting in the moonbeams, saw below,

This new creation of Onesimarch,
And straight came down, still glad in what is new,
To keep their revels on it.
Leon. [*Aside.*] Wonders grow,
Fruitful as thi.gs of nature.
Atal. [*To Nea.*] This is well ;—
Meet to our purpose, at the needful hour,
When they might succor us. We must persuade
The aid and office they will scarce deny
To one who holds them of a kindred race,
Though of another element. Away!
Seek their chief, Nea. Show him all our strait,—
Declare our want, and for his service now,
Pledge our good office at another time.
We wait thee here. [*Exit Nea.*] Alas! sweet youth, thou look'st
With such a sadness on me!
Leon. Not on thee ;—
'Tis on my fate I look!
Atal. I am thy fate!
And thou wilt hate me for it! Oh! forgive!—
If I have won thee now against thy will,
To this wild venture, I do free thee from 't ;—
I would not have my freedom, did it bring
A moment's grief to thee.
Leon. Thou little know'st,
Sweet Princess, of the lessons of my youth,
The training of my people, and the laws
Which make it still our duty as our pride,
To stake the issues all, of life and death,—
All that we pleasure and can peril most,—
In cause of love and beauty. I rejoice
That it is mine to combat thy mishap.
This is a venture of my heart's own choice,
Too precious to be yielded,—and, forgive,—
But little know'st thou of Spain's chivalry,
When thou believest that its valor shrinks
From any odds with fortune. 'Tis with me,
A pride to seek for peril ; and we hold,

Taught in our schools of faith and courtesie,
That, to the soul, no life is worth a care,
Lock'd up from noble deed, lapsing away
Like a scant brook, beneath a sunny sky,
Scarce murmuring as it wanders to be lost,
In the embrace of the o'erwhelming sea.

Atal. Oh! noble, brave philosophy!

Leon. We fight,
That insolence should meet check and overthrow,
The weak find succor, and the innocent,
Be always sure of shelter from the base;—
And, when the peril is for one so fair,
Then do our masters teach us, it is one
On which the heavens look down approvingly
And the bright angels cheer.

Atal. And yet thou griev'st;—
The sorrow grows to dews upon thy lids,
Even while thine eyes flash fire.

Leon. My grief, alas!
Mark'd in my face, is from the wretched fear,
Now coursing through my brain, that she I seek,
The gentle girl, companion of my youth,
Bland as the moonlight, wooing as the shade,
And sweet as fairy music, deeply lies,
Buried in these wild waters—never more,
To bless me with the music of her voice—
The magic of her smile—the calm delight
Of her not troublesome, devoted love!

Atal. Oh! I have tears to share with thee for her!—
I may not give her back to thee, nor bid
The voice to that young lip, where, like a bird,
That had its life in music with the flowers,
It moved in long and loving melodies;
But I will toil in thy service, glad to be,
For thy bereaved heart and fever'd brain,
Most like to her thou grievest. I will strive,
That thou shalt so esteem me. Not a tone,
Fashion'd by love's own mood, and most like hers,
But I shall teach my language;—not a look,

Worn by her gentlest features, but shall mine,
Skilfully take from summer skies and flowers,
Requiting thy sad heart.

Leon. Oh, sweetest maid—
Thy form is kindred to thy purposes,
And half restores me.

Atal. All will I restore—
All thou hast lost,—and more. Believe me then—
And lose thy sorrows. I will all replace,
Of thy fond fancies, and, with love as true,
Coupled with better pow'r to serve its hope,
I'll be to thee far more than she thou griev'st,
Though her affection, from the innocent hour,
Of thy confiding childhood and pure dreams,
Boundless as ocean, like the Mexique waves,
Knew but one course, and ever ran to thee.
Believe me, dearest, thou shalt nothing lose,
Of the known raptures. Thou shalt many win,
Not in thy wealth before. Thou shalt not think
Ere I shall know, and satisfy thy thought.

Leon. Too generous maid.

Atal. And,—hear me, gentle prince!—
If to thy sleepless, striving memory,
There be some marks, some moods, some images,
Some sweet tone, some fond action, some dear song
Of childhood, or some innocent prank you've known
Together, roving amid natural bowers,
Just budding into life and consciousness,
As their young flow'rs to beauty and perfume—
Teach me the trick of it all;—teach me the tone,
The dear song, the fond action, the gay prank,
Known to thy happiest childhood;—show me the art,
That nothing may be wanting—that I may take
A presence like to hers upon thy sight,
And make thee rich again, possessing her.

Leon. Thy words are queenliest, like thyself, sweet maid,
And balsam my deep wound,—if not to cure,
To soothe and stay its throbbing. Thou hast said,

In sweet tones, sweetest words, that soften much
The temper of my sorrows.
Atal. I am glad,
To offer to thy aid, to chide thy grief,—
Leon. Yet, for this sweet and undeserved love,
If I look coldly, unbecomingly,—
As feeling not its ministry, nor yet,
Beholding my own lack that makes it dear—
Impute it not, I pray, a crime in me.
I am not cold because my hope is so,
Nor yet ungrateful that I do not joy;—
I shall learn better to requite thy love,
In warmest language, when the pang is gone
Of this sad trial—if it ever goes.
Atal. What do they call thee?
Leon. Leon is my name.
Atal. I'll call thee Leon;—call me Atalant,—
Thy Atalant,—for shall I not be thine?
Ah! me! no longer may I be mine own!
Leon. Beautiful Atalant!—
Atal. But here they come,
Nea, and with her all the tricksy tribe,
That ride on beams and travel with the stars;
And sing in place of speech; and fly to walk;
Now here, now gone; garb'd cunningly with flow'rs,
They know to seem at pleasure; and still bless'd,
With that which were our sorrow—constant change.

SCENE II.—*The Same.*

Enter NEA *with Fairies. They circle the* PRINCESS *and* LEON *singing.*

CHORUS OF FAIRIES.

I.

Lo, we come, we come, we come,
On the glassy moonbeams riding,
While no cloud, with eye of gloom,
Looks down on us chiding—
Where the silver sands spread out,
Fit for spirits gaily moving;

Tossing fruits and flow'rs about,
  We are ever roving.

II.

Lo, we fly, we fly, we fly,
  All the world about us viewing,
Now in sea and now in sky,
  Still our sport pursuing.—
Where the moon is shining clear,
  Where the winds are met together,
Do we daily gather there
  In the summer weather.

III.

Lo, we dance, we dance, we dance,
  On the land, and o'er the ocean;
Seizing on each happy chance,
  With a glad commotion.
Where the summer's leaves are green,
  Where the early birds are singing,
And the flow'rs are soonest seen,
  We are with them springing.

IV.

Lo, we come, we come, we come,
  On our wings of light descending;
Wings that breathe, like flow'rs in bloom,
  Perfumes never ending.—
On the shining sands we meet,
  In the bright and gentle weather,
Each with something new and sweet,
  Dancing all together.

Atal. Oh! ye are glad to-night, ye merry ones,
With a fresh spirit, methinks. What pleasant hap,
New privilege, or wild inheritance,
Works on your wings such fine delirium?
I somewhat marvel at your happiness,
Though happy always; yet your wont is dull
To the extravagant rapture of your mirth,
And your free song to-night.

Nanita. Extravagant!
Our mirth, fair Queen, is very soberness;
We are the modestest fairies of the wild,
The gravest, quietest, best of little bodies,
That ever made mischief in a neighbor's fold,

And laugh'd to find our own. Why, people call us
The very prudes of faerydom. We shake
Our heads with gravity o'er state affairs,
And sit in council with old Oberon,
Who, when Titania wakes his jealousy,
Will straight prefer our wisdom to his own;—
As, at such times, indeed, he wisely may.

Atal. Oh! pray you then forgive me! Now I see
That you are sober and quiet as you claim,
Having but little mirth, and, at no season,
Extravagant in its utterance. Your excess
Lay only in my sadness, 'Twas my grief
That made your joy extreme. Your mood,
Thus born of freedom, little sorts with mine,
That grows with my captivity, and glooms
With the dread aspect of my prison-house.

Loline. Yet is there much to gladden us to-night.
Have we not newly added to our realms,
A goodly island, gracious in extent,
Whose beauteous sands, drawn out in lavish scope,
Persuades the moon's best smile upon our revels.

Atal. If you knew all,—the story of this isle!—
Yet is there something more, or I mistake ye,
For which ye joy to-night.

Careta. There is! There is!
Rightly you spoke, fair princess, when you deem'd
Our joy unwonted. We are bless'd to-night,
Beyond our usual measure. You shall hear.
Perchance you know Zerlina,—of our tribe,
The sweetest, merriest creature—full of fun,—
But glad to serve, and, with the happiest art,
To make the service pleasant as the will,
That prompts it to compliance. She is here—
Just freed from a captivity like yours;
Since in her sport, by some undreampt mischance,
She smote Titania's favorite nonpareil,
And broke its gossamer wing. The angry Queen,
For this, our little sister's innocent deed,
Doom'd her, a prisoner in the zephyr's shell,

Till the first flower that blossoms in the spring
Should speak her into freedom. Till this time,
Her fate was pitiful :—to use no wing,
Murmur no more, and mingle not, in song—
See none to comfort—hear no voice of love—
Dance no capricious revel on the sands,
But, with an unresisting sense, to float
On the tumultuous billows, night and morn,
Until the birth of that same flow'r of spring!
Found on the pleasantest shore beneath the sun,
Where first he soars in brightness from the seas,
We hail'd its presence and have set her free;
And, from her prison, with delighted wing,
She soars with us to-night.

Lol. Nor is this all—
Another captive hath to-night been freed,
We had deem'd lost forever to our sports.
This wanton fairy, sporting in the breeze,
Last moon, alone, was taken prisoner
By that same tyrant-king, Onesimarch,
That locks you in; and, 'twere a fit revenge,
That we should join with you, for these same wrongs,
To punish him in turn. Within yon rock,
He seal'd her up in crystal. By some chance,
Not yet discovered, all her bonds were broke,
And she is here with us. Tinina!—here!
Behold the maiden, Princess. She knows all,
The secrets of this tyrant's ocean-towers,
And, for your wand's recovery, will do
Aught that will seem most needful.

Atal. [*To Tinina.*] Fit a barque,
And make thy wing its sail, to waft this Prince
To the same rock that was thy prison late.
Himself will do the rest. 'Tis there I learn,
My sceptre is sealed up.

Tinina. The barque is here,
Even with a whisper, and my wing is ready;
Will 't please you go, my Prince?

Atal. [*timidly.*] Wilt thou go, Leon?

Leon. 'Twill please and make me proud.
Lol. Tinina, hence!
I give thee winds, and waters, and a star,—
I spell thee with a talisman of safety,—
And crown thee with a will and wing of strength;
Go hence in courage and be bless'd in service;
And when thy task is done, regain our course,
Which now we take toward the Hundred Isles,
That smile in the Southern Cross. We wait thee there.
Princess, we gladden that our offices
Seem worth thy tasking, and shall find delight,
If that they prosper 'neath thy hope and ours.
Wings, be ye up and wheeling—up, I say!

Flight of Fairies and Chorus.

We are they who fly by night,
When the maiden moon is bright,
And the silver beach is spread,
Out on ocean like a thread,
Meetly for a fairy's tread:
When the air of heaven is balm,
When the ocean waves are calm,
And the flowers of earth grow bright,—
We are they who fly by night!

[*Exeunt Fairies.*

Atal. Now, Leon, if the task before thee, seem
Unsuited to thy human strength,—
Leon. No more!—
Hold me, I pray thee, Princess, as a man,
That better loves the struggle that proves manhood,
Than the base sleep that stagnates all his soul.
I seek the adventure.
Atal. Then, this sylph will guide;—
Will bear thee safely o'er these tumbling gulphs,
To yon tall rock, now beetling black and vast
Above the whiten'd billows. Boldly speed,
Nothing misdoubting, howsoever strange
The thing that rises threatening in thy path.
The mystic ring that wraps thy finger round,
Hath, in itself, a wondrous faculty,

To shield the wearer from the unlicensed power
Of spirits of evil.

Leon. Atalant, I go,
Having a better talisman of safety,
In service which is noble, and in prayer
To him who checks and may subdue all spirits,
Than in this hoop of magic. See, this cross,
Which crowns the mortal weapon that I wear,
As life is over death!—this is my shield,
As, in the blade, I find my ample sword;
With these I go unfearing.

Atal. Would thou went'st
With brow serene—with happier thought than now.

Leon. Heed not the mood of this most heavy heart,
That clouds the brow thou look'st on. Some few days
Will hush the impatient grief that murmuring cries,
Seeking a loved one lost. When I return,
And thou hast led me where my sister lies,
Though she beholds not as I weep beside her,
Still will I strive to thank thee with a blessing,
Whose eyes shall look but love!

Atal. Till then I live not!

[TININA *sings.*]

The wind is on the wave, and the billow rolls away,
And the star that is the guide to the voyager is bright,
But the fickle wind may change, should the voyager delay,
And the star beneath the demon cloud may perish from the sight.
The will, and the wing, are both ready while I sing—
And the service that makes music as for love it labors still,
Hath no murmur for the ear, though it whispers still of care,
And implores that the season be not forfeit to the will.
Then away, then away, ere we meet the coming day,
For the dewy haze is rising like a curtain o'er the sea;—
I have winds and waves and star, but they serve us not in war,
And the present bears the flower that's most precious unto me

Leon. The delicate song is sung in my behalf,
A counsel spoke in sweetness, as should be
All counsel for the loved one;—fairy, thanks!—
I'm with thee!—sweetest princess, fare thee well!

Atal. I dare not bid thee go, but if thou wilt,
My heart has but one bidding—soon return.

[*Exeunt* LEON *and* TININA.

Nea. Sweet mistress!—
Atal. Come with me to ocean's edge,—
That we may soonest hail his coming back,
Made happy in his safety.
Nea. This is love! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The rock and tower of* ONESIMARCHUS. OGRE *chained at the base.*

Ogré. Shall I not have revenge—shall he not feel,
This wanton wrong that he hath put on me,
In his unmeasured wrath? Must I submit
To wear the chains about my limbs, as now;
Still fearing, that, for every erring deed,
I may not 'scape the villain penalty,
But bend my shrinking back to meet the scourge,
When 't suits a fellow slave to place it there!
I'll be revenged.—Already have I done
Something towards it; for, throughout the hour,
When that his storms were raging o'er my limbs,
Chafed into madness, the dismember'd rocks
I hurl'd into his secret halls above,
And the repeated crash gave token sure
Of a wild mischief—and I rest not here!
He cannot punish me more than he has done,
And, let the tyrant will it so or not,
I leave his service when my limbs are free.
Ha! What are these? How now! What seek you here?

Enter LEON *and* TININA.

What is it that you lack? Speak, ere I strike,
And hurl you into pieces with this rock.
Leon. Thou monstrous slave, what is it that thou say'st?
Dost threaten too? Stand by, and let me pass,
Or thus, I thrust my weapon to thy heart.
Tinina. Forbear! Thou wert an infant in his grasp,
And he would crush thee at a single stroke.
Show him thy spell of power—but lift thy ring!
See, now, he trembles: keep it thus in sight,

And we shall pass. No strength is in his arm,—
He cannot hurt us now. [*They ascend and enter the rock.*
Ogré. Terrible power!
How has it fetter'd me, and taken away,
Each nerve once strung for action. Lo! they come,
And bearing off my master's instruments.—
Well, let them go! I glad me he hath wrong!
I would that he were fetter'd in my place,
And I were free and had no master then;
How would I revel in all goodly things,
What lusts would I delight in,—food and drink,
Until my senses swim, and sleep i' the sun,
Doing no service more! Ah! here they come.

Enter LEON *and* TININA.

Leon. Slave, would'st thou have thy freedom, and escape
The tyranny that tramples in this wise,
Loading thy limbs with chains, while the salt sea,
Enflames the galling tortures of the scourge.
Ogré. That would I, mighty Prince.
Leon. Thou hast it then.
Throw by the chain thou wear'st and follow me.
Ogré. I'll fling it in the sea. Shall I do more?
Bid me upheave this rocky battlement,
Wherein he keeps his magic, I'll not pause;—
Do thou but say the word.
Leon. Nay, heed it not!
If she I serve do thus decree, thou may'st,—
Not else.
Ogré. How now! you are no monarch then?
Whom serve you?
Leon. The fair princess, Atalantis.
Ogré. I do remember that she spoke for me,
And would have saved me from this scourge and rock.
A goodly princess—I will worship her.

TININA *sings.*

The bark is on the sea, and the breeze is in the sail,
And the star to guide us onward is now gleaming o'er the steep;
We have won the prize we sought, and the whisper of the gale
Would counsel us, the treasure, we have haply won, to keep.

Then away, then away, ere the tyrant seeks his prey,—
There's a murmur of the ocean that's unfriendly to our flight;
And the cricket at mine ear has a chirrup full of fear,
That but lately sung in music of a confident delight.

Leon. Even as thou wilt, sweet maiden; let us hence
To her who waits in fear and innocence. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The Ocean between the Rocks and the Islet.*

ATALANTIS, LEON *and* NEA. ONESIMARCHUS *approaching with his Legions.*

Onesi. Ha! what is here—what fearful change is this?—
The rock of spells o'erthrown, and Atalant,
Again with wand restored, and, at her side,
The lowly instrument of her release.
I did not guard against a thing of earth,
And he hath wrought this ruin of my hopes.
She smiles upon him too—perchance she loves—
Hell!—that I cannot blast her with a look,
And him, the minion, that hath won her love!—
He shall not live, to triumph in that love,
Enjoying raptures still denied to me.
Rise waters—lift your heads—mount up and soar,
Engulphing all that may not ride upon ye;
And thou, dismembered shore, again descend,
Down to the oozy depths from whence thou cam'st—
I need thee nothing farther—sink, I say.
[*He waves his wand and the island descends.*

Atal. Now, Leon, place thy hand within mine own;
Fear not the billows—hearken not their roar,—
They cannot harm thee, thus accompanied.

Leon. And ye, fair skies, farewell. Thou fatal isle,
Which robb'd me of my best beloved, farewell—
I sorrow not to see thee downward go,
Troubling no mariner hence. One long last look,
Ye bright clouds, that remind me of my home—
My country, all, farewell. Oh, never more
Shall my eyes gladden with your glimpse again.
Now Isabel, I come!

Atal. Thou hast no fear,
Dear Leon, from this danger?

Leon. Little now,
Since, in the wonders that are shown to me,
I yield me to the fullest faith in all
That thou hast promised me.
Atal. Thou soon shalt see,
How, as to me, these waters shall become
Familiar to thy nature. Thou wilt glide
Unharm'd, between their billows, which shall lift
Thy form, with friendly succor, as thou will'st,
Making their arms thy servants.
Leon. I believe,—
And round thy waist, sweet Atalant, I twine,
Fearless, my confident arm and murmur not.
I would not look upon the skies again,
That witness'd my late ruin; and the seas,
That wrought it all, beget no terrors now.—
We do not sink.
Atal. Not yet!—Behold afar,
Where, gathering, grow vast legions—angry forms,
Gigantic, that in masses, or alone,
Dart onward, with a glittering panoply
That flames the crests of ocean far and wide,
While roll the constant thunders of the gong,
That calls them still to rise.
Leon. I see! I see!
Atal. These are the armies of my own domain,
Led by my gallant brothers. They go forth,
To fight and conquer this Onesimarch,
Who, strong in trick and artifice alone,
Will never meet them in the open field.
Already, see, he shrinks;—his hosts retire,
And his fierce rule departs.
Leon. The land is gone!
Atal. Yes, down we sink, and thou art all mine own:
I bear thee on the waters, for a while,
To prove the power I have to succor thee.
Now for the calm retreat, by ocean girt,
And stormy waves protected—now with me!
There in the sunny hours that lapse away,
Like angel messengers, and leave no pain,

Thy heart shall grow to gladness. Life shall be
A sweet, rich, gracious time,—a pure estate,
Beyond the strifes that trouble it with man:—
Free from controlling crowds—free from the jar,
The heat, the noise, the dust of human care.
Nature shall blight thee never, nor disease
Bind thee in loathsome sheets; nor tempests rise
To blast thy fields, dispute thy fondest hope,
And, from thy wearied and exhausted heart,
Drink the sweet lifeblood of thy innocent joy.
The breeze shall rather soothe thee with a breath,
Robb'd from celestial gardens. The blue waves,
Shall roll their tribute honors to thy feet;
Upon their bosom, many an offering placed,
Of fruits, fresh wafted from far Indian isles,
Wooing thee with their fragrance. In the air,
Nature shall cast her odors, and thine eye
Shall never ope but to behold some new
And most luxuriant freshness in her form;
And, I shall love thee too, and toil untired
To give thee back the maiden whom thou seek'st.

Leon. Ah! if thou could'st!—but no! The hope is vain,
And the wish idle. Yet the love thou givest,
Might well compensate, to this baffled heart,
The loss which still it weeps.

Atal. Oh! do not weep.
I'll love thee in all fortunes. At the morn,
I'll lead thee through our waters, 'mid our caves,
Where, in unconscious brightness, cluster gems
Had set your world on fire. There shall you mark
Glad sea-maids that, attending on our steps,
Fill their deep shells with song; and, when the sun
Shines burningly at noon, in coral groves,
Thy head well pillow'd on my happy breast,
I'll sit and watch thy slumbers, blest to soothe
Thy ever beating pulse, and kiss thy lips,
When, murmuring in thy sleep, thou speak'st the name,
Of her thou still hast loved.

Leon. No more of her.
I go with thee, sweet Atalant.—We sink!

NEA, *singing as the islet descends.*

I.

Come beautiful, amid the azure waves,
  Into our coral caves;
Fly from the gloomy, cheerless world above,
  To one of peace and love;
Forget the fears, the weighty fears, that press
  On thy heart's happiness;
And, with bold hand, asunder snap the chain
  That binds thee down to pain;—
Come, seek the coral groves beneath the sea,
  And dwell with love and me.

II.

Have they not put upon thy hopes a blight,
  Making all chill and night;
Rebuked, and frown'd upon thy soaring aim,
  To honor and high fame;
Taught thee, when all was nature in thy heart,
  To be a thing of art;
And, when thou least hast dream'd of such deceit,
  Trampled thee under feet;
And wilt thou not, beneath the rolling sea,
  Find better things with me?

III.

Thou wast not, loved one, O! believe it, born,
  To be a thing of scorn;—
Thy spirit is of strong and lofty make,
  Which they might never shake:
Wilt thou permit that it should waste away,
  In strifes and cares of clay,
Deprived of that high empire which was given,
  To thy great mind from heaven,
And made a victim, where, were empire free,
  Thou wert a Deity.

IV.

They fear, and fearing, hate thee: they would strike
  Thy hope and heart alike;
Deride the lofty object in thy aim,
  And all thy spirit tame;
Assail thy just pretension with a sneer,
  And mock, even though they fear;
Take from thy generous earnings, and deny
  Thy wing its victory;
Dispute the daring flight they cannot see—
  Come, beautiful, with me.

V.

What that thy people yields, do I deny ?—
  Look round thee and reply!
Thy life is but a battle, and in death
  Of what avail thy wreath;
Reluctant yielded, when in vain thy boast,
  A mockery to thy ghost,
A frail sere trophy which thou hadst not seen
  While yet its leaves were green,
But only when too late, and when no more
  Thou dost the boon implore.

VI.

I lure thee not with subtle strains of art,
  Wrought for thy slumbering heart;
The simplest note, the humblest influence,
  I offer to thy sense;
Assailing not thy reason with a song
  Of witchery and wrong;
But, with a tone made gentle to thine ear,
  I call on thee to hear;—
And, with a choice of brighter destiny,
  To dwell beneath the sea.

VII.

Thou wilt not lose the sky, for, haply press'd,
  Once, to the sea-queen's breast,
Thy form receives new gifts of power and sense
  From newer elements;—
Not perishing, but in its change, become,
  With renovated bloom,
A principle of freedom, which may roam,
  Making the world its home;
But chiefest, in the sparry caves of sea,
  Dwelling with love and me.

VIII.

Far down in the deep waters is an isle,
  Where sunbeams ever smile;
Strong are the rocks, the gentle shores protect,
  With flow'rs and fruitage deck'd—
Glad are the azure waves that round it glide,
  With music and in pride,—
And sweet affections, born of love and truth,
  Have there perpetual youth;
While hearts, more fond than those from which we flee,
  Give gladness to the sea.

END OF ATALANTIS.

THE EYE AND THE WING;

POEMS

CHIEFLY IMAGINATIVE.

7

THE EYE AND THE WING.

THE BARD'S IDEAL.

I.

Not like the rest, an image still retreating,
  That woo's in mockery and but woo's to fly—
Still, as at first, thy lovely presence meeting,
  Soothes the dark shades that gather on mine eye;
Beneath thy morning glance the gloom is fleeting,
  The tempest's self subsides into a sigh,
And thousand darting forms, the exile greeting,
  Restore his youth—persuade him of its sky.

II.

Rose of the enamor'd heart, as soft as glowing,
  Star of the vex'd and tempest-troubled soul,
Shining with hallowed beam upon its flowing,
  Silvering the waters that must ever roll;
Bird of the mazy note, the song bestowing,
  Whose tones come o'er us with a strange control;
Leaf, bud and flower, for each affection growing,
  Gladd'ning each sense and rousing up the whole.

III.

Bright shadow of the being we desire,
  When, from our feet, the mortal clog is gone ;
That keep'st the virgin voices of the lyre,
  And know'st to wake them into living tone ;
Unsleeping watcher of that sacred fire,
  Perpetual-springing, near the eternal throne,—
Whose every hour of tendance, brings us nigher
  The only realm of rapture ever known.

IV.

Sweet voice, that in the forest calls upon me,
  When woods are dim and falling shadows deep ;
Dear smile, that midst the gloom of night has won me,
  To love her coming, and with love to weep ;
And, when the strifes of fortune have undone me,
  Whose murmuring blessings to my bosom creep—
Sufficient solace, though the world may shun me,
  My sad heart in that happiest faith to keep.

V.

With pow'r to hallow where thy foot is planted,
  And wake the blossom into being there ;
With smile to make the saddest home enchanted,
  And break the iron sceptre of despair ;
I pant to find thee, as the hart hath panted,
  For the cool brooks when flying fast in fear ;
With staggering limbs, and spirit dim and daunted,
  The hunter on his flanks, the danger near.

VI.

Come to me with thy voice of loftiest power,
  And quell the demon raging in my breast ;
Lead me, thou gentle ! to thy shady bower,
  And lull me in thy snowy arms to rest ;
Above my head, oh ! hang thy sweetest flow'r,
  And wake the song-bird slumbering in his nest,
Nor let me measure the departing hour
  When thou hast made me thus, so truly, blest !

VII.

Back, lead me, to the long estrangèd dwelling,
  The sweet white cottage by the lake's green side;
Once more that prattling strain, from streamlet welling
  Above the grassy marge that strove to hide;
Bring me my wings—the birds, for ever swelling
  A fond spring carol winter's steps to chide;
And then, that sleepless hope, the rest excelling,
  That, through my homage, still sustained my pride.

VIII.

They come!—I hear thy silver sounds decreeing!
  Ah, truest!—thou art pow'r in love array'd;
Love is the essence of thy birth and being,
  At the heart's portals are thy dwellings made;
Thou cheer'st the exile from the cold world fleeing,
  Thou guid'st him fondly to the sacred shade;
All-lifting, all-endowing and all-freeing—
  Ah, generous! they are here with whom I played.

IX.

In thee they rise, in thee they gather round me,
  The crowding hopes and images of youth;
Each spell that won, each phantasy that bound me,
  Assuasive yet, as if they still were sooth;
With all to win, no tone or look to wound me,
  With cheeks all tenderness and eyes all ruth,
No form forgot, no friend that boyhood found me,
  No smile that cheer'd me, and that seem'd like truth.

X.

Bright as the morning when the sun is blushing,
  Soft as the rainbow when the storm is o'er;
Sweet as the zephyr o'er the still lake rushing,
  Dear as the holy shrine the good adore;
Winning as waters through the forest gushing,
  Soothing as hopes that come when we deplore;
Blessing as airs that say the storm is hushing,
  And sweet as dreams that bid us weep no more.

XI.

Thou hast the charm—in thee is all the sweetness,
  Of bud and bird, and flow'r, and ray, and hue;
Thine eye hath all the light, thy step the fleetness,
  Thou art the soul, the sun, the pure, the true;
I look for thee at morn, and in thy splendor,
  I ask not for the presence of the sun;
And in thy blue eyes and their aspect tender,
  Still deem the heaven above, and they, are one.

THE BARD.

I.

WHERE dwells the spirit of the Bard—what sky
Persuades his daring wing,—
Folded in soft carnation, or in snow
Still sleeping, far o'er summits of the cloud,
And, with a seeming, sweet unconsciousness,
Wooing his plume, through baffling storms to fly,
Assured of all that ever yet might bless
The spirit, by love and loftiest hope made proud,
Would he but struggle for the dear caress!—
Or would his giant spring,
Impell'd by holiest ire,
Assail the sullen summits of the storm,
Bent with broad breast and still impatient form,
Where clouds unfold themselves in leaping fire!
What vision wins his soul,—
What passion wings his flight,—
What dream of conquest woos his eager eye?—
How glows he with the strife,—

How spurns he at control,—
With what unmeasured rage would he defy,
The foes that rise around and threaten life!—
His upward flight is fair,
He goes through parting air,
He breaks the barrier cloud, he sees the eye that's there,
The centre of the realm of storm that mock'd him but to dare!
And now he grasps the prize,
That on the summit lies,
And binds the burning jewel to his brow;—
Transfigured by its bright,
He wears a mightier face,
Nor grovels more in likeness of the earth;—
His wing a bolder flight,
His step a wilder grace,
He glows, the creature of a holier birth;—
Suns sing, and stars glow glad around his light;
And thus he speeds afar,
'Mid gathering sun and star,
The sov'ran, he, of worlds, where these but subjects are;
And men that mark'd his wing with mocking sight,
Do watch and wonder now;—
Will watch and worship with delight, anon,
When far from hiss and hate, his upward form hath gone!

II.

Oh! ere that van was won,
Whose flight hath braved the sun,
Whose daring strength and aim
Have scaled the heights of cloud and bared their breasts of flame;
What lowly toil was done,—
How slow the moments sped,—
How bitter were the pangs that vex'd the heart and head!
The burden which he bore,
The thorns, his feet that tore,
The cruel wounds he suffer'd with no moan,—
Alone,—and still alone!—
Denial, which could smile,
Beholding, all the while,

How salter than the sea were the salt tears he shed ;
And over all, the curse,
Than all these more worse,
Prostrate, before the common way, to bear
The feet of hissing things,
Whose toil it is to tear,
And tramp the glorious creature born to wings !
Ah ! should he once despair !—

III.

But, strength from lowliness,—
From patience, power and pride,—
And freedom ever from the deep duresse !
These, to the one denied,
Still soothe the drear distress,
Brought by the very grief when well defied !
First, grovelling where he lay,
To want and wo the prey,
Unconscious that the darkness led to day ;
With eyes from birth still seal'd,
As are the eaglets ere they dream to fly,
The realm of open empire unrevealed ;—
First came the boon,—the precious boon—to see
That the broad firmament was spread above
A world that yet was free ;—
And, in the embracing and delicious air,
There hung great wings, whose plumage, bright with love,
Seem'd ever natural to the aim and eye !—
Were these but won !—with these !—
Oh ! thence, with fond devotion, rose the pray'r
For the one gift that promised such delight,
The single boon of flight !—
A prayer to make the hopeful heart grow wild !—
And, with the hope, still struggling, like the child,
To whom the eager mind the muscle brings,—
Not yet secure of foothold, but erect,
He grew,—in watches of the night, he grew,
When others slept,—in such secure degrees,
He vex'd no jealous view ;

And thus the upward progress went uncheck'd;
And thus he put on wings;—
Until, with strength to soar,
He felt the earth no more,
And shook its dust away, and all its reptile things;
The eye and wing together won the height;
And they who mock'd and smote,
Might vainly hiss and roar,
With nothing left them but to dream and dote:
Unless, and this were something of a bliss,
Compensative, from mercy, for their hiss,
To bow, while yet they gaze, and in their shame, adore!

IV.

What if the toil and struggle were with earth?
The purpose of earth's self is for a sphere
In which she has no share;—
And thus it is that she may loathe the birth,
Wherein a spirit so rare
Makes her the rack on which to stretch his wings.
Vainly he loathes and strives,
The victim feels but thrives;
It is appointed he shall still go forth,
If that he neither yields him to her hate,
Nor subjugates his pinion to her snare;
And, it is written, his first passion flings
Her clay off with her fetters, and her stains
With all his immature pains;—
As, in the expression of a joy elate,
With the exulting sense of a new dawn,
One flings away the dreary doubt that pall'd,
With sense of weariness, at close of day,
And, with the merriest strains,
Bids them bring forth his steed upon the sun-bright lawn!
He only hath to wait,—
To wait with confident heart; without complaint,
Endure, whate'er his lowliness of state,—
And, with a spirit resolved and never faint,
To struggle with the griefs that still oppress;—

And the appointed moment will unscale
His eye, and he will break from all duresse,
To see the glowing vans, all purple-hued,
Stooping, with gradual waver, to his will;—
At dawn, when happiest dreams his pulses thrill,
To find them freshly to his shoulders glued;
'Till, with a sense of upward life, he springs,
Scarce conscious of the motion of his wings,
To flight, and in his flight as all unconscious sings;—
Voice, wing and eye, being children of a birth;—
Flight of a threefold power, that still implies,
When fairly parted from the enthralling earth,
The song, and sight and soul, that shape it for the skies!

V.

If, for a moment, he forbears his flight,
Won by seducing syren of the shore,
Self-chidden, he is soon upon his way,
Still, upward, into light!
For, not in the embrace of mortal clay,
Sleeps long the soul of the imperial lyre!
The eye, that is the shoulder of his wing,
Still, in advance, beholds the approaching day.
Long ere the night, his head on his own heart,
Hath girt him to depart!
And thus doth he aspire,
And thus doth he explore,
And thus he finds his freedom, spite of art,
That would beguile him from his great desire,
And bind him vassal to most lowly will!
'Tis by necessity that he breaks away,
From earth and bondage still!
The soul that is his substance warms with ire,
Impatient of each profitless delay;
And though the song of the siren in his ear,
Works subtly in sweet mazes to his brain.
Yet ever a still voice of sadness tells
Of the past struggle, and the bitter care,
That kept him captived ever and in pain.

Thus warn'd, his better nature soon rebels,
And the false syren glozes still in vain.
Taught that a wing so nerved, need never pause
For rest which humble pinion may require,
He looks to far Parnassus, and takes hues,
Golden and azure, from the endowéd shapes
That linger still above its sacred heights;
And, with the glad persuasion of his song,
An emulous passion stimulates his wing,
So that he passes by the guardian capes,
Triumphant, and, with progress of his own,
He challenges each proud and antique Muse,
By her own altars, to the great delights,
She has made holy:—not that he would wring,
With proud compulsion, sad acknowledgment,
As of the presence of some nobler thing;
But that he fortifies the ancient cause,
Which many, by her own persuasions chuse,—
With meet example;—and, her crown reset,
Doth, by his might, her primitive sway prolong.—
He sings, as she hath tutored him to sing,
A chaunt of ages that sustains her throne,
By catholic utterance of the great intent
Which makes her mission hallowed, and for aye,
And, through a chosen race, o'er all asserts its sway!

VI.

'Twere vain to scan his office, and declare
The power he holds upon the earth and air,
And the sleek spirits that move them to their moods;
He is the sov'ran of the spell that sways
The groves in their spring sweetness—he hath power
To bring a sudden freshness to the hour,
Charm the green leaf, endow the purple flow'r,
And haunt with such a presence the great floods,
That there shall grow a glory on their banks,
And men shall gather from afar in ranks,
And bend before high altars he shall raise,
And speak with voices only won from him!

He shall bring beauty to the waste, and light
With bloom the wilderness, and so subdue
The terrors of the shade, that it shall be
Made sacred, with a halo, when most dim;
So that its dark, made beautiful to view,
Shall move new passion in the multitude,
To love the shadow whose obscurity
Hath lovelier eyes than haunt the night, and brood
Sad-smiling o'er still fountains that awake,
To fill their cisterns only for her sake!
For it hath been decreed his office still
To summon natural destinies, and invoke,
As with the simple utterance of his will,
The nimble servitors that love his yoke.
So, the devoted Passions hail his sway,
And Joy and Grief, with their link'd torches, glide,
Mute ever, but not heedless, night and day,
Serving his purpose, one on either side.
And hope, which is a feather from his plumes,
Now sinks, now falls, like shooting star through night,
And, even in falling, the abyss illumes,—
As memory of the first joy brings a light
To the sad eyes inhabited by wo—
The waving of a torch o'er mountain lake,
At midnight, while the storm-cloud, stooping low,
Hath iced it with a blackness nought may break.
Nor is he wanting in celestial aid,
Love being his meekest servitor, with brow
Twined with the myrtle, ever speaking truth,
That never fears the forfeit of his vow,
And, bashful in her bright, but unafraid,
Bearing the rose that symbols innocent youth.

VII.

Not lonely, with the sad nymph Solitude,
Deep in the cover of the ancient wood,
Where the sun leaves him, and the happy dawn,
Stealing with blushes over the grey lawn,
Still finds him, all forgetful of the flight

Of hours, that passing still from dark to bright,
Know not to loiter,—all their progress naught :—
His eye, unconscious of the day, is bright
With inward vision ; till, as sudden freed,
By the superior quest of a proud thought,
He darts away with an unmeasured speed ;
His pinion purpling as he gains the height,
Where still, though all obscured from mortal sight,
He bathes him in the late smiles of the sun ;—
And O ! the glory, as he guides his steed,
Flakes from his pinions falling, as they soar
To mounts where Eos binds her buskins on,
And proud Artemis, watching by her well,
For one,—sole-fortunate of all his race,—
With hand upon his mouth her beagle stays,
Lest he should baffle sounds too sweet to lose,
That even now are gliding with the dews.
How nobly he arrays
His robes for flight,—his robes, the woven of songs,
Borrow'd from starry spheres,—with each a muse
That, with her harmonies, maintains its dance
Celestial, and its circles bright prolongs.
Fair ever, but with warrior form and face,
He stands before the eye of each young grace,
Beguiling the sweet passion from her cell,
And still subjecting beauty by the glance,
Which speaks his own subjection to a spell,
The eldest born of rapture, that makes Love,
At once submissive and the Conqueror.
He conquers but to bring deliverance,
And with deliverance light ;—
To conquer, he has only to explore,—
And makes a permanent empire, but to spread,—
Though speeding on with unobserving haste,—
A wing above the waste.—
A single feather from his pinion shed,
A single beam of beauty from his eye,
Takes captive the dim sleeping realm below,
Through eyes of truest worshippers, that straight,

Bring shouts to welcome and bright flowers to wreathe
His altars; and, as those, to life from death,
Pluck'd sudden, in their gratitude and faith
Deem him a God who wrought the miracle,—
So do they take him to their shrines, and vow
Their annual incense of sweet song and smell,
For him to whom their happiness they owe.
Thus goes he still from desert shore to shore,
Where life in darkness droops, where beauty errs,
Having no worshippers,
And lacking sympathy for the light!—The eye,
That is the spirit of his wing, no more,
This progress once begun, can cease to soar,
Suffers eclipse, or sleeps!—
No more be furl'd
The wing,—that, from the first decreed to fly,
Must speed to daily conquests, deep and high,
Till no domain of dark unlighted keeps,
And all the realm of strife beneath the sky
Grows one, in beauty and peace forever more;—
Soothed to eternal office of delight,
By these that wing the soul on its first flight,
For these are the great spirits that shape the world!

IMMORTALITY.

I.

Beside me, in a dream of the deep night,
Unsummon'd, but in loveliness array'd,
Stood a warm, blue-eyed maid;
And the night fled before her, and the bloom
Of her eternal beauty, from my sight,
Dispell'd the midnight gloom.

II.

She stood beside me, and her white hand fell,
A touch of life and light upon my brow,—
That straightway felt the fresh'ning waters flow,
As from a heart whose tides had sudden might,
In the bright presence of some holy spell,—
Whose smile at once brought strength with new delight.

III.

And in her voice a winningness prevail'd,—
A music born of waters, that go free
Through forests gladdened in their greenery,
And lapsing through their leaves, as in a play
Of song and bird, by flow'r and beam regaled,
Whose pastimes are not ended with the day.

IV.

Hers was a voice of wings;—the linnet's note,
The lark's clear morning song of upper skies,
The dove's sweet plaint of tenderness and sighs;—
And the unparallel'd life within her own,
Made these a happier music than they brought,
Unchorus'd, when they carol'd forth alone!

V.

Her eye was its own music,—its own flight,—
As if, commercing ever with the spheres,
It strove for harmonies to mate with theirs,
And wings to pass from star to star at will;—
To shun the province yielded up to night,
For realms of brightness, still!

VI.

The living speech upon her lips, in fire,
Rose, swelling, like a soul;—while, in her eye,
The truth that blossoms with divinity,
Rayed out with golden brightness, and awoke
Within my heart a pulse of new desire,
That burst each ancient yoke.

VII.

Then, in my rapture, I had lain my head
Upon the soft swell of that happy round,
That rose up, like a white, celestial mound,—
As saying,—"bring your gifts to this one shrine;"
But that her brow's clear will soon banished
The fond resolve from mine!

VIII

I did not quail or tremble at her glance,
For still it seem'd as she were there to bring
New loves to crown my hope, a newer wing,
And open better provinces of life;—
Within her smile I saw deliverance,
And broad, new realms for strife.

IX.

Yet broken was my speech, and forth I stood,
Despairing, though immers'd in certain bliss,
Lest I should lose, in my soul's feebleness,
The embrace that now seem'd needful to content;
And tears were all that the impetuous blood
Vouchsafed, of all it meant!

X.

Then sweeter grew the smile upon her face,
As, conscious of my suffering and my truth,
Her heart for mine was sudden smit with ruth;
And she made answer, not with human word,—
But in her smile, and the intelligent grace
Of motion, was she heard.

XI.

"Thy wish is thy performance," said she then;—
"And thou wilt take me to thy arms anon,
When thou hast put thy loftier nature on,
And made me the sole passion in thy heart;
But not for thee, when we shall meet again,
To be what now thou art!

XII.

"And 'tis for thy soliciting to say,
Whether my form will show to thee as now;—
It may be thou wilt shrink to see the brow,
Which, though in loveliness it now appears,
May so affront thee, thou wilt turn away
In terror and in tears!

XIII.

"If that the passion thou hast felt for me,
Live in thy future memory, thou wilt raise
Thy altar, and thy anthem, in my praise;
And I will light thy fires, and wing thy strain;—
But if I lose thee from my love, for thee,
My presence must be pain.

XIV.

"'Tis written, we shall meet;—'tis written more,
Thou shalt be mine, I thine; and we must go,
Forever link'd, through ages that still flow
From founts of time eternal, to no end,
Save one of toil, which we may both deplore,
Or covet, as thy single wishes tend.

XV.

"Our future is performance! Worlds are placed
Around us for possession; and, in these,
We make our separate mansions as we please,
And choose the separate tasks that each fulfil;
In these, or happy and blest,—or, low debased,—
Must wait upon thy will.

XVI.

"And thus, in a brief vision of the night,
I show thee what I am, that thou may'st see,
How great the blessings that still wait on thee,
Even at thy pleasure:—Could I show thee more,
Then should thy wonder grow with thy delight,
At what is in my store.

XVII.

"I come not with denial, though I now
Deny thee my embrace;—thy head shall lie
Upon this bosom—on thy doubtful eye,
This form shall rise at last, whate'er thou beest;
For thee to say, how fair shall be the brow,
How bright the eye, which, in that day, thou seest.

XVIII.

"Oh! 'tis to all my charms that I entreat
Thy coming;—thou shalt have my crown and wings;
For thee, the bird that late and early sings,
When hope is at the entrance, shall appear;
And we will glide, with pinions at our feet,
To tasks by Love made dear!

XIX.

"Come to me then, beloved one, with thy heart
Made pure in my remembrance—with thy thought,
By hope of triumph in mine, forever taught
To seek the unnamed condition of delight;—
So shall I meet thee, fond as now thou art,
Thou me, as now I seem unto thy sight!"

XX.

Rapture, O! Rapture! wherefore wert thou born
So soon to perish! . . . . thou, a part of death,
Art lost to being with thy first sweet breath,
And lifelong, then, we mourn thee with an eye
Turned outwards, inwards—with the look forlorn,
Too happy, if it seeks for thee on high!

IMAGINATION.

I.

He is a God who wills it,—with a power
To work his purpose out in earth and air,
Though neither speak him fair!—
So may he pluck from earth its precious flow'r,
And in the ether choose a spirit rare,
To serve him deftly in some other sphere;—
And thus it is that I have will'd this hour,
And thou hast heard me, and thy form is here!

II.

Creature of wing and eye,
That, singing, seek'st the sky,
And soar'st because thou sing'st, and singing, still must fly;
Believe me, though I know not mine own voice,
I see thee, and before thee I rejoice;
Thou, precious in both worlds, with thy sole choice
In ours, I bless thee that I knew thee first,
Ere in the dawn of mortal joys my heart,
Low-fashioned by its fond caprice and art,
Had been for thy blest offices accurst;—

Denied the commerce of thy griefs which bring
The wholesome of Love's sweetness with the sting ;—
The love which Sin hath nurst,—
But nursing, could not keep,—
Soothed by delicious dews, the soul that steep,
And circumvent the wing !—
Oh ! thou hast heard me ;—heard me and com'st down,
Amid the silence and the shade, a gleam ;
I see the glimmer of thy golden crown,
I feel thy wing in murmur, and I dream—
Dream of thy pleasant provinces, which lie
Still open to the conqueror, who, no more
May rifle, than resist, thy precious store,
Which grows, the more he spoils, the more beneath his eye !

III.

Oh ! thou hast heard me with no jealous grace,—
Hast heard me, and approv'st the daring quest,
Which, heedless of this lowliness of place,
Would build thee here a shrine,—and, to my breast,
Implore thee, that I may be lifted high
To thy vast realms that still entreat mine eye,
Shining through fields of vision, by the star,
Most sacred, which, at evening and at dawn,
First comes to teach us where the bright ones are,
Each, in his place, upon the heavenly lawn ;—
All open to thy wing, that, dusk and day,
Descend'st and risest,—lifting, at each flight,
Some hopeful spirit, that, beneath thy ray,
Grows fitted to a world of more delight !—
Oh ! not to thee to censure lowliness,
Save in the soul, which, grovelling as it goes,
Sees not the bright wings that descend to bless,
And will not seek where the true fountain flows !
And he whom man denies,
Hath but to lift his eyes,
Touch'd by thy breath, fresh-parted from the skies,
And the walls tumble outward that did bound,
And, skyward, the blue deepens ; and, in air,

A flutter of the happiest wings is found,
Diffusing sweets that earth still finds too rare ;—
And faith takes both her wings,
Will, that o'er mortal things,
Still sways, as doth the wand o'er hidden springs ;
And Love, that, in her trust,
Holds empire over dust,
And lifts to very life the soul to which she clings !
These grow to freedom with thy downward flight,
While the gross earth, bedarken'd in the bright,
That kindles on his sight,
Feels all its pomps grow nought,
Subject to that great thought,
Borne on thy matchless plumes, by which the soul is taught.

IV.

I know my undeserving—know how vain
The poor equivalent of love I bring,
And yet once more I do solicit thee ;—
Again ! O ! yet again !
Sit by me as thou didst, my beautiful !
When life was but a blossom of the spring,
And thou its zephyr—sit by me and sing.
Thy voice of tears will medicine the gloom
That hangs about my spirit, and set free
That bird of faith that only finds its wing
In thy melodious coming. Chase away
These threatening shapes that cloud my lonely room,
And wrap me in their moody grasp all day !
Come,—for thou only canst—O ! come and lull,
With the sweet reedy music of thy tone,
The weary spirit left too much alone
By the gay strollers of this idle time ;
Yet, deem me not irreverent when I ask !—
With thee, the creature of the wing and eye,—
A bird-flight not a task !—
'Twere easy to adjure, from stars sublime,
Such mighty sorrows, as, through these old walls,
Would leave a thousand echoes gushing free,

At every trailing of a spirit's train;—
Recalling still that strain,
That woke me to thy presence first, when far,
Led by a single star,
And following in the wake of fancies sweet,
I wandered deep into the mountain halls,
And ever, through the flashes of the storm,
Beheld a flitting form;
And heard, when winds grew hush'd, the sounds of falling feet!

V.

I know, with various wing that thou canst soar
To realms that know no sorrow—that thy flight
Can waft thee to vain regions of delight,
Where wings may rather wanton than explore;—
But not to provinces like these I pray
Thy pinions;—nor for me that idle lore,
That only seeks to wile, or win, by art,
The vigilant hours that watch through the long day;—
Those foolish madrigals that chase away,
As old men laugh, time's wrinkles;—the vain joke
That shakes the theatre, while, for the nonce,
The buffoon triumphs in the sage's cloak,
And wisdom, all forgetful of his part,
Grows heedless of the white upon his sconce,
Nor deafens as he shakes his borrow'd bells!—
Nor should you win me when the drama tells
The sportive passions of that wayward God,
Who, riding Lybia's lion, yet with craft,
Still wings his wanton shaft,
Subduing mightiest spirits into shame;
Till lowlier men grow scornful of the fame,
That took the name of glory, ere the sport
Of that boy-archer shook their high report!—
As Love is in thy office, let the strain,
That teaches me his affluence, be implored
From the full heart and the sincerest thought;—
As if the captive thus had been restored
To passions of great pride and purest gain,—

Such as, by truth made plain,
Had never partaken of the pernicious fruit
That held the reptile in its core, and brought
Caprice, that ever must the soul imbrute!
Bring me to knowledge of that nobler flame
That never clouds with shame;
That freely may declare its aim and birth,
Nor glow, all doubtful of its proper name,
Impure, unhallowed, on the hallowed hearth!
Mine be the creature of a faith that brooks
No fashioning art or offices of man;
But, for its laws and properties, still looks
To the true purpose, first in nature's plan,
Decreed, ere rolling spheres and twinkling orbs began.

VI.

Thine is the night, the cloud, the lone, the far;
Thou bring'st to night her star:
The cloud from thee receives its wing for flight,
And, clothed in purple light,
Goes sailing, richly freighted, to the sea!—
And thou hast cheer'd the solitude for me;—
Hast borne me, when the fetters of earth had worn
Into the soul its scorpion lash had torn,—
Borne me, triumphant, from my lonely cell,
To freedom, in far empires of the night;—
The freedom of the rugged mountain's height;
The strange companions of the haunted dell;
Great fields of blue, star-lighted,—while the cloud
Lay mantling o'er the city like a shroud,
And all behind was sad, and all before was bright!
Long vistas of the wood were wooing,—gay
Sprinkt with the droplets which the sun had left,
Fast hurrying, having loiter'd on his way;—
These, in green thick close hid, and rocky cleft,
Made rich the solemn shadows of the wood;
So that the pilgrim, consciously astray,
Might wander still, since all around was good.
Thus night is in thy keeping! Thou alone,

Canst take the veil from off her matron brow,
And bid the dreamer gladden in her sight.
Thou mak'st the secrets of her mansion known,
Her mansion, gloomy with excess of bright;—
And, from its wealth, surpassing mortal show
The starr'd luxuriance of her pillar'd throne,
Thou canst extort her music—a lament
As if the stars and winds together made
A requiem o'er the glories that must fade,—
Such as might issue, on a God's descent,
From some high sphere his presence once had sway'd.
'Tis thine to put a soul into this train,
While earth is sleeping—blasted from her birth,
Into unmusical barrenness and dearth,
Such as might move her ne'er to wake again,
Did it not pleasure her vain pride to spoil,
With keen and clamorous coil,
The delicate labors of our secret toil;
To break upon the midnight watch we keep—
Forgetting sleep,
Here, charming night and silence from the deep,
Stars stooping round us ever as they shine,
While wings, from off thy shoulders, grow to mine.

EGERIA.

I.

The worshipper of nature and the heart,
  May in the lonely forest-depths survey
The spirit which has made thee what thou art,
  And crown'd with living loveliness thy lay;—
There hast thou caught the breathings from a shrine
  Too high for low devotion; and hast felt
How much may sorrow's oracle divine,
  When its faint echoes thus o'ercome and melt;—
Beauty thou breathest o'er the inanimate vale,
  And in the night of silence, dost receive,
From voices long forgotten, such a tale
  As grief may love to hear, and grieving love believe.

II.

Ah! voices that have spoke to thee in power,
  Yet with an accent so subdued and sweet,
They might have found their being in the flower,
  Such as implores thee, smiling at thy feet;—
These have confirmed thee in the happier faith,
  That brought thee to indulgence, and did make
Thy heart forgetful of its scorn and scaith,
  And blessing all of earth for nature's sake.
The storms that shake the blue and fretted vault,
  Came not within thy mission; but, for thee,
Life's office is to soothe and to exalt,
  To mould and not o'erthrow, to bind and not to free.

III.

Blessings upon thy fetters! which have given
  The freedom which the winged nature craves;—
Subjection first, and ere the seal is riven,
  Such chastening as becomes the worst of slaves;

The blindness which is born of profligate will,
  To couch,—and the insanity which has its birth
In base self-worship and delusion still,
  To trample down, deep down, in native earth.
Nor hard to thee these offices, whose power,
  So child-like in its exercise, declares
The freshness and the pureness of a dower,
  That never lost its innocence in tears.

IV.

These make the harmony that works in thee ;—
  And thus boon nature to thy strength has given,
The rugged fetters of the heart to free,
  As with the utterance of a word in Heaven.
Thus do thy attributes of voice and eye,
  Grow to an essence exquisite and strong,—
As sounds that glow to stars when lifted high,
  As stars that, as they kindle, sink to song.
The waters, 'neath a will thus married, break
  The seal that shut the fountain; and the soul
Assumes that noble aspect it must take,
  If thou would'st love, and God endow the whole.

V.

Go forth, in mercy, minister of gladness,
  Whose pulses sway the musical cords which bind
The links of the selected ; and from sadness
  Draw the best elements for heart and mind.
Set free thy doves of nurture ;—let thy song,
  Sweet song of meekness, bosom-toned and deep,
Touch, and revive, the wounded hearts that long
  Have only lived to want thee, and to weep ;—
Oh ! be thy spirit on the wild again,
  And let thy waters, from their blue abode,
Bear gently forth the melancholy strain,
  Sweet strain, sad strain, dear music sent from God.

ILENOVAR.

FROM A STORY OF PALENQUE.

A FRAGMENT.

WEARY, but now no longer girt by foes,
  He darkly stood beside that sullen wave,
Watching the sullen waters, whose repose
  Imaged the gloomy shadows in his heart;
Vultures, that, in the greed of appetite,
Still sating blind their passionate delight,
Lose all the wing for flight,
  And, brooding deafly o'er the prey they tear,
Hear never the low voice that cries, "depart,
  Lest with the surfeit you partake the snare!"
Thus fixed by brooding and rapacious thought,
  Stood the dark chieftain by the gloomy stream,
When, suddenly, his ear
  A far off murmur caught,
Low, deep, impending, as of trooping winds,
  Up from his father's grave,—
That ever still some fearful echoes gave,
  Such as had lately warn'd him in his dream,
Of all that he had lost—of all he still might save!
  Well knew he of the sacrilege that made
That sacred vault, where thrice two hundred kings
  Were in their royal pomp and purple laid,
Refuge for meanest things!—
  Well knew he of the horrid midnight rite,
And the foul orgies, and the treacherous spell,
  By those dread magians nightly practised there;
And who the destined victim of their art;—
  But, as he feels the sacred amulet

That clips his neck and trembles at his breast—
  As once did she who gave it—he hath set
His resolute spirit to its work, and well
  His great soul answers to the threat'ning dread,
  Those voices from the mansions of the dead!
Upon the earth, like stone,
He crouched in silence; and his keen ear, prone,
  Kissed the cold ground in watchfulness, not fear!
But soon he rose in fright,
  For, as the sounds grew near,
He feels the accents never were of earth:
They have a wilder birth
  Than in the council of his enemies;
And he, the man, who, having but one life,
Hath risked a thousand in unequal strife,
  Now, in the night and silence, sudden finds
A terror, at whose touch his manhood flies.
  The blood grows cold and freezes in his veins,
His heart sinks, and upon his lips the breath
Curdles, as if in death!
  Vainly he strives in flight,
His trembling knees deny—his strength is gone!
  As one who, in the depth of the dark night,
Groping through chambered ruins, lays his hands
  On cold and clammy bones, and glutinous brains,
  The murdered man's remains—
Thus rooted to the dread spot stood the chief,
  When, from the tomb of ages came the sound,
As of a strong man's grief;
  His heart denied its blood—his brain spun round—
  He sank upon the ground!

'T was but an instant to the dust he clung;
  The murmurs grew about him like a cloud—
He breathed an atmosphere of spirit-voices,
  Most sighing sad, but with a sound between,
As of one born to hope that still rejoices,
  In a sweet foreign tongue,
That seemed exulting, starting from its shroud

To a new rapture for the first time seen!
This better voice, as with a crowning spell,
On the chief's spirit fell;
Up starting from the earth, he cried aloud:
"Ah! thou art there, and well!
I thank thee, thou sweet life, that unto me
Art life no longer—thou hast brought me life,
Such as shall make thy murderers dread the strife.
But for thy ear a gentler speech be mine,
And I will wait until the terrible hour
Hath past, and I may wholly then be thine!
Now am I sworn until a wilder power,
But none so dear or precious, sweetest flower,
That ever, when Palenque possessed her tower
And white-robed priesthood, wert, of all thy race,
Most queenly, and the soul of truth and grace;—
Blossom of beauty, that I could not keep,
And know not to resign—
I would, but cannot weep!
These are not tears, my father, but hot blood
That fills the warrior's eyes;
For every drop that falls, a mighty flood
Our foemen's hearts shall yield us, when the dawn
Begins of that last day,
Whose red light ushers in the fatal fray,
Such as shall bring us back old victories,
Or of the empire, evermore withdrawn,
Shall make a realm of silence and of gloom,
Where all may read the doom,
But none shall dream the horrid history!
I do not weep—I do not shrink—I cry
For the fierce strife and vengeance! Taught by thee,
No other thought I see!
My hope is strong within, my limbs are free;—
My arms would strike the foe—my feet would fly,
Where now he rides triumphant in his sway—
And though within my soul a sorrow deep
Makes thought a horror-haunting memory,
I do not, will not weep!"

Then swore he—and he called the tree whose growth
  Of past and solemn centuries made it wear
  An ancient, god-like air,
To register his deep and passionate oath.
  Hate to the last he swore—a wild revenge,
Such as no chance can change,
  Vowed he before those during witnesses,
Rocks, waters and old trees!—
  And, in that midnight hour,
No sound from nature broke—
No sound save that he spoke,
  No sound from spirits hushed and listening nigh!
His was an oath of power—
  A prince's pledge for vengeance to his race—
  To twice two hundred years of royalty—
That still the unbroken sceptre should have sway,
While yet one subject warrior might obey,
  Or one great soul avenge a realm's disgrace!
It was a pledge of vengeance, for long years,
  Borne by his trampled people for a dower,
Of bitterness and tears;—
  Homes rifled, hopes defeated, feelings torn
  By a fierce conqueror's scorn;
The national gods o'erthrown—treasure and blood,
Once boundless as the flood,
  That 'neath his fixed and unforgiving eye
  Crept onward silently;
Scattered and squandered wantonly, by bands,
Leaguered in shame, the scum of foreign lands,
  Sent forth to lengthen out their infamy,
With the wild banquet of a pampered mood.

Even as he swore, his eye
  Grew kindled with a fierce and flaming blight,
Red-lowering like the sky,
  When, heralding the tempest in his might,
The muttering clouds march forth and form on high,
With sable banners and grim majesty.
Beneath his frowning brow a shaft of fire,

That told the lurking ire,
Shot ever forth, outflashing through the gloom
It could not well illume,
Making the swarthy cheeks on which it fell
Seem trenched with scarrèd lines of hate and hell.
Then heaved his breast with all the deep delight
The warrior finds in promise of the fight,
  Who seeks for vengeance in his victory.
For, in the sudden silence in the air,
He knew how gracious was the audience there;
He heard the wings unfolding at the close,
  And the soft voice that cheered him once before
Now into utterance rose:
One whispered word,
  One parting tone,
And then a fragrant flight of wings was heard,
  And she was gone, was gone —
  Yet was he not alone! not all alone!

Thus, having sworn,—the old and witnessing tree
Bent down, and in his branches register'd
Each dark and passionate word;
And on the rocks, trench'd in their shapeless sides,
The terrible oath abides;
And the dark waters, muttering to their waves,
Bore to their secret mansions and dim caves
  The vow of death they heard.
Thus were the dead appeased—the listening dead—
  For, as the warrior paused, a cold breath came,
  Wrapping with ice his frame,
A cold hand pressing on his heart and head;
  Entranced and motionless,
Upon the earth he lies,
  While a dread picture of the land's distress
Rose up before his eyes.
First came old Hilluah's shadow, with the ring
About his brow—the sceptre in his hand,
  Ensigns of glorious and supreme command,
Proofs of the conqueror, honored in the king.

"Ilenovar! Ilenovar!" he cried:
Vainly the chief replied;—
He strove to rise for homage, but in vain—
The deathlike spell was on him like a chain,
And his clogg'd tongue, that still he strove to teach,
Denied all answering speech!
The monarch bade him mark
The clotted blood that, dark,
Distained his royal bosom, and that found
Its way, still issuing from a mortal wound,
  Ghastly, and gaping wide, upon his throat!
The shadow passed—another took his place,
Of the same royal race;
The noble Yumuri, the only son
Of the old monarch, heir to his high throne,
Cut off by cunning in his youthful pride;
There was the murderer's gash, and the red tide
Still pouring from his side;
  And round his neck the mark of bloody hands,
That strangled the brave sufferer while he strove
  Against their clashing brands.
Not with unmoistened eyes did the chief note
  His noble cousin, precious to his love,
Brother of one more precious to his thought,
  With whom and her, three happy hearts in one,
He grew together in their joys and fears—
And, not till sundered, knew the taste of tears;
  Salt, bitter tears—but shed by one alone,
Him the survivor, the avenger—he
Who vainly shades his eyes that still must see!
Long troops came after of his slaughter'd race,
  Each in his habit, even as he died:
The big sweat trickled down the warrior's face,
Yet could he move no limb in that deep trance,
Nor turn away his glance!

They melt again to cloud—at last they fade;
  He breathes, that sad spectator,—they are gone;
  He sighs with sweet relief; but lo! anon,

A deeper spell enfolds him, as a maid,
Graceful as evening light, and with an eye
Intelligent with beauty, like the sky,
And wooing as the shade,
  Bends o'er him silently!
With one sweet hand she lifts the streaming hair,
  That o'er her shoulders droops so gracefully,
While with the other she directs his gaze,
All desperate with amaze,
Yet with a strange delight, through all his fear!
What sees he there?
Buried within her bosom doth his eye
The deadly steel descry;
The blood stream clotted round it—the sweet life
Shed by the cruel knife!—
The keen blade guided to the pure white breast,
By its own kindred hand, declares the rest!
Smiling upon the deed, she smiles on him,
And in that smile the lovely shape grows dim.

His trance is gone—his heart
Hath no more fear! In one wild start
He bursts the spell that bound him, with a cry
That rings in the far sky!
He does not fear to rouse his enemy!
The hollow rocks reply.
He shouts, and wildly, with a desperate voice,
As if he did rejoice
That death hath done his worst;
  And, in his very desperation bless'd,
He felt that life could never more be cursed;
  And from its gross remains he still might wrest
  A something, not a joy, but needful to his breast!
His hope is in the thought that he shall gain
Sweet vengeance for the slain—
For her, the sole, the one
More dear to him than daylight or the sun,
That perished to be pure! No more! no more!
Hath that stern mourner language! But the vow,

Late breathed before those spectred witnesses,
His secret spirit mutters o'er and o'er,
As 't were the very life of him and these,—
Dear to his memory, needful to him now!
A moment and his right hand grasped the oar,—
Then, bending to the waters, his canoe,
Like some etherial thing that mocks the view,
Glides silent from the shore.

CLARICE.

I.

Maidens there are, of grace and light,
  Who, when ye dream about the sky,
Come, ever smiling, strangely bright,
  Between the fancy and the eye;
Ye feel them sweet to soul and sight,
  And sadden as ye see them fly.

II.

And she was one of those that grew
  The image kindred to the theme;
Still present to the mind and view,
  Though still as something in a dream;
I loved her beauties ere I knew
  So well my thoughts did they beseem.

III.

Not long the heart an ideal thrills,
  Lacks comfort from the thing it woos;
For still the generous nature wills,
  That he shall find who well pursues;
The glad soul which a fancy fills
  Soon shapes the creature it must choose.

IV.

True to my fancy thus she grew,
  The living thing that was my thought;
The spirit of grace, the woman too,
  That dreams had found for me unsought;
If doubts declared the dream untrue,
  Her smile the perfect faith soon taught.

V.

And ever still, in hours of gloom,
  She brought me glimpses of her skies;
Her presence fresh'n'd earth with bloom,
  And heaven lay star-like in her eyes;
How should I vex me with the doom,
  Still wrought by evil destinies?

VI.

Ah! hers were spells we may not feign,
  Born at her birth and fashion'd so,
Ye may not teach, or falsely train,
  By all th' experience taught below;
To me they brought exceeding gain,
  But work'd her gentle spirit wo!

VII.

For, to the delicate hearts that take
  Their nurture from another's eye,
There's danger if the breeze but shake
  The lilies in the lake that lie;
She weeps, lest love his perch forsake,
  And dies with dread, lest rapture die.

VIII.

The smile, that, like a forest bird,
  Starts up with sudden song to cheer;—
The sadden'd tone, that, sudden heard,
  Sounds strange and cold upon the ear;—
The hasty glance, th' impatient word,
  These ever thrill'd her with a fear.

IX.

And pleasure's self was like a pain
  So keenly felt was every bliss;
Even though convulsive throbb'd the brain,
  Lest life should bring no more like this;
The very love she lived to gain,
  Brought death when bonded in its kiss.

X.

She perish'd in her innocent youth,
  As well beseems the creature made,
Like her, all tenderness and truth,
  Of such pure light, of such soft shade,—
So full of fear, and faith, and ruth,
  And born for love, of love afraid.

SUMMER WEST WIND.

From what dear island in the Indian seas,
  Com'st thou, sweet spicy breeze;—
The freshness of the morning on thy wing,
  And all the bloom of spring?—
Ah! ere thy flight was taken,
  The rose and shrub were shaken;
Thou stol'st to many a bow'r of bloom and bliss,
  Giving and taking many a balmy kiss!
Ah! happy, that, in flying, thou not leavest
  Aught that thou need'st or grievest;
Thy spirit knows not fetters, though subdued,
  For a long time, thy mood;—
Yet, let the west implore thee,
  The sweet south smile before thee,

The murmur of their fountains meet thine ear
  And thou, anon, art there!
The lone one will forget her loneliness,
  As thou uplift'st her tress,
Kissing, with none to check,
  The whitest neck,—
She blushing, with fond fancies, that repine
  For other lips than thine,—
Ah! why not mine!

II.

Methinks from thy sweet breath and tender motion,
  Thy last flight was from caves in southern ocean,
Spar-gem'd and lustrous;—there, thy form has crept
  To the pale Nereid as she sighing slept!
Ah, wanton!—thou hast toy'd with tangled hair,
  And bent o'er beauties rare;
Seal'd up bright eyes with kisses, that, anon,
  When sleep and thou wert gone,
Wept at the hapless waking which destroy'd
  The sweetest world of void!—
Thou might'st have linger'd in thy watch secure,—
  Thy kisses, though they waken'd her, were pure;
Nay, on her lips, thou might'st impress the seal,
  Her cheeks still blush to feel;
Her sea-shell, meanwhile, suiting with sweet notes,
  'Till slowly, through its purple winding floats
Love's fondest plaint,—
  The saddest, dear'st effusion of her saint;
Touch'd to the soul with such a tenderness,
  She may no more express,—
Her only grief, her joy in such excess,
  No words may well declare, no music paint!

III.

Can'st thou desert her, vain one!—wilt thou fly,
  With sunset, when the purple billow glows,
As with new passion, 'neath the western sky?—
  Thy flight hath borne with it her dear repose;—

That music, as it goes,
Robs her of life, with love ;—unless it be
She still can fly with thee ;—
Borne far with dying day,
A faint but fairy lay,—
That moves her,—following, through the fields of air,—
Thee seeking, false one, seeking every where !

IV.

Even in his fiercest hour,
Thou mock'st the great sun's power,
Thy broad wing o'er the quiv'ring plain below,
Shield'st fondly from his glow,
And cherishest and cheer'st the drooping flower.
Lo ! smiling, the green trees that forward bend
With thy fast flight to blend ;
Lo ! the cooled waves that, dimpling ocean's isles,
Implore thee with a thousand frantic wiles,
Flinging their shells along the yellow beach,
That thou may'st teach,
With lingering whisper, as thou dartest by,
To every twisted core, its melody.

V.

Swart labor greets thee from his fields with pray'r,
And bows with dripping hair,
Vest open wide, and blue eye that declares
A gladness born of cares.—
Mother of meekness, child of happy birth,
Sprung from the sky, yet born alone for earth,—
Glows his broad bosom as he sees thy wing,
Slow spreading, and with silence hovering,
A purple cloud descending,
Above his green fields bending,
And blessing !—Thou hast cheer'd him with thy breath,
When all was still as death ;
Leaves quiv'ring in the close and stifling air ;
A languor like despair,
Stretched o'er the earth, and through the coppery sky

That burns the upholding eye;—
Streams fled from ancient channels, and the blade
Blasted, as soon as made—
And the sad drooping of all things that sigh,
With the dread fear to die!

VI.

Ah! still above our green plains brood, and bring
Life to their languishing!
Sweet breath, and dear protection! go not soon,
Though, with the rising moon,
The mermaid woos thee to her silvery isle,
And songs from green-haired ocean-maids beguile,
No longer dumb with rapture, waiting thee.
We may not set thee free,—
Let prayer secure thee for a season, 'till,
Prayer true as ours gives freedom to thy will!
Then linger not too long, nor all forget
How fondly, when we met,
Our arms were spread to greet thee,—and each breast,
Warm, opening for its guest.
Come to us waking—sleeping; do not fear
To waken, with thy music in each ear,
Music of flow'rs and of the gentle waves
That break in moonlight caves,—
Music of youth and hope, which, if it know,
A touch of tears or wo,
Is yet a wo of tenderness that brings,
Gleams still of sweetest things;—
And, if it tell of night,
Tells of it only when its stars are bright,
And in the silvery, soft and tremulous air,
The moon and thou art both commercing there

THE KINGS IN SHEOL.

PARAPHRASE.—ISAIAH xiv.

HARK! the nations take a song
Of deliverance from the strong;—
Still they cry on every hand,
There is freedom for the land;
For the oppressor 's overthrown,
And the golden city's down!—
He who smote the world in wrath,
Now lies silent in his path;
None so feeble, but may stride,
O'er the brow they deified;—
God, in vengeance, hath arisen;
He hath broke the captive's prison;
In his smile a freedom bringing,
Which hath set the whole world singing;
All exulting o'er the ruin
Which declares the dread undoing,
Of the awful power that made
Earth grow barren in its shade!—
The pines, that trembled at his tread,—
The cedars, doom'd to bow the head,
Beneath his lordly axe, that won,
The grayest brows of Lebanon,—
Now shout triumphant in the blow
That shields them hence from overthrow;—
How stands above his open grave,
With words of scorn, his meanest slave!
To his gloomy ghost, they cry,
As it shrouds it from the sky,—

Sinking, under doom of wo,
To the awful realm below.

Thou, that lately stood elate,
Hence! to meet a loathlier state,—
Hell, to hail thee, stirs her dead!—
Rising, as they hear thy tread,
Lo! the great ones of the earth,
Hail thee with a mocking mirth;
From their thrones of ancient might,
Rise, to welcome thee to night.
Those, with common voice, they speak,
Art become like us, and weak;—
Pomp and music could not save,
All thy pride is in the grave;
'Neath thee winds the worm,—above,
Crawls, and clings, with loathsome love!
How art thou fall'n! that like the star,
The son of morning, shone afar,
Flung, midst the glory of thy light,
In darkness from thy mountain height;
Even at the moment when thy aim,
Had been the cope of heaven to claim,—
Above the stars of God to rise,
And sway the assembly of the skies!
Lo! where thou sink'st, with mortal dread,
While Sheol closes o'er thy head;—
Grasping her sides with feeble will,
Yet sinking downward, downward still;
How—could they see thee from above,—
The eyes that never watch'd in love,—
How would they cry—can this be he,
That made the crowded nations flee,
Did, in his wrath, the kingdom's shake,
And make earth's far foundations quake!

MONNA.

I.

There was an eye, a steadfast eye,
  That once I loved :—I love it now :—
  And still it gazes on my brow,
Unchanged through all,—unchangingly.

II.

It could not change, though it has gone ;—
  For 'twas a thing of soul ;—and so,
  It did not with the mortal go,
To that one chamber, still and lone.

III.

It had a touch, a winning touch,
  Of twilight sadness in its glance ;
  And look'd, at times, as in a trance,
Till I grew sad, I loved so much.

IV.

For life is selfish, and the tear,
  In one we love is like a gloom ;
  And still I wept the stubborn doom
That made a thing of grief so dear.

V.

Through sunny hours and cloudy hours,
  And hours that had nor sun nor cloud,
  That eye was rapt, as in a shroud,
Such shroud as autumn flings o'er flowers.

VI.

It had a language dear to me,
Though strange to all the world beside;
And many a grief I strove to chide,
Grew sweet to mine idolatry.

VII.

I could not stay the grief, nor chase
The cloud that gloom'd the earnest eye;
But gave,—'twas all,—my sympathy,
And wo was written on my face.

VIII.

'Twas on my face, as in my heart;
And when the Lady Monna died,
When still I loved,—I never sigh'd,
But tearless saw the lights depart.

IX.

They bore her coldly to the tomb;
They took me to my home away;
Nor knew that from that vacant day,
My home was with her in the gloom.

X.

They little knew how, still we went,
Together, in the midnight shade,
Communing with wet eyes, that made,
Our very passions innocent.

XI.

Born of the cloud, her mournful eye,
Was on me still, as shines the star,
That, drooping from its heights afar,
Broods ever on eternity.

XII.

It led me aye through folds of shade,
By day and darkness, still the same,
And heedless of all mortal blame,
I follow'd meekly where it bade.

XIII.

They watch'd my steps, and scann'd my face,
And vex'd my heart till I grew stern;—
For curious eyes have yet to learn,
How sorrow dreads each finger trace.

XIV.

Mine was too deep a love to be,
The common theme for idle tongue,
And when they spoke of her, they wrung
My spirit into agony.

XV.

I live a lone and settled wo;—
I care not if the day be fair
Or foul,—I would that I were near,
The maid they buried long ago.

UR-LIGHT.

Ere, at first, the seals were broken,
And the motive word had spoken,
Earth was but an idiot wonder,
Born in cloud and clad in thunder;
Blindly striving, vainly roaring,
Wildly plunging, feebly soaring,
Whirling with a fretful motion
Like a ship in peevish ocean;—
Graceless all, in grove and fountain,
Shapeless all, in vale and mountain;—
Hopeless, heartless, songless, sightless,
Cold and dismal, soulless, sprightless;—
Little dreaming then of glory,
Which should make so sweet a story,
Music-weaving, music-winning,
Closing sweet for sweet beginning;
Borne across the tract of ages,
Still in sweet successive stages,—
In their daily march untying,
Sounds forever thence undying;—
In their daily music, freeing,
Souls, forever thence in being;—
Beauty still, for song revealing,
Love, that finds for beauty, feeling,—
Hope that knows what truth shall follow,—
Truth that hope alone shall hallow!
But a word must first be spoken,
Ere the heavy seals are broken;
And bright clouds of spirits, chosen,—
Watchful, never once reposing,
Hang amid the void, upgazing,
Where the great world's soul is blazing.

Hark, a voice is heard, as calling,
And a star is seen, as falling,
Star of soul, whose spell symphonious,
Makes stars, systems, suns, harmonious!
Oh! that blessed sound, that thrilling
Earth and matter, make them willing!
Hark! the angels join, rejoicing
As they hear that highest voicing;
Stills the ocean, wildly rushing,
As their melody is gushing;—
Lo! the volcan stays his thunder,
And his red eyes ope in wonder!—
Earth, no longer blind, rejoices,
Clapping hands and lifting voices;
While the eastern sky is streaking,—
Hues of white, like lightning breaking,
Lighten ocean up with splendor,
Make the rugged mountains tender,
As still crowding into cluster,
They implore the growing lustre.
Tree and flow'ret, vale and mountain,
Plain and forest, lake and fountain,
Grove and prairie, rock and river,
Give their glories to the giver;—
Win their voices with their seeing,
Find, in light, their fount of being;
And at eve, its smile imploring,
Still, with dawn, begin adoring;—
Ah! by light eternal bidden,
Light shall never more be hidden.

THE LONELY ISLET.

I.

LIFT the oar, as silently,
By yon sacred isle we pass;
Know we not if still she sleeps,
Where the wind such whisper keeps,
In yon waving grass!
Death's a mocker to delight,
That we know,—and yet,—
There was that in every breath
Of her motion—in the set
Of her features, fair and whole—
In the flashing of her eye,
Spirit joyous still, and high,
Speaking the immortal soul,
In a language warm and bright—
That should mock at death!

II.

Silently!—still silently!
Oh! methinks, if it were true,
If, indeed, she sleeps—
Wakeful never, though the oar,
Of the well-beloved one, nigh,
Break the water as before;—
When, with but the sea in view,
And the sky-waste, and the shore,
Or some star that, sinking, creeps,
Between whiles of speech, to show,
How sweet lover's tears may flow,—
They together went, forgetting,
How the moon was near her setting,
Down amid the waters low;—

III.

Then no more should lovely things,
  Moon, or star, or zephyr, stoop,—
But a cloud with dusky wings,
  Gloom outgiving, still should droop,
    O'er that islet lone:—
And the long grass by the breeze
Sullen rising from the seas,
    Should make constant moan!
Silent!—Hark!—that dipping oar,—
    Oh! methinks, it roused a tone
As of one upon the shore!—
'Twas the wind that swept the grass!—
    Silently, O! silently,—
As the sacred spot we pass!

SYBILLA.

IN ILLUSTRATION OF A PICTURE.

Her brow is raised, her eye in air,—
The spirit burns and triumphs there!—
Mark the sacred strength that dwells
Where that pure white forehead swells;
Lo! the sacred fire that streams
From that deep eye's sudden gleams,
As a shaft of lightning driven,
Through the cloud-veil'd deeps of heaven!

What the passion in that soul,
Thus that bursts and scorns control!

Can it be the lowly birth,—
Passion, which has root in earth—
Which may govern thus, and move,
Soul so high with mortal love?—
No! the feeling in that eye,
Finds its birth-place in the sky.

She hath thrown aside the pen,
Which she straight resumes agen:—
Coursing o'er the spotless leaf,
Lo! her heart hath told its grief:
What a sorrow in that tone,—
What a passion in that moan,
And the big tear, in her eye,
How it speaks the destiny.

Read the letters;—speak them;—lo!
What a story writ, of wo;
Wo is me, that heart like thine,
Kindling thus, and pure, should pine;
Wo is me, that in thy morn,
Thou should'st blossom thus forlorn;
Yet the doom is said in sooth,
Thou shalt perish in thy youth:—

Lose the promise at thy birth;
Lose the pleasant green of earth;
Lose the waters, lose the light,
Sweet from sense and fair from sight;
Ere the breaking of thy heart,
From each dear affection part,
Die in spirit, ere the doom
Drags the mortal to the tomb!—

Thus the fearful prophecy
Glares before thy kindling eye;
Thy own fingers pen the word,
Which thy coal-touch'd ear hath heard;
Thou art doom'd to witness all,
Thou hast loved and cherish'd, fall,—

Fall,—the deadliest form of death—
From the friendship, from the faith!

This is worst—for death is nought
To the high and hopeful thought;
'Tis a deeper pang that rends,
In the parting of firm friends;
In the wrenching of that tie,
Which links souls of sympathy;
In the hour that finds us lone,
Making o'er the false, our moan.

Death she fears not;—but to part,
With each young dream of the heart;
That first hope that brought the rest,
All its sweet brood, to the breast;
Where, a virgin in her cares,
Love, a mother grew to snares,
Which, with harboured vipers, strove,
At the last, to strangle Love!—

Yet her sacred soul is strong;
She maintains the struggle long;
In her cheek the pale is bright,
And the tear-drop hath its light;
On the lip the moan that's heard
Is the singing of a bird,
Striving for the distant quire;—
And her fingers clasp the lyre.

She is dying,—dying fast,
But in music to the last;—
Oh! sad swan, thy parting lay
Is the sweetest of thy day;
And it hath a wingéd might
Bearing up the soul in flight,
Still ascending, seeking place,
'Mong the angels, for a grace.

THE BURDEN OF THE DESERT.

A PARAPHRASE.—ISAIAH XXI.

I.

THE burden of the Desert,
  The Desert like the deep,
That from the south in whirlwinds,
  Comes rushing up the steep;—
I see the spoiler spoiling,
  I hear the strife of blows;
Up, watchman, to thy heights, and say
  How the dread conflict goes!

II.

What hear'st thou from the desert?—
  "A sound, as if a world,
Were from its axle lifted up,
  And to an ocean hurl'd;
The roaring as of waters,
  The rushing as of hills,
And lo! the tempest-smoke and cloud,
  That all the desert fills."

III.

What see'st thou on the desert?—
  "A chariot comes," he cried,
"With camels and with horsemen,
  That travel by its side;

And now a lion darteth,
  From out the cloud, and he,
Looks backward ever as he flies,
  As fearing still to see!"

IV.

What, watchman, of the horsemen?—
  "They come, and as they ride,
Their horses crouch and tremble,
  Nor toss their manes in pride;
The camels wander scatter'd,
  The horsemen heed them nought,
But speed, as if they dreaded still,
  The foe with whom they fought."

V.

"What foe is this, thou watchman?"—
  "Hark! Hark! the horsemen come;
Still looking on the backward path,
  As if they fear'd a doom;
Their locks are white with terror,
  Their very shout's a groan;
'Babylon,' they cry, 'has fallen,
  And all her Gods are gone!'"

"WHERE BY DARRO'S EVENING WATERS."

I.

WHERE by Darro's evening waters,
  Hang the weeping willows low,
There they sat, the twilight's daughters,
  Ever beautiful with wo:—
Murmuring songs of fitful sorrow;—
  Sorrow mingled with such sweetness,
  That it would not know completeness,
But for softening tears that borrow,
  From the yielding heart compliance;—
  And such touching, fond reliance
On the rapture of the morrow,—
That the hearer weeps for pleasure,
  As the music o'er him creeps,
And he finds increasing measure,
  In his pleasure, that he weeps!

II.

Sleeps he then beside the waters,
  By that twilight song oppress'd;
Softly gliding, then, the daughters
  Steal beside his rest;—
Three young maids of touching sweetness,
  Born of dew, and light, and air,
Mourning still the life of fleetness,
  That belongs to birth so rare!—
Yet, so human still their 'plaining,
  In his heart strange pangs arise,
And a new life they are gaining,
  From the drops that fill his eyes.
Reason good for sorrow's power,
In that sad and dreaming hour—

Far beyond their hapless plight,
  Is his own and kindred birth;—
Born of air, and dew, and light,
  He is also born of earth!

SOUL-FLIGHT.

"Ah! whither strays the immortal mind."—BYRON.

I.

WHAT checks the Eagle's wing—what dims his eye,
Turned upward to the sky?
Doth the cloud cumber the ascending flight,
Of that which is all light?
Fruitless, indeed, were such a frail defence
Against intelligence;
And all in vain the chains of earth would bind
The disembodied mind!

II.

Glorious and unrestrained on its way,
It seeks the endless day;
It drinks more deeply of the intenser air,
That streams with being there;
A thing of sense and sight, it early learns,
And sees, adores, and burns;
Claiming, with every breath from out the sky,
Its own divinity.

III.

From world to world, from gathering star to star,
Its flight is fast and far;
As through an ordeal, it prepares in each
Some higher form to reach;
From the small orb that lights the outer gate
Of that all-nameless state,
To that which burns before the eternal throne,
Fearless, it hurries on.

IV.

Dread mystery, that, to the mortal sight
Seems all one shapeless night,—
Wild with unbidden clouds, that flickering haste
Still o'er a pathless waste,
Without one intellectual planet's ray,
To yield a partial day;—
Will death reveal the truth to sons of men!—
Shall we explore you then?

V.

I would not be the creature of the clay,
Mouldering with time away,
Nor hold, for my soul's hope, the awful thought,
That death is all, life nought!—
That all this soaring mind, this high desire
Still, upward, to aspire,
Is but the yearning of some painted thing,
That would not lose its wing.

THE CHILD-ANGEL.

It is our blessing that her lot was fair—
The precious birth-right of the dew and air,
The green and shade of woods, the song of birds,
And dreams too bright for words—
All that makes moonlight for the innocent heart,
And love, that in its bud, is still its crowning part.

The sadness of the spring-time in the shade
Of dusk—the shadows of the night array'd,
By stars in the great forests, as they look,
Glistening, as from a brook;
And stillness, in the gloom, that seems a sound,
Breathed up, unconscious, out, from nature's great profound;—

Fancies, that go beside us when we glide,
Still seeking no companion—prompt to guide,
Even where we would not, to the saddest grove,
Where one still weeps for love,—
Still nursing ever a most sweet distress,
That, through our very sorrow seems to bless;—

These, since the child's departure, still declare,
Her precious birth-right in the dew and air—
And I, that do inherit them from her,
Do feel them minister,
As with new voices never felt before,
To love that, in my heart, still groweth more and more.

NIAGARA.

I.

A YEARNING for the holier things!—
  The spirit vainly tries,
To reassume its morning wings
  And seek its native skies;—
The solemn dark to penetrate,
To grasp the magnet-realm of fate,
  And through the cloud to rise;—
Shake off the lowly world's control,
Assume, assert, and feel the soul,
  Triumphant in its prize,—
The treasure, free from stain of earth,
That proud dominion lost at birth!

II.

And thus we love the pathless shore,
  By ocean's waste of flood;
And listen to his solemn roar,
  With sad and thoughtful mood;
And o'er the rocks, and by the caves,
Where winds make sounds like rolling waves,
  And on the mountains, brood;
As if some sudden voice might swell,
From billowy deep or bosky dell,
  To soothe the anxious blood;
To quell the doubt and glad the sense,
With beams of bright intelligence.

III.

There, 'mid the awful strife, alone!—
  A mighty voice I hear;

An unknown sound of thrilling tone,
  That strikes my heart with fear;
But frees me from the lowlier press,
Of human feelings numberless,
  And every human care:
My spirit takes the eagle's wing,
Among the rolling clouds I spring,
  And all their hues I share;—
Visions of glory crowd my sight,
And woo me to an equal flight!

IV.

These bring me loftiest fancies now;
  I lift my heart and head;
God's burning eye is on my brow,
  His bow is o'er me spread;—
I tremble at no human shrine,
No idol form takes prayer of mine;—
  The signs around me shed,
Glow with the God who sets me free;—
These are his mighty altars!—see,
  His trophies bright and dread;
Columns and rocks, that, trembling, stand—
And oceans tumbling from his hand!

V.

I follow where his voice may guide,
  An accent of the sea,
When angry storms go forth in pride,
  And marshall'd navies flee;—
I hear him in that thunder-tone,
Whose echoes make the mountains groan,
  As toiling to be free;—
Dread glimpses meet me through the spray,
That ramps like lion, rash for prey,
  Beneath his forest tree!—
The God is in that fearful view;
I trace him in yon rainbow too!

VI.

Upon the awful verge I stand,—
  I crouch, but look not down;
Quick beats my heart, as if 'twere bann'd,
  Beneath a master's frown:--
The cries assail me from below,
A chorus of eternal wo,
  A hell-extorted groan!
Down pours the flood, unceasing still,
While all the solid mountains thrill,
  With terrors not their own!—
The abyss yells out in wild despair,—
God! thou hast chained thy rebels there!

VII.

A wonder, mix'd with dread, informs
  The spirit of my dream;
As, circled by this realm of storms,
  I shrink to hear their scream;
Yet, as I watch that awful show,
Shines out the many-blushing bow,
  Beneath the morning gleam;—
Oh! sign of promise still,—that stands
The woven of eternal hands;—
  How should we love thy beam,
That clasping mountain, ocean, air,
Soothes even the awful sorrows there!

TWINS IN DEATH.

SHALL the true faith, soaring high,
Dreaming still about the sky,
Weep the loved ones who have sought,
What hath ever been our thought?—
Better, with a word of cheer,
Send our thoughts to follow, where,
Thought 's no more a thing of care!—

Go, ye young twin-hearted,
Whom not even death has parted,
  So well ye clung together;—
Ye are free the long campaign,
Marches in the cold and rain,
  Hard fight, and bitter weather.
Ye shall know no more of trembling,
Weep no more at man's dissembling,
  Nor at griefs more dread,
In the cruel sad defeat
Of the hope, of all most sweet,
  On which our hearts have fed;—
Fed—fed! as in the solitude
The Hebrew did upon celestial food!

Sweet your future slumbers, where,
The young flow'rs, though soft and fair,
Hide no reptile, nurse no care,—
  Where no shaft your hearts may sever!
Sweetest fate was yours,—to mingle,
  Souls that would unite forever,
Dreading ever to be single!—
God has bless'd your deep repose,
  And the union so divine,
Hath a perfume like the rose,
That upon some mountain grows,
Where the clouds ascend not,

Which the tempests rend not,
  Where stars of night and day, still twinn'd, together shine.

Life can wing no after blow,
Ye are safe from mortal wo;
Ye have wings to fly the cloud,
Souls to fling aside the shroud;
Dreading never more the morrow,
With its brow of frown and sorrow;
Free from cruel time's oppressing,
Death himself but brings ye blessing.
Death who soothes even when he blights—
  Where is he stern-hearted!—
Not when thus his hand unites
  What never life had parted!
Ye have ceased your ailing,
There should be no wailing!

INFANCY OF AMBITION.

I.

'Tis thy first vision of glory;—
Lo! he is sleeping beside thee;
Sweet is the boy in his slumber;
Slumber more beautiful, never
Curtain'd the lips of an infant,
Hung on his mouth like a zephyr,
Or from his lips drew a laughter,
Such as an angel might share in!—
Dark are his violet eyelids,
Soft with a tear dewy-glistening;
Red on his cheeks are the blossoms
Of youth and ineffable beauty;
And o'er his brow, how transcendant,

Bright with all colors and glowing
Lovely as summer's first rainbow,
Circles the halo of heaven.

II.

Madden not, gazing upon him,—
Thus he but sleeps to beguile thee ;—
Stoop not to kiss from his eyelid
Those pearly droplets that glisten
Gemlike, as tributes from ocean,
Cast on the grey sand and shining
Bright in the last glance of evening.—
Little thou dream'st of thy peril ;—
Lo ! where, conceal'd by the roses,
Grasp'd in his hand and now quivering,
As eager to fly on its mission,
The subtle red shaft of the lightning !—
Look, where his head finds its pillow,
Bolt upon bolt, that flash softly,
Tinging with faintest suffusion,
The tresses of gold that half hide them.

III.

This is no child but an eagle,
Ready for flight with his burden,
Changing his aspect as quickly,
And reckless and stern as the Afrite,
Who, escaping from Solomon's signet,
Rose from his urn to a giant,
Stretching from ocean to heaven.
Waken him not in thy madness ;—
Sore is the grief he will bring thee ;
Hard is the task he will set thee ;
Soon, with the daylight beginning,
Late, with the midnight unending ;
Toils that will make thee to weary,
Sinking to die by the wayside,
With an eye and a hand ever stretching
To the lone unattainable summits.

BALLAD.

I.

Her eye is dim with many tears,
Her heart is cold with many fears,
And, in her cheek, and on her brow,
The white has grown to marble now.

II.

Yet, though the dangers round her throng,
And though she trembles, she is strong;
The purpose in her soul is pure,
And she is strengthen'd to endure.

III.

The worst is but a moment's pain,
Once felt, that ne'er is felt again;
She may not shrink from death, whose heart
Is buried with its dearer part.

IV.

Her life was in another's eyes,
And in their sad eclipse, she dies;
To all her hopes, the stroke that slew
Her lover, was most fatal too.

V.

She treads the bloody height once more,
Her feet are clammy with its gore,—
New anguish in her bosom thrill'd—
That blood was from his heart distill'd.

VI.

And darker, gloomier, grows the night,
Storm hangs above the fatal height,—
The lightning's flash, along the skies,
Shows where his mangled body lies.

VII.

Alone, the threatened doom she braves,
The tyrant only sways his slaves;—
She hides in earth the mangled frame,
When warriors fly, or bend in shame.

VIII.

A few short hours, and she will be,
Like him she lived for, far and free;—
The tyrant can but slay,—his blow
Restores the love, whose loss was woe!

VISION—FROM JOB.

'Twas in a dream, a vision of the night,
When deep the sleep that falleth upon man,
I felt a secret presence, and mine ear
Drank in a whisper, which, with mortal dread,
Sunk deep into my soul. My hair stood up;
My limbs with terror shook; crawl'd the cold flesh,
And shrunk with abject fear the lordly heart!
Well knew I that a spectre o'er me stood!—
A spirit pass'd before me, though mine eyes
Saw nought but shadowy things without a shape,
That fill'd the vastness.—Silence, and a voice
Follow'd, which spake:—"Shalt thou, a mortal man,
Be purer than thy Maker—juster than God!"

ALF-SONG.

I.

THE sunbeam darting to the stream,
  The birth that glows in dying,
Love's meeting hour and beauty's gleam,
  And raptures born when flying ;—
How, if we speed o'er summits fair,
  Just at each fountain dipping,
And pause to rest, in vallies rare,
  Their single blisses sipping !

II.

The cup that flows for us must take,
  Its color from the fountain,
In whose embrace the blue skies wake,
  Still dreaming of the mountain ;—
We ask no better boon for us
  While yet the bead is gleaming,
To snatch its single blessing thus,
  Though all the rest be seeming.

III.

And still the leaf that skims the lake,
  Shall satisfy our seeking ;
And still the bird note in the brake,
  Be ample for our speaking ;—
And still the dream at morning-tide,
  When April buds awaken,
Shall welcome bring, though from our side,
  The other self be taken.

STANZAS.

SILENT with all her vassal stars as ever,
Night in the sky,
Here, by this dark and lonely Indian river,
Scarce moaning by;—
Our spirits brood together in communion
Too deep for speech;
Thought wings its way to thought, and in their union
'Tis love they teach.

And yet how deep the mock to this condition!—
That dream of youth,
Whose night stars tremble over waves Elysian,
Whose day is truth—
Whose hope, with angel wings, to consummation
Speeds from its birth,
Whose joy, unfettered as at first creation,
Bends heaven o'er earth.

Hast thou not felt the cruel world's denial,—
Art thou not here;
Exiled and tortured, ere thy soul had trial
Of hope or fear;
Unknown and unconsidered, thy devotion
Denied a shrine;—
Methinks, these waters speak for thy emotion,
And echo mine.

The love that blesses youth is none of ours—
No smiles, no tears—
A sky that never moved the earth to flowers,
In earlier years:—
But the deep consciousness, still-speaking only,
Of the twin-wo,
That finds fit music in these waters lonely,
That moan and go!

BALLAD.

THE SPIRIT-LOVER.

I.

HARK! in gentle Emma's ear,
  Walter pours the well-known song,
He hath spell'd her with a tear,
  And she sighs and listens long.
Happy minstrel, who so well,
Of the young heart's pain can tell?

II.

Still to greet her minstrel boy,
  With the dawning eve she flies,
In her heart a budding joy
  Speaking through her dewy eyes;
Cruel minstrel!—she would chide,
For he comes not to her side.

III.

But the well-known music sounds,
  From the lyre among the groves;
Wildly then her bosom bounds,
  For it speaks of baffled loves;—
Speaks so mournfully and deep,
That she cannot help but weep.

IV.

Not an earthly presence there,
  Where the mournful shadows glide;
Not a mortal voice in air,
  Sweetly breathing at her side;
Chide him not, for he is nigh,
In the spirit of that sigh.

V.

Death has reft him from thy sight,
  But, unless thou will'st it so,
Never, from thy heart's delight,
  Shall his gentle spirit go;
Like the streamlet's far off trill,
Thou shall hear his music still.

FANCY.

Would you win from fancy power?—
Woo her in the witching hour,
  When the drooping sun retires,
  And the moon with softer fires,
Soothes with dew the drooping flow'r.

She is free when evening closes,
Fondly veiling summer's roses,
  To pursue, with noiseless flying,
  As the breeze of ocean sighing,
Seeks where zephyr still reposes.

Lo! you trace her airy motion
In the woods and o'er the ocean,—
  By the wing in tree-top whirring,
  By the zephyr sudden stirring,
By the little lake's commotion.

Earth grows fragrant in her power,—
'Tis from her she wins her dower;
  Sigh for sunset, gleam for alley,
  Flush for grove and voice for valley,
Scent for sun, and beam for flower.

BILLOWS.

GENTLY, with sweet commotion,
Sweeping the shore,
Billows that break from ocean,
Rush to our feet;
Slaves, that, with fond devotion,
Prone to adore,
Seek not to stint with measure,
Service that's meet;—
Bearing their liquid treasure,
Flinging it round,
Shouting, the while, the pleasure
True service knows,
Then, as if bless'd with leisure,
Flung on the yellow ground
Taking repose!

GLEAMS.

A SONG.

PHANTOMS, late caressing,
Whither, in your flight,
Do ye bear the blessing
That was my delight?
Why, at midnight greeting,
Promise ye so fair,
And, with morning fleeting,
Lose my hopes in air?—
Phantoms, O! whither,
Whither do ye veer?

If the night still brings ye,
  Let me not deplore,
That the dawning wings ye
  To some other shore;
Yet the doubt distresses,
  That your arms may find,
Forms, whose dear caresses,
  May more surely bind.
    Phantoms, O! whither,
  Wing ye with the wind?

MEMORY.

There is a moonlight in the heart,
  A lonely, sad expanse of light;
Cold as the meteors that impart,
  Strange lustre to the wintry night:
A vacant being, which though lit,
  By gleams that haunt it from the sky,
Still feels cold phantoms o'er it flit,
  The shapes of those who should not die.

These are the memories of the past,
  Gray watchers on the waste of years,
Shadows of hopes that could not last,
  And loves, forever born in tears.
The mellowed music that they bring,
  Falls sweet but sad upon the heart,—
Around whose brink they sit and sing,
  Of death,—and will not thence depart.

METEOR AT SEA.

A LINE of rosy light, as if a flower,
  Flung by a spirit of beauty through the sky,
A boon to some beloved one, for a dower,
  Henceforth the hope and aim of every eye!
How lighten the blue chambers, while the breeze
  Subsides to homage; and the envious stars,
Envious, but dazzled, shrinking from the blaze,
  Crouch in the shadows of their twiring cars.
'Tis as some gentle spirit sped through air,
  Sent on benevolent mission:—soft the light,
  Yet rosy,—and the waters leap outright,
Catching the smile, and looking all so fair,
  As if no tempest lurked within their caves,
  And ghastliest terrors ne'er had walk'd their
    shining waves!

DREAMLAND.

ONE might sleep ever in such dear delight,
  Thus dreaming of Elysium—of bright eyes,
  Still glimpsing, with an ever-sweet surprise,
Beneath the lids that open for the light,
Yet close again with rapture that it brings!
Oh! the most precious of a thousand things,
Thus to accumulate the various bliss
That comes with such dear 'tendance; and, with this,
To know the treasure, o'er all earthly price,
  Is still beyond all purchase, save of faith,—
That quits the giver with his own device,
  And finds self's better profit in its death.
Each generous gift of love to kindred worth,
Calls thousand worshipping spirits into birth.

SONNET.—THE FAIRY RING.

METHINKS, young shepherd, you have dream'd all this!—
  Our fancies are most frolicksome, and oft,
  They bear the thought, on erring wing aloft,
Where 'scaped from reason, it is lost in bliss.
Beshrew me, but it is a pleasant spot,
  For fairies to make merry on, until
  The steeple's clock, from yonder gray-brow'd hill,
Doth warn from their vagrant sports, I wot!
Yet, till the dawning they may brush the dew,
And, it may be, methinks, in daylight too,
Albeit we see them not:—The glare of day,
May take, perchance, their feebler fires away,
As the stars fade when the full moon is fair;—
And yet we know they still walk shining there.

THE END.