

UC-NRLF



\$B 168 333

Duncan Mackenzie
from J. W. Cunningham
with his best wishes.
Thanks for his labors in the
Sunday school.

Feb. 8, 1854



2









P o e m s .



2 Marks, Elias

ELFREIDE OF GULDAL,

A Scandinavian Legend ;

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

MARKS OF BARHAMVILLE.

NEW-YORK :

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, 200 BROADWAY.

PHILADELPHIA :

GEO. S. APPLETON, 164 CHESTNUT-STREET.

1850.

ENTERED, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1850, by
D. APPLETON & COMPANY,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District
of New-York.

GIFT

953
M346
elf

CONTENTS.

ELFREIDE OF GULDAL	9
SEMAEL	71
MAIA	97

WEEDS FROM LIFE'S SEA-SHORE.

The Chrysalis	131
The Maniac-Mother	135
Et Γap	139
To J. P. M.	140
The Inner-World	142

M865603

Thoughts	147
The Peasant-Wife	152
The Tablet	156
The Globe-Amaranth	160
To the Evening Star	162
Mary	164
“Nacoochee”	168
The Artist	173
La Fayette	184

ELFREIDE OF GULDAL.

A SCANDINAVIAN LEGEND.

Extra anní solisque vias."—VIRGIL.

THE following Poem refers to the close of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries ; a period rife with interesting historical associations, and one in which the European mind receives a wonderful impulse. It is the age of the First Edward, of Wallace, and of Bruce ; of Llewyllen, and of the last minstrelsy of the Cambrian bards. It is associated with the Hohenstaufen, a race with whom much of soul-stirring and ennobling deed is connected ; of the rise of the Hapsbourg, who, with the exception of Rodolph, its founder, possess a character the most opposite to the preceding dynasty ; of the great and successful struggle of Helvetic freedom ; of the re-assembling of the *Tièrs états* under Philip the Fair, and of the successful opposition to papal tyranny ; of the first *regular* Parliament of England ; of the noble stand made by the Barons of Arragon against monarchical supremacy ; and last, not least, of the discovery of Greenland, and the landing on the New England coast by the Normans—the people who are the subject of this Poem, and the countrymen of *Elfreide*.

ELFREIDE OF GULDAL.

PART I.

MIDNIGHT is past ; the west'ring moon looks down
Upon a waste of waters, stretching far
From the Norwegian to Icelandic shore ;
And surging inland to the rock-girt Nide,
Laves the gray walls of Drontheim's time-worn towers.
Swift speeding from its mountain-source, the Moã,—
It's crispéd wave lit by the cold moonbeam,—
Like chief impatient for the battle-field,

Speeds oceanward ; but meeting in its path
Thy lovely vale, sweet Guldal, slacks its course,
And gently winding slow, enamored woos
Thy flowery shelves, as if now loath to leave
Beauty surpassing for a scene of strife.

But who is he, at this unwonted hour,
When the sleek reindeer seeks his lichen-bed,
Looks o'er the wave from yon projecting cliff?
His cloak is girt around ; for the night-breeze,
Although 'tis summer-tide, is chill ;—uncoiff'd
He gives his fever'd brow to the keen winds.

'Tis the young Harald, Scandinavia's pride,
Of Drontheim's youth most favored ; Haco's son,
Haco, who on the field of Esterdal,
Shook off the vassal-fetters of the Dane,
And on the Dofrine's highest peak, uprais'd
The ensign of his country's charter'd rights.

But why is it, that thus the son foregoes
The sweets of home, of cultured friends, of ease,
Accustom'd letter'd toil, and minstrelsy,

To wander at this midnight hour, in scenes
Where the lynx skulking, and the prowling wolf
Seek the wild shore for what the waves have left ?

Is it ambition thwarted ? has the friend
On whom his soul repos'd, betray'd his trust ?
Has she, the lov'd Elfreide, of humble birth,
The loveliest of Guldal's maids, has she
Prov'd false to vows, which made her wholly his,
Turning her vision from his fallen state,
Like evening cloud, when bright-ey'd day has fled ?

O no, not these ; in the spring-tide of joy,
When his full soul had on the billow-top
Of fortune's wild, unconquerable sea,
In expectation mounted ; and the shore,
Where honor would have reap'd her laurel'd wreath,
Appear'd in prospect ; even then came o'er
A causeless, nameless horror, loathing strange
Of what seem'd bright without. Soul-plum'd ambition,
Heart of the world, which gives its pulse to being,
Droop'd in an instant ; and the fiend despair—

Whose siren whisperings are like the moan
Of ocean-shell, telling of happier home,
And coral palaces beneath the deep—
Bade his sad burdened spirit flee away.

As from electric cloud, the thought flash'd home,
That all which seemed so glorious to his hopes,
Of living in the lives of men unborn,
Was but a day-dream, a bright tissue wov'n
To sport before his fame-deluded eye,
Like fairy, swinging on a gossamer
In moon-lit bower.

Thus the golden chain,
Which links the soul to its original,
And from that centre sends its meshes forth
To human hearts, was broken. Now, no more
In things without, what truly is within
The volume of the soul, and only there,
Bright forms of beauty and of grace disport.
All these reflect upon his sadden'd being,
Not as a summer's sun, but as the lights

Which now are flick'ring round yon arctic pole,
Marshalling their hosts in heaven. E'en music's self,
That once entranc'd his ear—the symphony
Of many-voicéd nature—the hoarse dash
Of the vex'd wave afar, commingling wild
With the deep organ-note of mountain pine,
Swept by the midnight breeze ; the piping cry
Of the lone sea-gull, speeding homeward late—
All these, which once mysteriously chim'd in
With kindred chords—no longer have response.

But hark ! on the swart bosom of the night,
A chant of voices dissonant, comes forth
In the far distance—dying now away,
As the wind sweeps the wold. The surging wave
With clamor hoarse, now breaks the swelling strain,
Now gives a fit accompaniment to what
Seems rather wild lament, than gleesome song.

By devious path, where late the mountain flood
Descended to the sea, where fir-clad cliffs
Arise on either hand, muffling his cloak

Closely around him, Harald follows on,
To where the chant arises. At his tread,
The sea-mew, pent within the hollow cleft,
Whirrs screaming seaward. Listening the dash
Of the fast ebbing tide, with visage turn'd
To the late moon nearing th' Atlantic wave,
He hies him on. Again the chant swells up
Nearer and nearer, more unearthly wild
And fiendish in its wail.

A cavern's mouth,
Shrouded with stunted yew and hemlock shagg'd,
Jutting far out into the ocean-wave,
Now frowns upon his sight. High overhead,
From its projecting brow, shooting far o'er
The roaring surge beneath, a scathéd ash,
Like castle-banner waving in the wind,
Flouts the still air, and 'gainst the northern sky,
Lit up with Boreal blaze, seems like a blot
Upon the beauteous visage of the night.
Wild screaming flies the ominous bird of prey,

Rook'd in its top ; and poising in the blast,
Seeks the safe shelter of the cavern's mouth.

Now with uncertain tread, yet pausing oft,
He threads the mazes of the winding cave.
Forth from a crevice, near at hand, gleams forth
A lurid light, like fen-fire seen at eve
By the late traveller. Anon arise
Wild bursts of wassail-glee ; and now full hoarse,
A dirge-like hollow voice evokes strange names,
Uncouth of sound and utt'rance.

On his brow
Thick dew-drops stand ; while horror and dismay
Arrest the mantling blood. And now, behold,
Through the cleft rock, a dark mysterious rite,
Plied by a haggard, wild, unearthly crew,
Confounds his gaze.

Around a caldron's blaze,
A motley, strange-attired group is rang'd,
With hands enlink'd, and incantation dread,
Like that which Isis' temple saw of yore,

Their shrunken, fiendish visages illum'd
By the blue flame, lit up with horrid joy.

With mutter'd spell, the crones pursue their task
Of invocation, throwing in the vase
Night-gather'd venom, fraught with noxious power.
The work complete, each dips her shrivell'd arm
Within the kettle, and anoints her eyes.
Now with triumphant shout, joining their hands,
While the vast antre echoes through its depths,
With haggish yell, and harsh and uncouth speech,
They dance around, with antic step and swing,
And head awry, and gibb'ring laugh and shriek ;—
And while the wondering Harald shrinks aghast,
With sense astounded, in the sheltering nook,
Away they scour, far bound on hellish deed.

Transfix'd with horrø, and in wild amaze,
At what seems but a phantom, which the night,
Clad in her many-tissu'd robe of dreams,
Disported 'fore his fear-appalléd sense,
List'ning his bosom's throb, he looks around,

And ever and anon, bewilder'd asks
His horror-stricken breast, if what he sees
Is of the earth ; and now, with desperate step
He treads the unhallow'd cave of sooty hue,
So lately trod by the weird sisterhood.

O'er the expiring flame still bubbles up
The potent fluid, made up of noxious weed,
Gather'd at midnight hour midst the wild moor,
While that the moon amidst the rifted clouds,
Hurrying impatient down the western sky,
Veil'd her pale forehead, frighted with the deed.
Within the charméd vase he dips, and to his eyes
Applies the liquid, when at once, behold !
As if call'd up by skill of necromance,
Opens a new creation to his sense !

Myriads of tiny forms, fantastic, trim,
Which 'fore the eye oft sport, when th' o'ertasked brain
Would seek oblivion to world-jaded thought,
Wanton around him, gorgeous in array ;
Transform'd in shape, of visage quaint, whereon

Sit mockery and spite, malignant mirth,
And proffer'd courtesy, with eyes askance,
That beam'd false homage, vanity, and hate.
On elfin wing, some chase with hornet-barb
The bubbles, as they course the caldron's brink,
Or upward fly to catch the vapory wreath,
Curling it back in very wantonness.
Anon before his gaze a figure flits,
Beckoning him on, then vanishes in air.
Again arise to view gay, laughing meads,
Bright vales, and sunny glades, inviting groves,
With branches arching. Others overhead,
Whose pendent boughs extended to his hand
Hesperian fruit of various smell and hue,
Which as he tries to pluck, evanishing,
Gives to his grasp the bur and prickly thorn ;
While from a thousand caves, re-echoing wide,
Bursts of infernal laughter greet his ear.

Soul-fraught with horror, thro' the chasm'd rock
He speeds his way. Meanwhile the pale-eyed moon,

Whose vesper-pray'r and early orison
Ascend for him, so late estrang'd in thought—
An alien now to plighted love and home.
See, with the dawn she saunters down the vale,
Gathers the pansy, he was wont to praise,
And puts it in her tress. Alas, that cheek,
On which the dew-drop of the flower now falls,
Is wet already with the tears of night.

And who but woman, with endurance arm'd,
Her bosom an exhaustless fount of love,
Can minister to wretchedness like his ?
O, 'tis her heart alone, that in its pulse
Feels sorrow throbbing in another heart.
Man's pity greets in the world's busy mart ;—
'Tis woman seeks the cloister'd grief within.

And now his home receives him ; with amaze
The parent sees strange horror in his wan
And haggard aspect ; while his restless eye,
With wild expression, wanders round and round,
On objects she beholds not. She who once

Knew all the foldings of his youthful breast,
Reads not its secret ; 'tis mysterious lore.
Sleep comes ; but O, what sleep is that, wherein
Again in dark procession, pass the forms
Which waking vision gave. Once more stand forth
The wizard-shore, the darkly-veiléd moon,
The ever restless, undulating deep,
And heavens clad in black ; from cliff to cliff
He toils in agony of soul ; o'erlooks
The abyss below, and giddy topples down
Full many a fathom in the roaring tide.

The agony awakes him ;—fever'd, wild,
He lifts him from his brain-distracting sleep.
The sun rides high in heav'n ; but yet the mist
Hangs in the mountain gorge a feath'ry wreath,
Disporting in fantastic, varying form.

Amidst the melody of morn, the song
Of thrush and linnet, piping merrily,
And skylark, mounting up into the vault
Of the blue welkin, far above the rack

Of drifting cloud—a speck in ether now ;
Amidst the matin song of forester,
Wending betimes to his accustom'd toil ;
The gay light-hearted carolling of her,
Who tends the lowing kine by Guldal's side ;
'Midst all the genial harmony around,
Behold the high-soul'd youth, whose man was wont
To look a-tiptoe i' the far-off sky
Of the bright future ;—O behold him now,
Where earthward tending, like the scythéd flower
He droops in sickliness of very hope.

Alas, for him, who walks the round of life,
With mind o'er which the pall of with'ring doubt
Hangs with its sable foldings, shutting out
The blesséd light of heav'n ! Existence here
Weighs like an incubus upon the soul ;
And if at times imagination bring
Some gleam of sunshine to the shrouded sense,
'Tis but the lurid lightning's distant blaze,
Showing the trav'ler faint and far astray,

The frowning horror of the sky o'erhead.

And this were nought, were but the past a blank ;
But then, even then, the sibyl memory,
As if in very mockery and spite,
Holds up the glowing transcript of gone days,
And like a fierce inquisitor, seeks out
The part whereon her engine can inflict
Severest torture, and applies it there.

Then in an instant, with a light intense,
The past crowds in, disports and vanishes.
Once more he bounds light-hearted to the chase,
Pursues with spear the fold-assailing wolf,
And drags him bleeding from his mountain lair ;
Or, in the list caparison'd, his casque
Deck'd with the ostrich plume by Elfreide's hand,
With spear in rest, he seeks his fair one's side,
And claims the guerdon dearest to his heart.

And till that hour, when that the fiend despair,
Gave the dark surmise, whose soul-with'ring blight
Came like a mildew o'er his spring of life,

Whispering that all, the future opened up
To his enchanted sight, was but a lure
To cheat him into being—till that hour,
Love, lore and minstrelsy, a tissue bright,
Wrought with hope's golden web, enclasp'd his breast
With fold more ample than imperial robe.

Look on the wreck of empire, 'midst the grave
Of nations pause ; upturn the sculptur'd stone,
The fluted column, frieze or architrave ;
Go view the marble waste, wherein the ghost
Of ages sits, shrouded in silent gloom ;
Where Tadmora, Thebes, and Meroë repose
With cowl'd visage, stooping low in dust,—
Then turn to where the heaven-illumin'd mind,
Impress of its divine original,
Falls from its pedestal and prostrate lies !

But lo, what object now arrests his sight ;—
Who on that grassy knoll, where Moä's wave
In murmur gushes o'er its pebbly bed,
With eye intent upon the rippling stream,

And yet in thought estrang'd from all around,
Nor heeds his tread, nor marks his near approach ?
'Tis she, his Elfreide : but how chang'd since last
They met in Guldal's vale, where hope and joy
Lit up their mutual being, promising
A halcyon sky, unvisited by storm.

Already at her side, his arm enclasps
Her drooping form ;—she on his shoulder rests
Her lovely head, bow'd down with silent grief,
Like hyacinth surcharg'd by low'ring sky.

“ My Elfreide here ? O tell why strayest thou,
Far from thy home ? thy cheek indeed is pale.”

“ Harald, dost thou ask this ?—but I'll not chide,
A stranger-language comes from thy dark eye ;
O, it affrights my soul to see thee thus.”

“ But yesterday, dear Elfreide, though no cloud
Of visible grief rose 'bove my horizon,
I deem'd myself most wretched ; but O now,
I would give worlds, were I as yesterday !
I've seen strange sights, have hied me where yon sun

Ne'er gave its blesséd light,—where orgies dark—
Thou turn'st away, dear love?"

“Harald, thy words

Freeze up my blood,—I cannot, will not hear.—
Come to my parent's cot ; or, rather, go—
Go thou to Drontheim, where thy absence grieves
A mother, who now mourns thee lost ;—go where
Friends, all who love thee, are most sad, because
Of thy estrangement. Shun that fatal shore
Where demon-voices mingle with the roar
Of the vex'd ocean ; where the Lapland drum
Blends with the night-blast.”

“I have left that home ;—

This morn I left, or rather reach'd it then.
O Elfreide, since, on yester-eve, yon sun
Sank 'neath the wave, a brief of life hath been,—
Nay is inscrib'd in fearful characters
Here,—here within.”

“Is this then Harald, he

Whose fearless bosom brav'd the fearful fight

Of Esterdal, though then a boy, beside
His glorious Father! Harald, thou art o'ertask'd
With nightly vigil;—leave thy books, and go
Into the walks of men. Th' Almighty asks
Return from minds enkindled at the source
Whence gifted natures e'er derive their light;
Their issues are in action; for the soul
Must merge in deeds beneficent, or else,
Like a fell canker eat into itself."

"My Elfreide, list, I have a tale for thee,
Which thou must hear. Last night, by Lenthal's beach,
I saw the Lapland harpies—that weird crew—
Nay, visited their cave;—thou tremblest, love."

"Then, Harald, tell me all—I would know all;—
One joy, one woe, one destiny is ours."

"Their task complete, each in a caldron dipp'd
Her sinewy arm, and to her bleared eyes
Applied the ointment, and straight fled the cave.
I enter'd, did the same—for madness rul'd—
When like a fever'd dream, in th' instant rose

To my astonish'd view, a hidden world,
Divested of its form and symmetry.

And now this earth, this vaulted sky above,
Are as it were but filmy shadows, whence
Life, light, and beauty have for ever fled."

"Harald, there is a light, before whose beam
These shadows of thy now benighted soul
Shall pass away ; as 'fore yon blesséd sun
Have fled the vapors of the mountain gorge.

"Thou 'st sought the fount of truth in human lore ;—
The beautiful in nature and in art
Hath been revealéd to thy favor'd breast.
But deemest thou the stream of minstrelsy
Shall quench the thirst of thy immortal part ?
No, nothing short of Heaven can minister
To the deep yearnings of the undying spirit.
The dove of peace, whose outstretch'd wing hath pois'd
O'er the dark wave of soul-submerging doubt,
Can find a rest—where rest is only found.
We will together hie to yonder glebe,

Where the ag'd father of his people bides
Close to the spire of his lov'd minster ;—there,
With one who has from youth to rev'rend eld
Held conusance with pray'r and with his God,
Shall we hold converse and communion sweet.”

Near where the mountain-torrent, over crag
And fallen forest of gigantic growth,
Impatient leaps to join the seaward Moä,
Dwelt the sage Guisco. From Ausonian strand—
The land of Petrarch, Danté, and Boccace—
In early youth he sought Norwegian wilds,
Bound on the blesséd embassy of love.

In leech-craft wise ; well skill'd to minister
To ills which rack the flesh ; more skill'd to raise
The falt'ring spirit, and to point to where
The wanderer of earth can find repose.

Fast by the trodden path of wayfarer,
Hieing from Guldal to the distant hills,
Or to the neighboring Drontheim, full in view,
Stood forth his humble thatch ; and yet I ween,

Nor wanting was it in romantic charm,
Or sylvan beauty. There the clust'ring elm,
Woodbine, anemoné, and hawthorn bright,
And azalé, which courts the northern blast,
Hung round the holm, and wooed the inmate's gaze.

There too, the missil-thrush, and woodlark shy,
The throstle and the linnet lent their notes,
And glanc'd at early morn from spray to spray ;
Or 'neath the pent-roof thatch, screen'd from the blast
Of the keen nightwind, gave their vesper-hymn,
And sooth'd the tenant of the humble roof.

High overhead the various-tinctur'd rock,
With moisture trickling down its glist'ning slope,
Upholds with its sharp cliff, or fissure deep,
The berry-bearing ivy, eglantine,
And many-color'd lichen ; while remote,
Seen in the distance, as if motionless,
Adown the deep ravine, the rushing brook
Seems like a silvery ribbon, sportive hung
Against the purple of the Dofrine's brow.

The sheltering porch and ground-sill'd lattice op'd
On the broad pathway, as if welcoming
The wearied pilgrim, or the tuneful Scald,
Or Norland fisher, wayworn and forespent
With nightly toil, amid the north-sea wave ;
Or him who seeks for counsel for the ills
Which bide earth's children.

Guisco, even then,
Clad in serge-tunic, with his palmer staff,
Was issuing forth—bound for far eastern hills.
With mutual hail and kindly greeting, such
As to like natures are th' electric spark
Pervading kindred beings, soon their souls
Are fus'd in one ; and seated now, full soon,
Harald, with faltering voice and troubled mien,
Thus questions of what chief concern'd his state.

“ And what deem'st thou, sage Guisco, have the things
Term'd sensible, which seem to th' outward eye,
Presentments of the fair and beautiful
Of nature and of art—have they a being—

Possess they truly a locality,
Or are they phantoms—strangely conjur'd up
By some mysterious process of the spirit—
A spirit formative of all which here
Allure us on, and cheat us into life?"

To whom thus Guisco—lost in wonder long,
While his clasp'd hands, resting upon his staff,
Upholds his visage—whence, depending, flow'd
His lengthen'd beard, in patriarchal guise.

“From off this height, which looks o'er fiord and fell,
Cast thy eye seaward, Harald, and behold
On yonder wave, which to the noon-tide sun
Lifts up its whiten'd crest, yon gallant bark,
Shaping its course for Vineland's distant shore.
See how she cleaves her way, like to a thing
Instinct with life, tho' mountain billows rise,
And adverse tempests overlay her path.

“And why is this? because in the blue heav'ns,
At times the pilot sees yon orb of light;
And when night low'rs, beholds the starry host,

That lights the pole. And tho', midst seasons dark,
Even these are shrouded from his outward sense,
And terrors lurk around, like ambush'd foes ;—
Yet, 'fore his eye of faith, the headland bright,
Crowning with azure-peak the wave-girt isle,
Rises to view. On this, and this alone
His moral vision fastens ; and his soul,
In fealty to what is here reveal'd,
Has prelibation of a joy to come,
And revels in the present.

Thus, my son—

Thus, like the iris-bow, exalting faith
Rises to heaven, yet rests its arch on earth.

“ And he that treads this sun-encircling sphere,
With soul attun'd to the rich symphonies,
Which burst from all the creatures God hath made,—
Whate'er of beautiful, sublime, or fair
Salutes his sense—a revelation bright—
Looks out upon a world, which lies around,
And feels a world correlative within.

Forth from the bosom's fount the current flows
 Of man's allotted bliss. True, it is fed
 By issues from above, pure, undefil'd,
 Life-giving ;—but the heart, with guilt perturb'd,
 Sends up its ooze ; and none but Him who once
 Still'd the strong tempest's rage, and bade it calm,
 Can clear that fount and make it bright again."

" And what, sage Guisco, if things visible
 Give dissonance—not music to the soul ;
 Hold forth misshapen forms and semblances,
 Which cheat the sense, and turn this world within
 Into a chaos of distemper'd dreams ?
 Last night, on Lenthal's beach—"

" Harald, forbear,"

Guisco exclaim'd ; " even now thy parent's lip
 Hath giv'n the purport of thy fever'd dream.
 These are the phantoms the distemper'd brain
 And craz'd affections conjure up. To him—
 The troubled king of Israel, fear-perturb'd,—
 Stood forth the seer, portraying to his sense

Things that consorted with his troubled spirit.

“ The being ’thrall’d by doubt or dark dismay,
Draws his own wizard-circle, where within,
Thrust by his coward fears, he stands appall’d
With will subdued and resolution crush’d,
As if bound down by triple bars of steel.

“ The blesséd One who visited this earth,
Came not a disembodied Spirit here,
But came a Being cloth’d with attributes,
Which b’long to man—and here gave evidence,
Both by his ministry and works of love,
That Heav’n demands return for talent given.
—And whilst thou findest thou canst interfuse
Thy moral life-blood in a kindred being,
In this or future age, woulds’t thou apart,
Brood o’er the visions of thy sickly brain,
Or look to Heaven for aid, and bravely *do* ?”



ELFREIDE OF GULDAL.

PART II.

'Tis night ;—a chieftain in the Danish garb
Leaps from his skiff, moor'd closely to the shore,
Upon the crag of Hevné's lonely strand.
A soldier in attire, and yet he bears
Within his belt the pilgrim's scallop-shell,
While o'er his shoulder floats a sable scarf,
From which his scrip and cimbric harp depend.
His shallops ride at anchor in the cove,

Screen'd by the lofty cliff, high beetling o'er,
From sight of inland wand'rer at that hour,
Who at the glimpse of foeman's craft or sail,
Had spread alarm throughout Norwegian wilds.

Along the rock-girt shore, the sharp-prow'd skiff,
Toss'd by the surge, is tenantless, save where
The osprey and the vulture fierce contend
With the loud watch-dog.

On the ocean-skirt,
The herring-fisher, midst the Froën sea,
Hurling his net, stands out in bright relief,
Lit by the polar blaze, far stretching out
Against the Dofrine's height. From time to time,
As the long mesh, fraught with its finny spoil,
Moves through the deep, the moor-ild flashing up,
Gives forth a sea of fire, wild issuing forth
In bright effulgence from the weltering deep.

And see, he climbs the steep, clears the deep gorge,
Bounds with impatient step o'er shelving rocks,
And gains the flowery turf; where, 'fore his step,

The lev'ret starts, surpris'd with visitant
At an unwonted hour ; and falcon, perch'd
Upon the oaken-bough, watching his prey,
Shoots with wide-spreading wing into the dell.

His front bespeaks one wont to lead the way
In perilous strife and deed of hardihood.
His stature noble ;—with determin'd tread
He climbs the swelling knolls ;—and now within
The silent vale of Guldal—sleeping calm
Beneath the moonbeam of a summer-night,
Follows the winding of its beauteous stream.

'Tis Sigurd of Aarhuus, who with his sire
Led forth the Danish host at Esterdal.
Made captive by brave Haco, they receiv'd
Beneath the chieftain's roof that courtesy,
The gentle valiant can alone extend
To the brave vanquish'd. There, the stripling chiefs,
But yesterday opposed in fight, forgot
Their mutual feud ; confed'rate now in sport,
In joust, in vent'rous chase ; or, when the night

Had shut out all those spirit-stirring scenes,
Which prompt the impulse of gay, buoyant youth,—
Some saga wild, whose soul-exciting theme
Was of the vy-king's deeds, or foray bold
Of Norseman on the far Northumbrian strand ;
Or rite of Lapland witch, or Finnish seer,
Employ'd full well the hour.

And now the theme
Was of the kraaken huge, by shipman seen,
Rolling in spiral fold, outstretching far,
Like isle emergent from the briny deep.

Anon, the converse rous'd to bolder mood,
Kindling within the breast high swelling hope
Of bold emprise ; telling of him, the great,
The glorious Wallace, who but late stood forth
For Scotia's rights, 'gainst the Plantagenet.
And of the Bruce, who prov'd at Bannockburn
That though the patriot perish, yet his blood,—
Far more prolific than the seed of earth,—
Like dragon teeth, sow'd in his country's soil,

Gives forth a Cadmean host of kindred souls.

And thus the night wax'd late, while on the hearth,
The blazing fir-fire o'er baronial hall,
Where hung the escutcheons of a by-gone race,
Flash'd with uncertain light, and gave the hour
A shadowy spell, that quicken'd fancy more.

'Twas then in Guldal's vale that Sigurd saw
The maid, who held in thrall young Harald's breast ;
And in that kindly intercourse of soul,
Which prompts ingenuous natures, he had heard
From Harald's own impassion'd lips of her
In whom his hopes were centred—and had learn'd
One mutual love had seal'd their destiny.

—He saw, and in his breast a passion rose,
Which wrong'd his friend ; for no ennobling aim
Exalted Sigurd's nature. Even then,
The germ of perfidy inwrought, conceiv'd
That purpose, which long years had caus'd to bud.

Full soon the captives for the Cimbrian shore
Gladly made sail ; for gen'rous Haco now

No ransom ask'd,—claiming as future guests
Whom his roof shelter'd, and his board receiv'd.
Eager they leap'd forth on their natal soil,
Where joyous vassals greeted their return.

Years pass'd—yet intervening seasons serv'd
To nurse in Sigurd's breast th' ignoble flame,
And prompt ungen'rous schemes. Th' occasion soon
Dawn'd on the night of his perfidious thought—
Like beacon-light ; and his aspiring hope
Bounded towards the fair Norwegian spoil,
And felt it in his grasp ;—for Eric now,
Who sway'd the Danish sceptre, burn'd t' efface
The shame of Esterdal ; and pointed where
Drontheim's proud tow'rs frown'd o'er the fiord of Nide.

And gladly Sigurd seized the proffer given,
To lead the Cimbri forth to northern shores ;
And soon the armament with hoisted sail,
Wafted by favoring breeze, bounds o'er the wave,
And eager press for Scandia's rock-girt coast.

As near'd the fleet at eve the well-known fiord,

Instant the thought flash'd home on Sigurd's soul—
And his impatient spirit grasp'd the thought—
Even then amidst the shadows of the night,
To learn if Guldal's valley yet possess'd
The object of his mission,—the fair flower
Whom he would bear in triumph to his home.

Lo, as his agile tread, with the rapt thought,
As is the wont, keeps pace, before his eye
A strangely lurid mist, lit by the moon—
Now hurrying thro' the heav'ns, comes sweeping on
Afore the breeze of night, towards the shore,
Adown the vale, and overthwart his path.
Onward it moves ; and now full near, behold
Flimsy and shadowy forms, whose visages
Swart and unearthly, sinister and wild,
Consort with the dread hour ; their garments wide
Float on the night-wind ; as the north-sea scud,
Seen by the affrighted fisher, sweeping on
Before the tempest. Then, with one consent,
Each lifts her arm, and with sepulchral voice,

“ Sigurd of Aarhus, stay thee, ere too late ;
Or woe betide thee on Norwegian strand !”

“ Away, ye hell-brood !” shouts the furious Dane,
While his high-throbbing heart and pallid brow
Confess, that even Sigurd stands appall’d,—

“ Away, or this good steel shall tell thee soon,
Ye croaking hags of night, whom thou would’st daunt.”

“ Rash braggart boy, put up thy weapon, which
Cleaves the air idly ;—hark ! we tell thee, Dane,
Ere morrow’s sun shall set, thou’lt need its proof,
Where arms shall hurtle.”

“ Harpies,—hence—away.”

“ Nay Sigurd,—boast not ;—lo, we tell thee, Dane,
A woman’s scarf, waved to the breeze, ere long,
Like lightning-scath, shall overthrow thy host,
E’en as these shreds we rend ;—beware—beware !”

Scarce had they said, when from their shrivell’d lips
Issued a deaf’ning yell, and then with shriek
Like to the owlet’s fearful screech, they flee,
As a dark vapor on the winds of night.

The cot is reached ;—a fairy bower, enclos'd
In bosky dell, encompass'd all around
With treillage of bright clasping columbine.
The restless aspen and the tassel'd beech,
Sway'd by the night-breeze, turn their trembling leaves
To the cold moonbeam ; while the silv'ry Moä,
Winding its gentle current, murmurs by,
And gives its vespers to the stars o'erhead.

A wand'ring scald, benighted in the vale,
Foredone with length of way and pilgrimage,
Asks for a lodge. The agéd mother hears
The minstrel's plea, renews th' expiring blaze,
Spreads the neat board,—then shows the pallet near.

Meanwhile he proffers to fair Elfreide's ear
A saga wild, of hap or battle done
In distant age, on Neustria's strand afar.
Lo ! as with sinewy arm uplift, he grasps
The gilded harp, his cloak departing shows
Beneath its folds a warrior's garb. The maid
Instant beholds, restrains her rising fear ;

“Minstrel,” she says, “thy cloak and accent tell
Thee of the Cimbric race ; how is't, that thou,
Amidst these valleys, pliest the scaldic art,
And with our gifted bards contend'st in song ?”

From off his brow, till now half hid, he lifts
The fur-clad bonnet. Elfreide straight, beholds
The well known features of the treacherous Dane.

“Sigurd, is't thou ? at this unwonted hour,
And in this guise, which shows no friendly part,
Seek'st thou an entrance in our cottage home ?”—

“Elfreide, 'tis no mean errand brings me here ;
Sigurd of Aarhus kneels before that one,
Who holds in thrall his being. O, then list,—
List, maid of Guldal ; turn not thou away
From him, whom years of absence far from thee,
Have made the more thy captive. 'Tis the suit
Of one whose happ'ness is at thy behest.
From Denmark's king on embassy, I come
To seek thee, Elfreide, and conduct thee hence.
Honor and royal favor,—courtly dome

Await thee, maiden, born to deck a throne."

"And com'st thou thus, O Sigurd, to prefer
Thy suit, and at this hour?" the maid replies;
For well her thoughts devise, his mission there
Portended ill to Norway. "With a fleet
Of twice ten ships, a num'rous gallant crew,
Now riding in the Nide, hither I come,
In fealty to her whose word is life."

"Is it a proof of knighthood, at this hour,—
When Norway holds alliance with thy king,
Resting in faith upon a solemn league;—
Wouldst thou, at this still hour, basely invade
A city sleeping in the arms of peace?
Dreading no stratagem, or fierce assault
From coward-foe, who shuns the light of day;
And on the fold, steals like the prowling wolf!—
At least, would'st woo me as a hero, Sigurd."

"Thou wrong'st me, Elfreide; Sigurd wars not thus;
We shall do battle in the eye of day.
But I would shield thee, Elfreide, from the shock

Which bides to-morrow's sun, and place thee, where
Honor and def'rence shall attend."

"Not so,"

Elfreide replies, while in her crimson'd cheek,
Determin'd eye, and firm erected mien,
The soul heroic of old Norway speaks.

"Not so; for honor, life, and every hope,
All have their issues in my country! Nay,
Unhand me, Sigurd!—hence, depart,—or now
Guldal shall wake, and thou escapest not."

There is a heav'n-imparted effluence,
A panoply of light to virtue given,
Which when it speaks out from a woman's soul,
Comes forth in utt'rance like an angel-voice,
Appalling and arresting brutal force.

This Sigurd feels, when with astounded look
At what seems more than mortal prowess, he,
Like the foil'd tiger, baffl'd of his prey,
Mutt'ring revenge, reluctantly retires.

'Tis midnight past; the winds are up, and fast

The cloud-rack from the mountain summit scuds
Athwart the vale, and hoarse the forest roars.
With strength wrought up by fearful consciousness,
That Drontheim's fate—her more than life—was pois'd
Upon the issues of that awful night,—
Wrapp'd in her mantle, lo she rushes forth,
Clad in the strength of Heav'n-directed might.

Her woman's heart beats quick, but yet the soul
Gives to her fragile form th' elastic spring
Of mountain antelope. Lit by the light
Of an uncertain moon, and silv'ry sheen
Of vap'ry rifts, she seeks the river's bank,
Frees the light skiff, quick shoots the placid Moä,
And now is pressing on for Drontheim's towers.

Nor does she bide the time, but with shrill voice,
That makes the mountain-echoes give response,
“Wake ye,” she cries. “Ye Norsemen! on the coast
The foeman rides;—they make for Drontheim's walls.”

And now on Selhoë, the signal flame
Lights up the Dofrine's snowy height, whose peak

Gives back the light on dark ravine and dell.
Frosten and Stranded, Stenwick—even the isles
Of distant Froën answer with their fires,
Whose blaze reflected, tells the pirate foe,
Norway is up, with heart and weapon true !

The citadel is reach'd, reposing calm,
Like the lone sea-bird on the northern wave,
Not deeming of the ice-floe hov'ring nigh,—
But at the voice of Elfreide, it awakes.
Loud sounds the well-known bugle o'er the hills,
Echoing among the vales and dark ravines.
Burgher and huntsman, even he who plies
His craft upon the fiord—all, all are up.
The forester and herdsman, stripling and aged
Are buckling on, and answering to the call.
—Harald is there and doing ;—quick he flies
From rank to rank, giving, receiving cheer
From hearts responsive ; but the fearful thought
Of Elfreide lone, far from her cottage-home,
Leads him to seek her, ere he takes the field.

Encircled by a youthful band, she stands—
A seraph sent to rescue,—and imparts
To her aged parent at her side, led there
By followers sent, a soul-sustaining faith,
That He who to a people thus imparts
Assurance firm, will give the victory.

But hark ! in distance faintly heard, the sound
Of mountain-bugle wakes the echoing vale ;
And louder yet the pealing notes ascend ;
Till from afar, as if in meet array,
Is heard the tramp of coursers, hast'ning on.
Selhoë's hill-top now gives forth to view
A squadron dense, with banner floating wide,
Speeding towards the glen ; until full near,
The neigh of steed, and shout of martial host,
Call forth new ardor in each Norseman's soul,
Hast'ning from glen and dingle far and near.
With greetings loud they cheer :

“ Hail ! Harald, hail !

We seek thee, son of Haco,—lo, the Dane

With twice ten sail, make for the fiord, and rear
 On the tall mast the raven-gonfalon!
 For Drontheim's tow'rs they steer. We follow, where
 The battle waits."

Quickly he turns, beholds
 His Elfreide pale, yet firm, with soul prepared.
 "Heav'n gives thee vict'ry, Harald," lo, she cries,
 "Look thou to Heav'n for aid, and bravely do."
 Were the bless'd words thou heard'st from Guisco's lips.
 I go not home. From Melhuus' hill, these eyes
 Shall see the conflict; and, victorious there,
 Behold thy banner wave, where Scandia's arm
 Drives back these Danish wolves."

One short embrace—

No more;—he dons the proffer'd casque and mail,
 Grasps Haco's weapon, plac'd within his hand,
 And with his gallant comrades seeks the foe.

Full soon they meet,—for on the rocky shore,
 From the black ships leap forth the eager Dane,
 Form the array, and with a shout press on.

A chieftain leads, of lofty form and port,
With helm and cuirass panoplied, and fierce
Points with his spear to Drontheim's distant spires.

"Sigurd of Aarhuus," is the signal cry,—
"Sigurd of Aarhuus," shout they in reply ;
And clash their arms and raise the yell. The clang
Of Cimbrian drum and trumpet swell on high,
As on they press to seize the proffer'd spoil.

Down rush, with deaf'ning shout, the fiery host
Of Norway's chivalry ; 'tis Harald leads,
'Tis Harald's voice which gives the signal-word,
'Tis Harald's eagle eye that points the way,
And nerves each breast with that assurance, e'er
The presage of success or glorious death !

But then 'tis Dane that grapples with the Norse ;
Here all is peril'd on the issue,—there
'Tis conquest, or an ignominious death.

As tow'ring icebergs 'midst the Arctic deep,
Driven by polar tempest, meet and crash
With force terrific—so to together rush

Th' infuriate combatants.

But see, afar,

On Melhuus' summit is a woman's form,
 Who seems to give her pennon to the breeze.
 Is she of earth? or is't a visitant
 From fields of light, on blesséd mission sent—
 The tutelary saint of Norway's shore?

Aloft in air the sky-woof'd tissue floats;—
 Harald beholds, and with triumphant shout,
 That strikes a terror in the adverse host,
 Points with his sword to where his Elfreide stands.

The Danes, fear-stricken, see an angel-one
 Lighted on earth, for Norway's rescue sent;
 They turn, they fly to reach their stranded barks.
 In vain does Sigurd raise his war-note high,
 And rally for the fight, and desp'rate cleave
 The fugitives to earth.

“Recreants,” he shouts,

“Redeem the flight, and vict'ry still is ours;
 Turn ye and die! would meet a coward's grave?”

Sigurd of Aarhus ! on—for Denmark, on !”

“Harald of Norway greets,” a warrior shouts ;
“Here, Sigurd, here is quarry for thy steel.”

“Thou’rt welcome, Harald, we shall seal the day.
Yet—as erewhile thy guest—as one whose board
Sigurd hath shar’d, he wars not with thee, Harald ;—
Another arm shall meet the sword thou wield’st.”

“Then as thy liege and lord in former feud—
Since unredeem’d we gave thee to thy home—
We charge thee, Sigurd, yield thee. Thou shalt find,
Whom thou hast deeply wrong’d, again can pardon.”

“Battle gives conquest and not suzerainty,”
Sigurd replies ;—“but were it as thou say’st,
The vassal who, and who the suzeraine-chief,
Since thou wilt have it so, this very hour
The cast of battle shall decide ;—the deed
Of violated plight,”

“Sigurd, is thine,”

The son of Haco answers. “Durst thou speak
Of violated plight, who yesternight—

As wand'ring scald benighted in the vale—
Sought even then to seize a precious prize,
Whom all thy sov'reign's treasures cannot purchase ?”

“ Then as thou listest,” Sigurd fierce returns,
“ Or thou or I shall rue it ; here's to thee.”

He said, and clos'd in fight, and bleeding falls
'Neath the red sword of glorious Haco's son.

'Tis now that Norway's vengeance rises high,
And cleaves the fugitives to earth ;—in vain
They rally for the fight ; death meets them there ;—
None reach the shore ; the few give up the strife,
And yield them captive to the victor host.

For Drontheim march, tho' slow, the conquerors,
Cumber'd with dead and wounded, whom they bear
On hurdles, where their vestments spread, afford
To those who live, repose ;—all turn to where
The guardian genius of the day once stood,
And gave the victory ; and Melhuus' steep
Receives the fealty of grateful hearts.

With banner, sword, and spear waving aloft,

Thrice does the cheer e'en from the suff'ers rise,
For "Elfreide ! Elfreide ! angel of the fight !"

It is a festal day ; the villagers
From glen and valley throng ; and every copse
And mountain dell, and neighb'ring ocean-cliff,
Pours forth its tenants ;—joy shines forth in all ;—
The vet'ran chief and hardy mountaineer
Blend salutations ; while around, on high,
The welkin rings with blessings and acclaim
Of agéd father ; and the unhouséd dame,
The gay-coiff'd lass, the stripling, and the churl,
Priest, pedler, boor, fantastic mountebank,
All press for Drontheim ; where the pageant rite
Awaits the conquerors, now entering
Beneath triumphal arch the portal wide.

From castellated dome and minster-spire,
Norwegian banners float upon the breeze ;—
And, as the martial pageant wends its way
Through the dense mass, array'd on either hand,
In motley costume or in sober garb,

Matron and maid, and lovely childhood, strew,
From arms outstretch'd, athwart the warriors' path,
Flowers of bright hue and garlands freshly wrought.

And now way-worn, in weary plight, they reach
Drontheim's embattled towers, whose vestibule,
Replete with vet'ran chiefs and sages grave,
Awaits their entrance. But why stands aghast,
With horror-stricken brow, the youthful chief?
What sight transforms, as scath'd with lightning-shaft,
The port of valor into craven fear?—

'Tis she, the Hecaté of yesternight—
To his enchanted sight alone reveal'd ;
Bearing the semblance of a crippled dame
To other eyes around.—With gasping dread,
See how his falcon-gaze is fixed on hers,
'Like the charm'd bird within'the curséd thrall
O' the deadly viper, coiling to inflict
His venom'd fang ;—when lo, from basket-store,
Into the air she hurls what seems to be
Off'ring of grateful incense to the brave.

Full on his temple falls the fragrant spoil ;
When in an instant,—O bless'd instant, fraught
With joy unspeakable—from off his soul
Falls the dark shroud of grief, as darkness flies
Before the uprisen morn.

The calenture

Of the craz'd brain, and woe-surchargéd breast
I' th' instant's gone ; and the full tide of life
Makes its bright way, like to the mighty gush
Of torrent, sweeping the opposing mound.
As the bold eagle from his eyrie-peak,
Thro' heaven's pure ether cleaves his sunward course,—
So doth the soaring spirit upward mount,
And all again is redolent of hope.

But where is she—his Elfreide—guardian sprite
Of his existence—of the conflict past
Blest arbitress, as though on mission sent
From realms above, to light his soul in this ?

Lo ! 'neath a canopy, in rural state,

On sylvan throne of ilex, intertwined
With fresh-cull'd eglantine and mountain ash,
And bright arbutus, and each flower that loves
The brief embrace of Norway's summer-sun,
She sits in regal hall—while noble dames,
Flower-cinctur'd virgins, rang'd on either hand,
Await the pageant of the warriors near,
And their grave senator and agéd sire,
And Jarl and lordly thane, and vet'ran chief,
Do homage to the maid of Guldal's vale.

Aloft, the Runic scalds in order plac'd,
With brow enwreath'd, give forth the bardic-strain,
And tell the deeds of those, who well have prov'd
That Norway still is rife with hearts allied
To the great chieftains, who in climes afar
Had made the Moslem crescent to wax pale,
And stemm'd the surge of Saracenic might.
But chief to her—the lightning of whose soul,
Kindling new ardor in each patriot breast,

Sped its bright shaft within the Cimbric host—
The symphony of grateful spirits rose.

So in her darkest hour, when 'fore the Gaul,
The Curule Fathers of their country bowed,—
Amidst the sacred fane of Cæræ's grove,
The vestal fire of Rome burn'd brightly on,
Fed by th' untiring faith of woman's love.

“ They come, they come ! raise high the martial strain,
Awake your silvery chant, ye virgin band !
Bugle and harp, send forth your gleeful notes,
And let the mountain-echoes speak again.

Behold the chieftain ! With one loud acclaim
The dome resounds ;—when thus the agéd Jarl :
“ Hail, noble warriors ! and all hail to thee,
Brave Harald, who hast led these conqu'rors forth !
But, chief, I bid thee hail, that thou hast won
A nobler guerdon than these trophied-spoils
Now borne in triumph by thy gallant band ;—
'Tis she whom Heaven has sent to bless our land.

Thy chiefest glory is, that such a heart
Has liv'd to bless and triumph over thine.
Receive and wear then, as thy richest boon,
The flower of Guldal—Elfreide of Melhuus!"

NOTES.

*“Shun the fatal shore,
Where demon voices mingle with the roar
Of the vex'd ocean.”*

PAGE 26.

“Solent quoque nocturne viatores, gregumque et armentorum excubiis intenti, portentis diversi generis circumfundi. Velut Hotherus Rex (Reste Saxone) tres Nymphas ad earum antra secutus, victoriae zonam et cingulum impetravit. Quandoque verò sultum adeò profundè in terram imprimunt, quod locus cui assueverant, insigni ardore orbiculariter peresus, non parit arenti redivivum cespite gramen. Hunc nocturnum monstrorum ludum vocant incolæ choream Elvarum: de quibus cum habent opinionem, quod animi eorum hominum, qui se corporeis voluptatibus dedunt, earumque quasi ministros se præbent, impulsuique libidinum obediunt, ac divina et humana jura violant, corporibus elapsi circum terram ipsam volutantur.

Equorum credunt eos esse, qui se adhuc nostro seculo in effigie humana accommodare solent ministeriis hominum, nocturnis horis laborando, equosque et jumenta curando, ut infra de ministerio dæmonum hoc eodem libro ostendetur.”—*Olai Magni Gentium Septentrisnalianum Hist. Brevi. Ed. Amstel. Cap. x., p. 88.*

“Where the Lapland drum

Blends with the night blast.”

PAGE 26.

“This they do with a certain instrument which they call *kannus*, not unlike the old-fashioned drums, from whence they are usually called Laplandish drums. This drum being beaten, and some songs sung, they bring the designed sacrifice to *Thor*.—SHEFFERUS’ *Hist. of Lapland*, p. 42.

“Bound on the blesséd embassy of love.”

PAGE 29.

The Norwegians were converted to Christianity about the beginning of the 11th century. This was, however, pretty much that kind of *conversion* which Charlemagne effected with the Saxons, in which the baptismal font or the sword was the alternative. “Ecce illa ferocissima Danorum sive Nortmannorum aut Sueonum natio, quæ, juxta beati Gregorii verba, nihil aliud scivit nisi barbarum fren- dere, jamdudum novit in Dei laudibus Alleluia resonare. Ecce pop-

ulus ille piraticus, à quo totas olim Galliarum et Germaniæ provincias legimus depopulatas, suis nunc finibus contentus est.”—*Hist. Gotthor, Vand., and Langob., ab Hugone Grotio, p. 108.*

“ *Shaping its course for Vineland's distant shore.*”

PAGE 32.

“ We have thus seen that the old Icelandic Sagas state explicitly that colonies of Northmen existed on the shores of Greenland from the close of the tenth to the beginning of the fifteenth century. From that period, to the middle of the last century, nothing more was heard of them, and those who had not read the original documents, and been convinced from the internal evidence afforded by the simplicity and truthfulness of the narrative that they dealt with facts, and not with fiction, might reasonably doubt their testimony, and, by analogical reasoning, that of the Sagas in general. The Runic inscriptions, and the numerous vestiges of the former colonies, scattered along the east coast of Baffin's Bay, are therefore doubly interesting and important ; for they not only confirm, in the most striking manner, the authenticity of the Sagas relating to Greenland, but warrant the conclusion that those which tell us, in the same artless manner, of the discovery of the American continent, are equally trustworthy, though their statements have not as yet been confirmed by the same kind of palpable evidence.”—MALLET'S *Northern Antiquities, p. 249-50.*

“ *The moor-ild flashing up,
Gives forth a sea of fire.*” PAGE 38.

“ Proceeding from an agitation of the salt water in a dark night, which hath been every year observed by the herring-fishermen, when towing their nets along in a calm ; for the sea appears in a kind of flame, as far as the nets reach.”—PONTOPPEDAN’S *Norway*, p. 5, P. I, Chap. 1.

“ *And now the theme
Was of the Kraaken huge, by shipman seen
Rolling in spiral fold.*” PAGE 40.

See PONTOPPEDAN.

“ Sunt monstrosi pisces in lettoribus seu mari Norvegico, inusitati nominis, licet reputentur de genere cætorum, qui immanitatem suam primo aspectu ostendunt, horroremque intuentibus incutiunt, tum in formidinem diutius conspicientes pariter et stuporem vertunt.”—*Olai Mag., Gent. Sept.*, p. 456.

“ *Lo, the Dane,
With twice ten sail, make for the fiord.*” PAGE 51.

“ News came from the Southland, that the people of Hordaland and Rogaland, Agder and Phelmark, were gathering and bringing

together ships and weapons and a great body of men. The leader of this was *Eric*, king of Hordaland. Now when *Harald* got certain news of this, he assembled his forces, set his ships on the water, made himself ready with his men, and set out southward along the coast, gathering many people from every district. The whole met together at Jeddern and went into Hafursfiord. A great battle began, which was both hard and long, but at last King Harald gained the day. There King Eric fell," &c. So says HORNKLOFE ;

"Has the news reached you? Have you heard
Of the great fight at Hafursfiord
Between our noble king brave Harald?" &c.

Heimskringla.



SEMAËL.



S E M A È L .

THY waye, internal sea, wherever named—
Levantine, or Ionian, or Tyrrhene—
Stretching far on, from Calpè, olive-crown'd,
To the dark Syrian or Egyptian strand ;
Or flowing northward t'ward Europa's shore,
Laving the soil of Hellas or Ausonia ;—
Thy wave, were it but voic'd, could open up
A tale of eld, hid in the womb of night,
Which nought of Delphic lore, or Orphean hymn,
Or song of Ascrean bard, hath e'er reveal'd.

'Twas o'er thy waters look'd Semæel forth

In the deep noon of night, from off the cliff
Of steep Alaya, frowning o'er the sea ;
Rolling 'twixt Syrian and Cilician coast.

From youth to manhood, manhood to old age,
Semaël's days had flow'd serenely on ;
His night was giv'n to pray'r or vigil lone ;
Morn sent him forth on daily pilgrimage,
But to no canoniz'd earth-stricken saint,
Or precious relic of a by-gone age,—
'Twas human welfare claim'd his anxious breast ;—
Where suff'ring man was, there deem'd he the shrine
Of Him, who walk'd the earth ; of Him who bore
The penal woes of all. The lowly cell,
Palladian palace, or the sod-built cot,
Found him a willing and a welcome guest.
Or, in the rear of battle-field, where death
Strode with gigantic stride, and carnage wild
Deluged the plain with slaughter—there was he.
Where the crusader and the painim strove
In deadly conflict, till the sun went down

In blood ; a tutelary spirit there ;—
Moist'ning the burning lip with cooling draught,
From fount or brook ; stemming life's gushing tide,
Pouring the oil and wine, pillowing the brow
Upon his agéd breast ; and pointing where
The burden'd soul alone can find relief.

But now full fourscore years have blench'd his brow ;
So that his few spar'd locks, like to the flake,
Which crowns the neighb'ring Taurus, show that time
Has well now fill'd his record of good deeds,
And giv'n him passport for eternity.

In his lone skyward cell, which crowns the cliff
That beetles o'er the sea ; while the pale lamp,
Low pendent from the roof, scarcely illumines
The sacred page ; he plies th' inspir'd theme,
Which plumes his hope, like a bright seraph-wing,
Toward the heav'n he sought. Anon he lifts
His pale but placid brow from off the scroll ;
Looks out upon the night. The moon has ris'n
Above the hill of Eastern Lebanon,

Which throws its shadow on the dark blue wave ;
And yet so bright, so glorious is her beam,
That palm and fir, and olive, stand reliev'd
In the bright heavens beyond. On that vast sea,
O'er whose wide waters roves his hazéd eye,
The fleet of mighty nations, now no more,
Whose very names have scarcely reach'd his age,
Had rode in triumph. The Phœnician there,
Nearing the Sunium, where, in after age,
Athena's glorious fane, like vestal fair,
In spotless robe, look'd down upon the sea,
Cheering the wanderer o'er the Ægean deep,—
Bore on to favor'd Greece the letter'd spoil,
Which gave to speech a semblance, and to thought
An omnipresent and enduring being.

And there the Egyptian queen, who led enthral'd
In love's soft blandishment, Rome's conqueror,
Sail'd on in state, a sovereign of the wave,
In barge which sham'd the dolphin's golden pride,
Another Amphitrité. And there too,

The vanquish'd mistress, fleeing from the fight
Of Actium, led th' ignoble Antony,
Partner in shame, in flight—and one in death.

But now, nor thought of strife or passion, mars
The peaceful brow of him, upon whose breast
Far gentler, holier influences fall,
As fall the moonbeams on the tranquil waves
Which stretch far onward. The felucca there,
With lateen-sail, seen in th' horizon-skirt,
Shaping its course t'ward the Egyptian shore,
Gives to the moon the silv'ry foam, which breaks
'Gainst the sharp keel, and tracks the wave with light ;
While just beneath him bounds the lighter skiff
With bird-like speed ; and, darting to the shore,
Lowers its white sail, and moors its painted prow
Close to the cliff. Disporting in the sheen
Of glorious night, which orient clime alone
Doth witness, the sweet-voic'd nightingale
Sends up her plaining note ; while from afar
The varied sound of sea-bird, or the howl

Of distant mastiff, or the lashing surge,
Come o'er the soul like some bewildering spell.

“ Scroll of past ages,” thus Semaël speaks,
“ As flash thy billows 'neath the beam of night,
Methinks I read upon thy surging waves
The transcript of the past. Upon thy marge
Empires have grasp'd at spoils, as perishable
As weeds upon the sea-shore, eager sought
Of sportive childhood. Yet, upon thy shores
Science was cradled, art unfolded all
Of symmetry and grace, as fabled once
Of Aphrodité risen from thy foam.

But O, thy chiefest glory, wondrous sea,
Thou lav'st the steep of yon blest Palestine,
Where rose that Sun with healing on his wings,
Which shall illumine this earth's remotest verge.
O'er thy wide waters went his heralds forth,—
The favor'd messengers of light and life,
To nations yet unborn ; and Europe now
Risen from the grave of empires, shall repay

For light received, a glorious recompense.

“Thy poetry, O night, when stars look down
From the blue depths of heaven, on a sea
Of calm-reposing waters—giving back
In mimic pageant, from their crispéd wave,
Another firmament of kindred stars,
Which there reflected, seem like spirits fall’n,
Reverting to the source from whence they fell ;—
Thy poetry, O night, is beautiful—
Seen as thou art in widow’d loveliness,
In weeds of mourning,—weeping ’midst thy dews,
For a world ’rest of Him, earth’s first espous’d,
When angels dwelt with man, and man with God.”

Once more Semaël seeks the sacred page,
Ere sleep weighs down his eyelids, and sets free
The spirit, loos’d from thralldom of the sense.
Joyous he holds sweet converse with bright beings,
Beatific visitants from realms, where sin
And sorrow come not,—giving here below
Rich antepast of heav’n—fruition blest,

Which only disembodied seraphs know.

So the bold mountain bird, with sunward gaze,
Thro' wint'ry tempests, seeks its rock-girt home,
Mounts from its eyrie, and with outstretch'd plume,
Soars far above the threat'ning whirlwind's sway,
The torrent's rush, or lurid lightning's scath ;—
Far, far on high, amidst th' ethereal vault—
The bright Cerulean—with determin'd wing,
He cleaves the fields of ether, and sails on.
Full on his vision beams the glorious orb,—
Yet with unblenching eye, he onward mounts,
Still onward, and still onward ; nor to earth
Turns back his gaze, till lost amidst the blaze
Of light celestial—earth has disappear'd.

But lo, a form before his fearful gaze,
Of stature far surpassing man ! his brow,
Cinctur'd with night-shade, reaches the arch'd dome,
Whence beams the flick'ring lamp. His visage grave,
Despeaking peace, benignity, and love,—
Such as angelic natures wont to have,—

Dispels the terrors of Semaël's breast,
And speaks him bound on embassy of peace.
Yet from his full-orb'd vision, issues forth
Unearthly radiance—such as overhead,
The moon emergent from some dark-rob'd cloud,
Throws out upon thé night. With outstretch'd arm,
He lifts his starry mantle ; then with hand
Uprais'd, yet objectless, pointing to nought,
Save the blue vault without, he speaks with voice
As hymning night-wind thro' the tufted boughs
Of the dark fir, beneath night's silvery ray :

“ Semaël, thou canst read an embassy
Which comes to all,—him thron'd in regal state,
The houseless wand'rer, and the dungeon-slave :
Emasser, I —— the messenger of death !
But not in me seest thou that phantom dark,
That hideous spectre, arm'd with dart to strike,
As pictur'd to the terror-stricken breast
Of him, the slave of sin ;—the envoy I
Of peace and joy to such as thee on earth.

Ere three short moons shall wane beyond yon hills,
Thou, son of earth, shalt end thy pilgrimage,
And slumber with thy fathers. 'Tis because
Of a long life, in charity with man,
And converse with the skies, that thou, Semaël,
Art now forewarn'd, thou soon shalt put aside
Thy palmer-weeds, and deck thyself with robes
Radiant with light—a never-fading vestment."

"Angel of death"—Semaël calm replies,
"Him will I follow, who has pass'd the vale
Triumphantly before me, and lay down
My staff of faith, just on those confines, where
Time ceases, and eternity begins.
But tell, blest spirit, where thy dwelling-place?
O'er earth,—thro' air—or ocean wand'rst thou;
Or dost inhabit those bright spheres above,
Which now send down their influence on the night,
And tell of worlds beyond?"—"It is forbidden,"
Answers Emasser, "to unfold to mortal
What would inflict on life's probationer

A prescient suff'ring ; but, Semaël, thou
 Art 'bove thy fellow-mortal privileg'd.
 Fear not,—I'm with thee ;"—straight Semaël feels
 The messenger's firm grasp, as with strong arm
 He circles him ; and o'er the battlement
 Bears him thro' air. The bright array of heav'n
 Is burning overhead ; and, far below,
 The roar of ocean, and the unceasing dash
 Of mountain-torrent, and the hollow moan,
 Made by the night-gust, thro' the rocky gorge
 Of Lebanon and Hermon, scarce are heard.

As shoots the meteor thro' the cope of night,
 So swiftly pass they peopled continents,
 Kingdoms and empires, and the throngéd mart
 Of wall-girt city, now in slumber hush'd.

And now they light on earth. A chasm vast,
 Of savage aspect and of Stygian gloom,
 Receives the aërial travellers ; when, lo,
 Bursts on Semaël's sense a wondrous scene,
 O'erwhelming and appalling. 'Midst a cave,

Which to the gaze would seem interminable,
Unnumber'd lamps of varied colors, pendent
From wall of glist'ring spar, stalactitic,
Shine with a dazzling splendor. While above,
From the high archéd dome of ebon-hue,
Crystals of rich and varied drapery
Give back in prismy hues the flame beneath.

In the far distance, where the cavern'd space
Opens to day, a light ineffable,
Whose brightness far excels ten thousand suns
Converg'd in one, beams with a ray intense ;
So that not eagle-eye had brook'd its splendor.
No wonder this, for thither effluent,
Pass the flame-spirits, instant going out,
Of myriad lamps, coursing with lightning speed
Back to the source of empyréal brightness.

From under ground, the sound of rushing waters,
Chiming thro' clefts, or dashing over rocks,
Blends with a strange unearthly melody,
Heard from the vaulted roof. As 'neath the spell

Of wizard-power, cheating the 'wilder'd brain,
Semaël turns him to the stranger-guide.

“Tell me, Emasser, what this wondrous place ;
These myriad lamps of varied hue and shape,
Whose flames in volume differ each from each ;
From the faint beam which fitfully illumes
Its own circumference, to those torch-like fires,
Throwing afar their blaze into the night ?”

“These,” said Emasser, “are the lamps of life ;
Each has its meted naphtha ; and the hue
Tells of the varied castes and characters.
Those thou beholdest, to the verge replenish'd,
Have enter'd on existence ; these thou seest
With scant supply, are the brief lights of those,—
Whether of glorious, or of sad import
Their lives on earth,—who pass from this abode
In lustihood of life ; while buoyant hope,
E'er in the distance, lures them soothingly,
With bright-wrought tissues fading into air !—
'Midst joyous visions of futurity,

Or dark forebodings of an after being,—
Retributive of good or ill on earth,—
Their lights go forth—not out,—their issues are
In the bright effluence, thou seest afar.
Others thou seest, whose pure flames are fed
With crystal naphtha—pure as that which gives
To the bright star of morn its silv'ry ray ;
Yet as that star evanishes at dawn,
So shall these lights of cherub-infancy
Mount up to heav'n and mingle with its brightness.”

“ But whose are these,” Semaël asks, “ whose lights
Burn so intense, and with as vivid flame,
As that which once descended from above
On sacrifice accepted, drinking up
The fluid of life with fierce consuming fire,—
Making a holocaust of that it loves ?”

Emasser thus : “ These are the sons of song,
Whose lights soon fade and pass from mortal sight ;
But that which hath been kindled from above,
Lives thro' eternity ! And see their rays—

Like to th' effulgent sun-stream issuing forth
At yonder portal—seek a higher source ;
Where all their powers inspher'd in harmony,
Freed from Promethean ligament, which here
Chains the proud spirit to the naked rock
Of earth's existence—there to writhe and groan
In agonizing thralldom,—know no bounds
But that which binds them to the throne of God !

“ Not so of him, whose lamp below thou seest,
Close to that stream bituminous, which flows
From impure source, conveying in its course
Gross matter phosphorescent, the foul lees
Of putrefaction ;—fed by aliment
So vile, behold how fitfully the flame
Shoots upward, with resplendent, sportive ray ;
Now waxes low, a pale and sickly beam,
Scarcely adhering to the filmy wick ;—
Now flickering faint, now flashing up again,
As loath to leave ! This is the light of bard,
Falsely so call'd, libidinous and vile,

Whose numbers flow in gay and sprightly strain,—
 Charming the ear, soothing the dreamy sense,
 Infusing deadly poison in the soul ;
 Like that of Circé, luring to destroy.

“ Those of ensanguin'd hue are lights of heroes,
 Whose brow-encircling wreath is drench'd in blood.
 The fluid which feeds their flame, as thou perceiv'st,
 Sends forth a sick'ning odor, like to that,
 Which from the field of carnage reeking comes.

“ Emblazon'd in the heav'ns or on the earth,
 Where are inscrib'd the victories of those
 Whom the world hail'd as heroes ? Where the pomp—
 Th' array of serried hosts—the deaf'ning trump
 Of glorious warfare ? Ask the trackless waste,
 O'er which we cours'd this night, where, in their pride
 Fair cities stood, resounding with the hum
 Of a throng'd people, busy in the arts,
 The gentle courtesies, domestic joys,
 The kindly interchange of charities ;—
 All that exalt society, and lift

The soul of man. We pass'd this night, where lie
Prone in the dust, the wondrous works of art ;
Where silence, like a dwarf and sullen mute,
Sits with her finger plac'd athwart her lip,
Clad in her weeds of mourning. And we pass'd
The arid desert, verdureless, where once
Bright laughing fields, and crowning villages,
And flocks, and herds, and smiling harvests, bless'd
A countless multitude. All these have fled,
Because a hero will'd it,—and the bard
With song of triumph would exalt his fame.

“ So much for fell ambition, ruthless e'er
To all which thwarts his path ; snatching his wreath,
Tho' drench'd with infant gore, 'midst the lament
Of the 'reft widow, or the shriller wail
Of maiden, roving o'er the battle-field.
Even such an one,—as on the wings of air
We cours'd this night, 'neath yon starr'd canopy,
Beheld we on the plains of Khuzistan,
Where Terak winds his way thro' banks of bloom ;

Whose water with the morning sun was bright,
But now ensanguin'd, fearfully speeds on
Beneath the moon's sad light. We saw her there
In search of her betroth'd in early youth ;
Whom having found, tho' marr'd with ghastly wound,
In maniac-mood, she plucks her tresses wild,
And wipes the life-blood from his clotted face ;
Then lying down beside, with bosom press'd
Closely to his, and lip impress'd on lip,
She yields her life, and with it all her woe.

“ His is a hallow'd cause—such as on high
Angels shall gaze upon and deem sublime—
Who on the threshold of his country stands,
Link'd arm in arm with kindred spirits there,—
And with confed'rate breast—determined soul—
Hurls back the invasive foe ; or cleaves to earth
The wretch who dares assoil his sacred home.

Who falls a martyr here—to him let pæans
And songs of lofty eloquence arise ;
And monumental shaft, to distant age

Attest in grave, enduring character,
A nation's gratitude for rights maintain'd.

“ These lamps of lurid flame, and sulph'rous stench,
Shedding a tomb-fire glare, and flashing up,
With intervals of gloom, are the craz'd urns
Of sensualists—inebriates—whose whole being,
Immerg'd in matter, is imbruted so,
That nought of their original remains ;
Their semblance, man—their state, beneath the beast.

“ And see yon lamp, in form like serpent wreath'd ;—
The flame forth issuing from its horrid jaws,
Like fang distilling poison, darts around
A baleful, flickering gleam ; showing a skin
Of mottled hue ;—this is the lamp of him,
Miscall'd philosopher, whose powers are spent
In luring souls, by specious show of words,
To depths of doubt and fathomless despair ;
Until with fell, self-immolating hand,
The child of mis'ry hurls his anguish'd spirit
Into the presence of the God who gave it.

" Beside it, see that lamp of grotesque shape,
 Like to a beetle toiling in the mire,
 With head turn'd earthward ; 'tis the light of him,
 Whose sum of life is spent in heaping up
 That dross of earth, term'd gold. He, like the thing
 Spher'd by the insect, crumbling into dust,
 Shall prove himself at last, less instinct-wise."

As if already pass'd those bounds, where time
 To th' illimitable future gives
 Th' enfranchis'd spirit, freed from vassalage
 Of racking doubt or intermittent fear,
 Semaël stands ; like one beneath the spell
 Of wizard-power : and lo, the high-arch'd brow,
 The breathing audible, the frame convuls'd,
 The orb of vision, eloquent with dread,
 Hand link'd in hand with spasm'd energy,—
 Attest how deep his soul drinks in the tale,
 Which the dark messenger of fate unfolds.
 Yet like the victim, by the Flamen led
 In pagan pomp, bedeck'd with flow'ry wreath,

Destin'd to crown the sacrificial rite,—
 He bows submissive, and awaits his doom.

And now Semaël questions thus his guide :
 “Closely beside me, burns a lamp, whose light
 Beams forth with clear, attenuated ray,—
 Of form peculiar,—like the vase which throws
 Its grateful incense thro' cathedral-dome ;—
 And see, the aliment which feeds its flame,
 Nigh spent,—its light shall soon depart for aye ;
 Tell me, Emasser, whose this feeble fire ?”

“That lamp,” replies the messenger, “is thine.
 As I have told thee, ere three moons shall wane,
 Thou, son of earth, shalt end thy pilgrimage,
 And slumber with thy fathers. Nay, fear not ;
 'Tis but a transit ; for in yonder skies,
 These effluent rays shall form a diadem—
 A bright reflex of Deity itself.
 Next to eternal suff'ring, were to live
 Through an eternity of being here,
 Upon this spot call'd earth. Undying man,
 Invested in a frame of fleshly mould,

Subject to rack and moil—soul-strick'ning gloom—
With intervals of fev'rish, frenzied joy—
Fitting the more for each access of pain,—
Were but a thing of wretchedness supreme.
What never-ending strife of hope and fear,
Pressure of heart and brain, distracting doubt ;
Torture which kills not ; joy which flies the grasp ;
Hope in the distance, which comes never near ;—
These were indeed eternity of woe,
To which ten thousand agonizing throes,
Marshalling the way for me—were joy intense.

“To die, then, truly is to thee, Semaël,
A freeman's privilege ;—thy franchis'd spirit—
Prison'd so long, within its dungeon-gloom,—
Snatching at times glimpses of joy far off,—
Shall rend its fetters—leave its earthly cell,
And revel in the bliss of new-born life.”

“'Tis well,” the sage replies, and meekly folds
His hands upon his breast :—“But say, Emasser,
Whose lamp is that replenish'd to the verge,
Burning near mine ?”—Emasser thus :—“That flame

Is the young Nepar's, who each morning leads
Forth from Alaya, his well-order'd fold,
To pasture in the vale 'neath thy abode :—
Happy his days, for plenty crowns his board ;
Content and innocence, his chosen guests.
His oil of life, thou seest, shows that his being
Has an abidance here of many years."

Semaël motions here, as he would speak,
But his tongue falters, and his voice is faint ;
And deep conflicting feelings shake his frame,
Almost to ague ; while his throbbing brow
Shows that the pulse of life beats fitfully.

Folding his mantle o'er his laboring breast—
As if to shroud its heavings from Emasser—
He drops it suddenly with flash of thought,
That pass'd his brain, and wakes another purpose.
" Emasser,"—thus he answers—" thou behold'st
The lamp of Nepar nigh to overflow ;—
Were it not well to give of his excess,
To this poor flame of mine ?" Scarce has his tongue
Giv'n utterance to the thought that racks his soul,

When from the cavern's depths, a fearful shriek,
As if from thousand agonizéd spirits,
Gives forth in bitter plaint ;—and lo, a voice,
In sorrowing accents echoes deep and clear—

“ Shall perfect charity be found on earth !”

The din awakes Semaël. His, indeed,
Has been a fearful vision. From the scroll
Which open lies before him, slow he lifts
His aching head ; scarce knowing if the dream
Which sleep had woven, is in truth a dream.

With trembling bosom, yet with grateful joy,
He looks around. The glorious sun has risen ;
And from the ridge of eastern Lebanon—
Whose brow a crimson haze has circled—casts
Thro' the east casement, light upon the page,
Which lies outspread before him,—and he reads :
“ ‘ Watch ye and pray,’ and heed the tempter's lure ;
‘ The spirit wills,’ but yet ‘ the flesh is weak.’ ”

M A I A ;

A MASK.



M A I A .

FICTION.

CLAD in ever-changing dye,
The elder-born of fantasy,
With pinion dipp'd in yonder blue,
Sparkling in its sapphire hue,
Tir'd with sport of yesternight,
On this mortal sphere I light !

I have bless'd th' enthusiast's dream
With the thousand forms, that teem
Not in worldling's sordid mind—
To this spot of earth confin'd.

I, nor festive sport nor mirth
Hold with Gnome, who delves the earth ;
Thriving the golden vein—divining,
Where the silver ore's refining—
Till his soiled plume no more
Upward from its dross can soar !
He, with cowering crest and wing,
And drooping eye—no more can spring,
Like the sceptred bird of Jove,
To the fount of light above !

'Fore the Bard I have disported,
And his sealed vision courted ;
Opening to him tracts of time
Far beyond the solar clime.
Thence I've borne him back to where,
Ages of glory past appear ;
Where knightly Troubadour, in lays
Of sweet accord gave forth the praise
Of Lady-love ;—and tilt and war,
Lighted on paynim strand afar.

Whilst, the midst, the courteous dame
The guerdon-meed of song proclaim.

Whisking thence, I've fluttering sped
To the wretch's prison-bed ;
And while slumber seal'd his lid,
Open'd on him scenes forbid.
Home and all its joys beguil'd,
Spouse and prattling infants smiled !
Once more, fraught with bliss, he wander'd
Where his native stream meander'd ;
List'ning to the linnet's lays,
And tasting joys of other days !
Now, I hie me hither, where
Coming fancies fill the air
With unearthly sounds of glee,
Of approaching jubilee.

But lo, what sylphid-spirits sail
Hither on ambrosial gale !

(Fiction retires into the background.)

Enter THREE FAIRIES.

First Fairy. Whither, sister, wouldst thou roam ?

Second Fairy. Where the martin makes his home ;—
In the mossy, sheltering cleft.

Third Fairy. Wherefore thither ? frosts have left
The enamell'd mead,—and daisies peep
From their half-year, winter sleep.

Second Fairy. But the orchis shuts her bell ;
This, some coming sleet doth tell.

First Fairy. No, the swallow skims the sky,—

Third Fairy. And mock-bird wakes his revelry.
And see ! the season weaves for May,
Blossom, bell, and tassel gay.
Thro' the air, and on the wing,
Go the germs of future spring ;
Floating unseen, save by eyes
Kenning all their mysteries.
Mine the task, to break the threads,
Which the wily spider spreads

O'er travell'd paths, from spray to spray,
To mesh the insect on his way.

Second Fairy. Tell me, when upon the mead
We parted, whither did ye speed ?
I, all night within my bower
Of the yellow jonquil-flower,
Fanned by zephyr whispering by,—
Slumber'd with unopening eye,
'Neath the moon-illumin'd sky.

First Fairy. And I, amidst the joyous hall,
Watch'd the gay, accordant fall
Of the mazy circling ring,
Whilst the viol wak'd its string ;
Lending to beauty's cheek, the while,
Laugh, and dimple, sport and smile,—
Gamboling in the flowing tress,
Smoothing the plume with mute caress ;
And chasing with my thistle-spear,
The moth-fly round the taper's glare.

Third Fairy. Behold this gem !—this was a tear,

Coursing down the lovely cheek
 Of a maiden,—bending meek
 O'er the peasant's pallet,—where
 Disease had fixed his ghastly air.

I mark'd her, when at yester-eve,
 From her lodge she took her leave,
 And, wending thro' the copsewood, hied
 To yon ivied cot. I spied,
 When she from the matron's brow
 Wip'd the cold death-dew ;—whispering low
 Blesséd words of hope and peace,—
 Bidding the sigh of anguish cease.
 Just then, from forth her eyelid's sphere,
 This tear-drop cours'd ; I caught it, ere
 It fell to earth, and brought it where
 Our fairy King his audience kept,
 While the race of mortals slept.

First Fairy. And what did Oberon ?

Second Fairy. O say !

Third Fairy. From Jove's silvery star, a ray

He caught, and quick with elfin-spear,
 Transfix'd it in the vestal tear,
 Which shot into this crystal sphere !
 O, sisters, how upon the night
 It stream'd ! as if some meteor bright,
 Bursting amidst the welkin's height,
 Scatter'd towards earth its thousand streams
 Of diamond starlets ;—

First Fairy. But, meseems,
 These go out, before they near
 This earth of ours—as if nought fair—
 Of heavenly proof—can, unassoil'd,
 Approach its orb—

Third Fairy. But here it foil'd—
 This beauteous gem—all vain compare ;
 As the nymph, each maiden fair,—
 And blaz'd the more upon the brow
 Of sable-stoléd night ! and now
 Our kingly Fay—with gallant mien
 And courteous bow, approach'd his queen ;

And with a sportive, knightly smile,
 Aërial harpings heard the while,—
 Would fain have placed it in her zone ;
 “ Not so,” said she, “ my Oberon ;
 For only she, this gem shall don,
 Who gave it being—and display
 Its honors, as our Queen of May.”

To Titania, our queen, is the task assigned,
 To place this gem on the bosom kind
 Of the lovely nymph of the falling-tear,
 But lo ! what plaintive sybil's here ?

MARCH.

[*Beckoning to April, who follows.*]

Hither, sister, hither, but with stealthy tread,
 And list if now stern Aquilon be fled
 With all his wintry hosts of icy-mail ;
 His ambush'd frost, and fierce, assaulting hail.
 And hark !—the Lapland war-drum, muttering low,
 The howl of Arctic-wolf ! ah ! me—I fear,

Stern winter will himself anon be here,
 With giant footstep and dark horrent brow,
 Scattering his sleet athwart th' inverted year.

Even now—even now—

Methinks I list the despot's threat afar—
 Denouncing scath and death and savage war—
 Borne on the fitful breeze.—Behold! behold!
 Blanch'd by the midnight winds from off the wold,
 A pale-eyed daisy 'midst its fellows lies,
 An early victim to insidious skies!—
 And here, iniced by sleet of yesternight,*
 A zephyr-loving jasmine feels the blight
 Of churlish night,—revisiting the light
 Of this bless'd morn; yet feeling not the ray
 Of spring-tide day.

How like a lady-prisoner, she peers—

* The yellow jasmine of the South frequently blossoms in January and February. The fact mentioned here has frequently occurred. A severe February sleet was followed by a *hard* frost. A jasmine-vine, with its beautiful, golden-hued, bell-shaped blossoms, and bright green leaves, was thus *iniced*; upon which the morning sunbeams reflected with surpassing splendor.

A Mary or a Grey, of bygone years—
Thro' the scarce-visible bounds—which wears
The mockery of homage ; and yet holds
The lonely nymph within its crystal folds !

SONG.

Tell me, O tell me, thou delicate stranger,
Bearest thou still the bright vestments of spring,—
Now that late winter's harsh chidings endanger
Curve-loving tendril and sweet blossoming ?

Daisy and primrose and violet are wither'd,
That peep'd but of late from the warm southern slope ;
Few were the days here of sunshine they gather'd,—
Day-stars of summer and pris'ners of hope !

Ice-fetter'd victim—death-stricken—yet blooming,—
Around thee is winter's sharp, cankering breath,—
Soul-withering, yet clasping,—caressing, entombing
All that we love, in the folding of death !

Bright to the vision—triumphant—yet dying,—
 Odorless, sunless—thou smil'st to decay ;
 Wintery breezes around thee are sighing—
 Yet still thou look'st forth on the glories of day !

O, thus in that hour, when the coil of existence,
 Unrav'ling, is setting th' imprison'd soul free—
 May a spring, never ending, beheld in the distance,
 Cause the spirit to look forth, sweet flow'ret, like thee !

APRIL.

O moody sister ! thou art still the same,
 As wont of yore—an ever-prescient dame ;
 Foreboding from the skies, stars, moon, and sun,
 Of evil hap ; come, put thy kirtle on
 Of flowers fresh gather'd ; here is lily fair,
 And rose and snow-drop for thy unbound hair ;—
 Thy tresses discompos'd—thy sibyl-air—
 Ill suit the coming of th' auspicious day,
 'That ushers in the myrtle-cinctur'd May.

See how the meadow laughs with myriad flowers !
Spring comes, and with her come the loves and hours.
The swallow is abroad, and upward springing,
The welcome mock-bird, many-voic'd, is singing.
All hail the genial morn ;—the seaward plover
Sails up to heaven, and says that cold is over ;
The lark, whose sky-notes thrill the welkin's ear,
Mounts fearlessly, and tells our lady's near ;
The jasmine shoots, the sycamore puts on
Her tender green—proclaiming winter gone ;
And the soft-tinted hawthorn, with her green,
So delicate to sight,—and flow'rets sheen,—
Yields to the wooing south her sweet perfumes
To greet our festal Queen ! who hither comes !

SONG.

Look on this rose—'tis beauty's dower ;
How bright its hue—its breath how fragrant !
The bee that roves from flower to flower,
Here ends his quest, no longer vagrant :

And in his foraging career,
Like warrior spell'd—enchain'd by beauty,
Leaves all for this ; and sighing here,
Merges in love the call of duty.

Is't not, in truth, of flowers the queen !
What pensive grace—bewitching coyness !
It peeps from forth its bower of green,
As, giving joy—itself were joyless.

Then in thy bosom place this flower,
Sweet emblem of a morn like this ;
The year's sweet hymenéal hour,
When all is redolent of bliss.

[She places the flower in the zone of March.]

MUSIC.

[Scene draws, and discovers Oberon and Titania seated on their throne, surrounded by attendant Fairies. One is employed in giving drink to Oberon out of a lotus-leaf ; another is placing

flowers in the tresses of Titania ; another is fanning her with green palm-leaves. Oberon rises from his throne, and addresses the three Fairies.]

Oberon. Well have ye done, ye fays, to whom we gave
Our late behest ; all things ye've featly done
To grace this coronal. Our Maia comes—
Deck'd with that gem more precious than all else—
A truthful bosom, fraught with sympathy.
And see, Titania—see on yonder cloud,
Which with its fleecy skirt sails 'thwart the blue
O' th' welkin's cope, our elfin messenger,
Aglaiia, sits,—and to the wanton winds
Diffuses fragrance. And Ganóma too,
Our merry fay, with his lithe birchen wand,
Calls up unreal shapes, and semblances !
Agapé, too, that melancholy sprite,
Gives to the upland slopes, and devious brooks,
And distant hills, the purple haze of spring :
All, all rejoice. Hark—from the distant wave

The chant of ocean-chieftain inland floats !
E'en Neptune's self, in coral-vesture deck'd,
Renders his homage to our coming rite.

SONG.

THE VY-KING.*

[*Heard in the distance.*]

Come on the sea, sweet one,
Come without fear ;
Leave all for me alone,
Kinsfolk and gear !
Yonder, my gallant bark,
See it rides fair ;
Pennons fly—sails swell,—
True 'tis a cockle-shell,
Yet I am king there !

* See De Vigny.

The land for the slave, sweet one,
The wave for the free ;
Round us, wild waters
Enfold thee and me !
True 'tis a great deep ;
So is love, dear !
Pennons fly—sails swell,—
Our's but a cockle-shell,
Yet I am king here !

Titania. How now, sweet Iris, my light-footed fay,
To whom, as almoner of fairy realm,
We gave in trust, the lovely crystal tear.

Third Fairy. See, my Queen, I've brought it here,
Perch'd upon my ouphen-spear ;
Glowing with the starry ray,
Which Oberon, with kind essay,
Wrested from the star of Jove,
As it speeded from above.

Titania. Give me the gem, bright fairy ; it shall deck,

On this auspicious morn, the bosom fair
O' the lovely nymph, to whom it owes its birth.

Third Fairy. Here to thee, I now consign
A gem, that shames Golconda's mine ;
Issuing from the heart's warm core,
Where love abideth evermore.
Love, the pearl of priceless worth,
Love, the sun that lighteth earth,
Love, that gave existence birth ;
All the treasure earth affords,
All the gold the miser hoards,
All the music of the grove,
All the starry host above,
All that greets the eye and ear,
Is nought—beside this love-form'd tear !

MUSIC.

Pageant ushering in the Queen of May.

FLORA, POMONA, THE QUEEN, CERES, ZEPHYRUS.

While these advance in the foreground, the Fairies are arranged on each side of the throne.

Fiction is seen at some distance in the rear, in a green alcove, having on one side March, and on the other April.

Oberon and Titania descend from their throne, and conduct Maia to it, placing themselves beside her. The seat of Maia is a little more elevated than theirs.

FLORA.

[Approaches Maia, and bends in fealty.]

Hail beauteous Queen! Sweet Maia, we here bring
 Our vernal tribute! Lo, the frolic-spring,
 Prank'd in her iris-vest, hath sportive flung
 O'er upland hill and dale, her robe;—and hung
 Upon the beech, her tassell'd honors high!
 This coronal, which ere the garish eye
 Of laughing morn peep'd o'er the eastern hill,
 Or that the plaining Whippoorwill

Had still'd her vesper-notes of yester-eve,
Or that the woodpecker, with curious bill,
Had made the wilderness reëcho, shrill,—
For thee, sweet Maia, we weave !

Here are sweet violets, gathered
Ere that the vaulting sun had stolen their dew ;
And here are wildlings, sever'd
From off the sloping greensward, where they grew.

But flowers wither while they bloom,
Gracing the bridal and the tomb ;
Stars of earth—they ope to fade ;
And while, O nymph, for thee we braid
All that dale or upland views
Of myriad shapes and myriad hues,
Know, that summer will be here,
When these blossomings shall sere ;
Autumn-gales shall erewhile come ;
Vocal notes and wild-bee hum
Then depart,—and leaf and blade,
'Fore the sighing wind shall fade.

Haste, then, gather flow'rets, where
Spring forever crowns the year ;
And the spirit, soaring high,
Drinks of immortality !

ZEPHYRUS.

Hail, lovely Maia ! from yon star-crown'd west,
On goss'mer wing, we speed at thy behest !
 Swiftly we have wander'd o'er
 Coral strand and cliff-crown'd shore,
 Where the huge Pacific rides,
 Heaving with his countless tides !
We have frolick'd with the curl
 Of the crispéd Ocean-wave ;
We have gamboll'd, where the pearl
 Lies deep in Neptune's cave ;
And have fann'd the sea-boy's sleep,
 Whispering in the shroud ;
And on the stilly moonlight-deep,

Mock'd the curlew loud !
We have backward chas'd the year,
Wheeling on his destin'd sphere,
From the vale of bright Cashmere,
 Either Ind and Araby ;
All the sweets which each supplies,
All that greet the charméd eyes,
 Hither we convey to thee,
 In token of our fealty !

POMONA.

All hail sweet Maia !—not in vassal-guise,
Hither we haste to plight allegiance due ;
Pomona's treasures come, where summer-skies
Beam brightest in their deep, cerulean hue ;
Or when mild autumn, gorgeously bedecks
The west with pageantry of crimson dye,
And evening, clad in purple scarf, reflects
Upon the soul her thought-alluring sky.

Yet these pledges here we bring,
Of our orchard's blossoming ;
Redolent of every sweet,
Which the vernal year can greet ;
And ere three summer moons shall wane,
Pomona shall her joys proclaim ;
Her golden fruit and purple store,
From her teeming horn shall pour ;
Crowning the board with viands which vie
With immortals' luxury !—

CERES.

Yonder, where the forestere
Affrights with echoing axe the deer,
Bounding thro' the copse-wood home,—
Thence, sweet Maia, we have come
With nodding sheaf and tassell'd ear ;
And ere three summer-moons appear,
With their modest crescent fair,

We shall crown the grange e'ermore,
And bless the board with Cerés' store.

Even now the mower spies

The golden-crested harvest rise!—

Not in Delphos' fane I dwell,

Echoing to the mystic shell ;

Nor in Eleusis' shrine—nor where

Dread Dodona fills the air

With unearthly sounds,—which, caught,

Are with wondrous import fraught.

All these mythic fictions gone,—

Blar delusion too hath flown.

Philosophy, when read aright,

Is the harbinger of light ;—

Mystery, and craft, and fear,

Have no place or presence here.

Not a warbler wakes his lay,

Not a dew-drop pearls the spray,

Not a fleecy cloud-rack sails,

'Fore the warm-breath'd summer gales,

Shedding blessings on the earth,
But heavenward points its primal birth.

Hark the green-sedg'd chiming rill,
Winding down yon cot-crown'd hill,
The torrent's dash, the river's gush,
The mighty wind,—resounding crush
Of the fall'n monarch of the wood,
Re-echo'd by the distant flood !

Ask thy spirit,—while it ranges
Thro' the wonder-teeming changes
Of creation's mystic book,
Whereon, maiden, thou dost look ;
Wherefore there conjoinéd be
Beauty and variety ;
Why are all those thousand dies,—
Plumage—leaf—and earth—and skies,—
Ev'ry varying form of being,
All peculiar,—all agreeing,
But that the path of duty be
Path of pleasantness to thee ?

Sweet Maia, while thy soul full fraught
With ecstasy of wildered thought,
With these joys is redolent,—
Be thy spirit, e'er intent
On that beneficence, which giv'st
All the bliss, thou here receiv'st.

So, like those day-spring clouds, which lie
Entranc'd before the musing eye,—
Reflecting on their gorgeous height
The glories of the risen light,—
Thy soul, responsive, e'er shall be
The bright reflex of Deity !

TITANIA.

[Advances with the crown and gem.]

This gem, sweet Maia, all thy own,
Shall deck this day thy lovely zone ;
Our Iris mark'd thee, yester-eve,
Ere the western sky could weave
Her many-colored braid of light,

To deck the raven-brow of night,—
She mark'd thee, when, at yester-eve,
Thou from thy lodge didst take thy leave ;
Wending thro' copse, and dell, and mead,
To minister to suff'rer's need :
And saw thee, from the matron's brow
Wipe the cold death-dew—whisp'ring low
Blesséd words of hope and peace,
Bidding the sigh of anguish cease.

Just then, from forth thy eyelids' sphere,
This tear-drop cours'd,—she caught it, ere
It fell to earth—and brought it where
Our Oberon his audience kept,
While the race of mortals slept.
'Twas even then, my royal fay
From Jove's silvery star a ray
Straight caught, and quick, with elfin-spear,
Transfix'd it in this vestal tear,—
And fain would place it in my zone :
“ Not so,” said I, “ my Oberon,
For only she this gem shall don,

Who gave it being—and display
Its honors, as our Queen of May.”

[*Titania places the crystal tear in the zone of Maia.*]

THE CORONAL.

And now that with the vernal year,
Awak'ning nature's smiles appear ;
While genial harmony and gladness,
Lift e'en the stoic-brow of sadness ;—
While groves are vocal, flow'rets brightest,
Skies blue, hearts true, and bosoms lightest,—
To usher in this blissful day,
We crown thee, maiden, Queen of May !
We bring thee garlands, gather'd ere
The sun's first orient rays could sere
Their bloom and freshness ;—eglantine,
Violet and rose and lily, twine
To grace this festive day of thine !

But lilies fade, and roses wither,
And spring departs, and clouds oft gather,

And summer flies, and autumn, near,
 Resigns to winter's arms the year.
 —O, may we, lovely Maia, see
 The season's blessings meet in thee ;
 Spring's earliest promise, summer's skies,
 And autumn's stores, and winter's joys ;—
 Revolving thus, e'er bless'd and blessing,
 And virtue's fadeless meed possessing.

CHORAL RESPONSE.

And now, that with the vernal year,
 Awak'ning nature's smiles appear,
 While genial harmony and gladness
 Lift e'en the stoic-brow of sadness ;
 While groves are vocal, flow'rets brightest,
 Skies blue, hearts true, and bosoms lightest,—
 To usher in this blissful day,
 We crown thee, maiden, Queen of May.

[After a slight pause, Oberon and Titania conduct Maia from her throne.]

TRIUMPHAL MARCH.

[*All pass out except the three Fairies and Fiction.*]

Third Fairy. And now, with duteous speed, we'll sail,
On the blossom-bearing gale,
To where Oberon, our king,
And his queen, Titania, bring
Regal banquet for the fair,
Of bosom kind and falling tear ;
And yon gem shall gorgeous blaze
Brighter than the planet's rays—
Whence its silvery sheen is ta'en—
In the forehead of the night,
Charming the sense with moral light,—
Telling that nought more brightly glows
Than beauty's tear for kindred woes.

FICTION.

'Tis pleasant in greenwood, where wildlings are
springing,

Where the spicewood-tree blooms, where the linnet is
singing,

To list to the boatman's carols which tell,
Mellow'd by distance, passing well ;

'Tis sweet by the moonlit fountain to lie,
And watch the light fleece come sailing by,
And picture thereon, with spell-waking wand,
All the enchantments of fairy land !

Or, to join our voices with winds which blow,
On summer eve, thro' the forest-bough.

But 'tis sweeter, far sweeter, to watch the rise,
In the morning of life, of brimming eyes,
O'erflowing with hopes and sympathies.

And now, we'll away to the banquet-hall,
Lest there aught of scath our queen befall ;
Be mine the task to dispense around

Sweet illusions of sight and sound ;
Pluming the thought, and pointing the smile,
And joining of hearts and hands the while.
Thus then, on whirring pinions we go,—
Hither, sweet fairies, and trip it so !



WEEDS FROM LIFE'S SEA-SHORE.

Thou who readest here,—O learn that these—
Each of these weeds hath been uptorn—each one—
From the mysterious soundings of the heart;—
To each belongs a tale, which but the depths
From which they come, can tell.

WEEDS FROM LIFE'S SEA-SHORE.

THE CHRYSALIS.

I too, like thee, amidst the stour
Of winter's darkest noon was nurs'd—
Cradled in ice, and rock'd in storm ;
Blear lightning, at that hour accurs'd,
Around was gleaming,
And the night-bird of ominous power
O'erhead was screaming.

And would that hour, which forward gave
 My helpless bark to life's rough sea,
 Had seen it found'ring 'neath the wave
 Of overwhelming destiny !
 Or—rather—were the gall-steep'd germ
 Of hateful being never given ;
 Or, that life's lamp—when it would burn—
 Were blasted by a gust from heaven.

Yet thou, lone chrysalis, though erst
 Autumnal leaves their cerement gave
 To form thy little embryo-grave,—
 Shall burst,
 Soon as the early swallow skims the stream,
 Thy earthly tegument—thy wintry dream,
 And soar on pinion far away
 Beneath the solar ray.

From flower to flower at will to rove,
 Freely to sip where thou shalt list,

Proffering to each a passing love,
 Reckless of beauty soon as kiss'd ;
 Till tir'd of play and fev'rish being,
 The same dull round of pleasure-seeing,
 Pillow'd on the rose's breast—
 Together with the west'ring sun—
 Thy little brief existence done—
 Thou sink'st to rest.

Lone chrysalis! 'twas pride beguil'd
 The parent, thus to place her child
 Pendent on the cliff's dread brow ;
 Where haggard danger, mute yet wild,
 O'erlooks the misty vale below.
 Ah ! deem'd she then, what ills await
 Ambition's cliff-aspiring gait ;
 That 'midst these peaks, the lightning stroke
 Rifts to the base the gnarléd oak ;
 While safe within the valley moor'd,
 Screen'd from the tempest's scowling eye,

The humble holly roots secur'd,
Nor dreads a fluctuating sky.
Ah, thither hie,
On that blest morn, which sees thy natal hour ;
For I, like thee, amidst the stour
Of winter's keenest noon was nurs'd—
Cradled in woe and rock'd in storm ;
Yet, tho' the world its cerement bear,
To sepulchre the spirit here,—
Yet shall it burst—
Soon as the eternal morn shall beam—
This earthly tegument—this wintry dream,—
And soar on pinion far away
Beyond the solar ray !

1809.

THE MANIAC-MOTHER.

SHE sits within her maniac-cell,
Like statue in Egyptian tomb,
No impulse prompts, no passion's swell
Heaves in her breast, where all is gloom.

And yet that eye's bewilder'd sphere,
E'en tho' immovable it seem,
Looks in upon the soul, and there
Beholds its earliest childhood's dream.

And see that flush'd yet beauteous brow,
O'er which a gray lock—not of time—
Falls like a flake of Alpine snow
Upon some crevic'd eglantine.

Her world is all within ;—around
 She sees not—hears not—feels not aught ;
 The moving lip gives forth no sound,—
 She lives as tho' she liveth not.

The summer breeze, which wanton plays
 Amid her tresses, moves not her ;
 With hands enclasp'd she bides the gaze
 Of weeping friend and passenger.

But lo ! upon her heaving breast,
 With tendril-twine, her babe would seek .
 To clasp its fount of life, and rest
 E'en there its pouting lip and cheek.

See, see, she moves, benignant smiles,—
 Her eye unfix'd, bends down ; she views
 The cherub one's endearing wiles,—
 She weeps—she weeps ; the blesséd dews

Of sweet affection, like the drops
 Of heaven upon the sultry plain,
 Fall fast and thick,—and new-born hopes
 And past affections spring again.

The hands forego their marble hold,
 And mount convulsive from their rest ;
 The mother rapturous enfolds,
 And clasps her infant to her breast.

And now his cheek is press'd to hers,
 And consciousness, like morning light,
 Dawns on her soul—and passion stirs,
 And day once more succeeds to night.

Her lip drinks in his fragrant breath,
 She speaks—she names her infant one ;
 'Tis as a soul awoke from death,—
 As bursts thro' autumn's cloud the sun.

The sculptur'd form—so fable spoke—
Breath'd at the artist's earnest pray'r ;
Instinct with spirit, it awoke,
And love, and life, and thought were there.

But here, a mother's love alone
Doth reillumine the torch of mind,
Wake from its wintry sleep the soul,—
Like faith it loosens and can bind.

O Thou, who saidst that e'en when she—
A mother—should desert her own,
Thou art with him who flies to Thee,—
Thy love surpasseth hers alone.

EI TAP.

GIVE me the conflict, where all in all,
Is placed on the perilous cost ;
Where conquest shall give—or scath befall—
And battle won or lost.

But this probation of strife and woe,
Which manacles spirit and will,—
This rack of bigotry, blow by blow,
Doth crush the spirit—not kill.

These—these are the vultures of earth, which tear
The heart to its inmost core ;
O, the lightning's shaft were mercy here,
Which, blasting—blasts no more !

TO J. P. M.

THE gaudy mantle of pride and power,
Cinctur'd around, with flowery zone,
O, where is its clasp, at the sunset-hour,
When the spirit in solitude sits alone ?
When the feast is done, and life's pageant is o'er,
And the bridegroom death in his vestments come,—
When the bowl lies broken, the oil no more,
And the guests have departed one by one ?

And at that parting, O what are all
The glories of morn or twilight gray,

The grandeur of ocean, the tones which fall
On the chords of the heart in ecstasy ?
When the restless spirit which nestled here,
Is fleeing on pinion of light away,—
Escaping its mansion of sin and care,
To bask in the beam of eternal day !

Then, heaven in mercy hath hung the lyre
Of earthly bliss on the willows of woe,
That the exil'd here might still aspire
To a home, where music resumes its flow,—
Where the chorus of praise shall ever arise
From voices and harpings, never to cease—
And the light of a Saviour glad the eyes,
In a region, where all is joy and peace !

THE INNER-WORLD.

Look out upon the things of earth—
The beautiful, sublime, and fair ;
Gaze on until the sated sense,
Recoil at what is there ;
The landscape's ever-shifting form,
The cultur'd dale—cliff-pillar'd sky—
Torrent and lake—all that can charm
Or hold in thrall the eye.

Look on yon dome's majestic pile :
See, where its marble column throws

Its semblance on the sunlit-stream,
 Which near its terrace flows.
 Look out upon the ocean-wave,
 From the lone bark, or sea-girt steep,
 And note, upon its giant breast,
 The tall ship's cradle-sleep ;—
 Or see it in its waking wrath,
 Where, surging on the rock-crown'd height,
 It scorns all subject-fealty—
 Exulting in its might.

Or gaze on beauty's cheek—drink in
 Of siren-song, until its strain
 Deluge the heart with fierce delight,
 And joy itself be pain ;—
 And the full breast ; like his of yore—
 Check'd in his whirlwind-sweep of earth—
 Lament, that there are bounds which stay
 The bliss which here hath birth.

Yet 'midst all these, the drooping soul,
 With unplum'd wing and fallen crest,
 May sit within its inner court,
 Unvisited—unblest.

'Tis the bright sunshine from above,
 Whose effluence can alone illumine
 The things of earth, and give a joy
 Which lives beyond the tomb.

The spirit's rest is not of earth ;—
 Here, like a songster-bird, it sings
 From off its spray, and looks beyond
 Where light eternal springs !
 True,—to the past it turns its eye,
 As to a little firth, flown o'er,
 And sees an ocean, surging on
 Th' illimitable shore !

All, all without is aliment ;
 Nor can the outward sense inherit

Aught of those attributes divine,
Which belong unto the spirit ;
For eye and ear are ministers—
Purveyors of the soul within ;
And O, if darkness broodeth there—
It is the night of sin.

The mind illum'd—alike yon wave,
Where tower and rock reflected lie—
Gives back the heaven-enkindled ray—
Reflex of Deity !
The atheist-eye may roam at large
From Alpine height, o'er tower and fell ;
Drink in poetic ardor there,
And yet that heart be hell.

To him, the light which burns within,
Is darkness ; and the spirit strong
Cowers to earth—a quirister—
Yet darkling in its song.

It sees the orb of truth afar,
Shorn of its glorious beams, as th' eye
Of Arctic trav'ler sees the sun
Far in the distant sky.

And O, if wrapp'd within this web—
This chrysalis of earthly blight—
The soul drinks in from things without
Such draughts of keen delight,—
What bliss awaits the seraph—when
From this its coil of earth set free—
It bathes in light ineffable
Of God's Eternity.

THOUGHTS.

THE deepest, sharpest woes, which pierce
E'en to the soul, not always pain,—
The wound, at times, may bleed,—but, then,
'Twill bleed and cicatrize again.
So, too, the tear which kindly flows
For kindred grief, shall pass away,
As night-dew from the drooping rose,
Before the morning's early ray.
'Tis well 'tis thus ; for were the grief
Of myriads here, who writhe and moil,
Accumulative, as the leaf
Of autumn, on the trodden soil,—

A dun eclipse, a general blight,
Upon this little sphere would fall ;
Affliction's cloud blot out the light,
And cover as a funeral pall.

1806.

HEAVEN wills—and to its high behest
Sure we should bow—Heaven wills that here,
Virtue should ever be enchas'd
In the jet-ground of worldly care ;
And brightest gleams on darkest soil
The gem which holds inherent light,—
In the full blaze of day, no foil
Gives forth its beauty to the sight.

1806.

AND yet despite the frigid lore
Which cloister'd wisdom oft has dealt

To misery's moan,—
 Cull'd from the scholiast's crude store—
 Profuse of sentiment unfelt,
 For throes unknown :
 Still, like yon far view'd billow heaving,
 Tho' the rough blast hath left the sky,
 The conscious breast to memory cleaving,
 Gives to the past the tribute sigh.

1806.

I ASK not here, or wealth, or power ;—
 Grant to the great the golden hour ;—
 Be mine the might in powerful song,
 To reach, to bear the breast along.
 'Tis not the boon of life I crave,—
 For me no terrors hath the grave ;—
 But O, let not time's onward wave
 O'er my sod oblivious lave ;

But like the star, whose trembling light
 Shoots o'er the weltering wave of night—
 I would transmit one cheering ray,
 To greet life's pilgrim on his way.

1807.

I ASK not fame—it comes too late ;
 What is the laureate-wreath to him,
 Who long hath with an adverse fate
 Wrestled in agony of spirit ?—dim
 The pageantry of life. The appetite
 That crav'd the breath of man is sated.
 Creator ! may the blesséd light
 Of truth be mine ! The spirit mated
 To Thee, the source of truth, can ne'er
 Live on earth's aliment ; but high,
 Seek its original—and there,
 Merge all of being in eternity.

1849.

I SIT 'neath the trembling moonbeam,
And list to the light wind's play ;—
It comes from across the graves of those,
Who were of yesterday.

From the pine-clad hill, where they lie,
O, their voices seem to say—
The flute-like voices of those we lov'd,—
We were of yesterday.

And the dark forest yields its leaves
To the passing night-cloud's sway ;—
They strow the resting-place of those,
Who were of yesterday.

And, O, it were sweet here to rest
In peace,—'neath night's trembling ray,
And sleep the sleep of those, now blest,—
Who were of yesterday.

THE PEASANT-WIFE.

Joy to the peasant-wife,
Lovely and mild,
In the well-water'd valley,
A flower o' the wild ;
'Neath her thatchéd roof plying
Spindle and loom,
She prepares for him absent,
The comforts of home.
From the hill-top, her carols

Come back, like the greeting
 Of silver-voic'd cherubs,
 In symphony meeting.
 At dawn, with the woodlark
 Goes he fieldward, and late,
 With the woodlark, as duly
 Returns to his mate ;
 While around him, like vine-plants,
 The infant ones creep,
 And claim the knees' dalliance
 And lullaby-sleep.
 These—while the yule-fagot
 Gives forth its rich glow,
 Yield nights which the vot'ries
 Of fashion ne'er know.
 Thus in spring-tide and summer,
 In autumn and cold,
 Behold how they cluster
 Like lambs of one fold.
 Who watches their slumber,

Who wakes them to toil,
Fills their lap with the fruit
Of the rock-cinctur'd soil?
That Being who gives
To the raven its food,
And tempers the blast
To the dove's callow brood.
Look abroad on the mart
Of what worldlings call bliss,
And tell if thou seest there
Happ'ness like this.
'Tis contentment alone
Gives existence its zest;
His life is most fragrant,
Whose heart is at rest.
Then joy to the peasant-wife,
Lovely and mild,
In the sweet-water'd valley,
A flow'r o' the wild;

'Neath the thatched roof plying
Spindle and loom,
Who prepares for the absent
The comforts of home!

THE TABLET.

“Mount up with wings as eagles.”

LIKE this tablet, thy life's volume
Hath few records yet within,
Virgin-leaflets—unassoiled
By the Harpy-touch of sin.

May its yet unwritten pages—
Gay or sad—record no day,
Which may cloud thy future age's
Calm descending, evening ray.

Life will fleet—e'en now 'tis fleeting,
And our morrows, like yon sky—
Earth and Heaven dimly meeting
In the distance—come not nigh.

And the crimson honors beaming,
Tempting with their beauteous bow,
Fade with night, like fancy's seeming—
Lo, 'tis changing, fading now.

As St. Bernard's pilgrim, wending,
Where the tow'ring Alps arise,—
Over crag and cliff ascending,
Toils to near his native skies.

Peak o'er peak, aloft aspiring,
As in rivalry, he sees ;
Snow-clad vales beyond, retiring,
Lost amid their mountain seas.

These he tempts not—but reposes
 'Neath his homestead—while, abroad,
 All the wildering scene discloses
 Where, a pilgrim, late he trod.

Thus, O youth, tho' in the distance,
 Blissful visions now arise,
 May to thee, this earth's existence
 Ope a vista to the skies.

Lo, within the breast's dominion,
 Glory, vict'ry, empire lie ;
 While ambition's eagle pinion
 Tempts the glacier-cliff on high,

Where the ice-peak turret gleaming,
 Sun-illum'd, is bright but cold,—
 Like philosophy's vain dreaming,
 Like the bliss of mortal mould.

Sun-illum'd aloft it towers,
Yet beneath, dissolving slow,
Lo, an avalanche,—it lowers,
Whelming, crushing all below.

O, be then, Thou Rock of Ages!—
Thou alone, her bold emprise,—
That when below night's tempest rages,
Day-spring above may glad her eyes!

THE GLOBE-AMARANTH.

TO J. P. M.

“Since bright things fade, why not this?”

You ask me why this sunny gem,
Gather'd 'midst autumn's low'ring weather,
Tho' sever'd from its parent stem,
Should hold its form and bloom together.
'Midst winter's dark and driving clouds,
Unalter'd peers the self-same flower,
Nor dreads the gloomy north, which shrouds
All nature, with benumbing power.

Observe its leaves, like warrior's mail,

Obdurate, hard, repel the finger ;

No zephyr pauses, to inhale

The odors which around it linger.

Why should it fade ?—nought's there, which death

Could banquet on, and find a home ;—

It lives—lives on—while 'fore the breath

Of winter, leaf and flower have flown.

E'en with the breath of spring, some one

Begins to pale its virgin hue :

The daisy closes with the sun,

The primrose, ere it drinks the dew.

O, it is only hearts and flowers

Of tender form and lovely dye,

Which feel the chill on life that lowers,

And wither 'fore a wintry sky.

TO THE EVENING STAR.

STAR of eve, of silv'ry hue,
Who on my pillow beam'st,
'Midst yonder fields of deepest blue,
On pilgrimage thou seem'st.

Art thou, indeed, of earthly mould—
That gem'st the brow of night—
And with our sphere dost kindly hold
Sweet interchange of light ?

To-morrow's sun which lights us here,
 Shall give to thee our ray ;
We then shall be thy evening star,
 And thus thy beams repay.

Bless'd intercourse ! 'tis thus that souls,
 Illumin'd from above,
Give back that joy themselves receive,
 Communicant of love.

Be then our star, when dews of night
 This earth with tears have strown,
And we shall be to thee a star,
 To cheer thee in thy own.

MARY.

IF life were but a vision, bright yet fleet,
 Athwart whose wildering maze, in pleasing show,
Those phantom-joys disport, which mortals greet
 As aye substantial forms of bliss below—
Were he not then accurs'd who, with fell blow,
 Would seek these joyous visions to dispel,
Which of themselves, alas! too quickly go,—
 Evanishing ere seen—so frail the spell—
Like nightly fire of yore at sound of curfew-bell.

O Mary, still I see thee as thou wert,
 Flush'd with expectancy of coming years,—

That soul whence genius beam'd—that full-ton'd heart,
 Nor damp'd with sagging doubt, nor blench'd with fears,
 Nor weeting aught of future haps or cares,—

 Thee viewing thus, oft 'fore my sickening soul
 Memory, the record of the past hath held,
 When panting for the self-same glorious goal,
 I laugh'd to scorn the prudent lore of eld,
 That with monition kind, hath stern upheld
 The disappointment and the care which blight
 Ambition's fearful, cliff-aspiring flight.

Then bounding buoyant with the conscious spring
 Of raptur'd thought, the heaven-plum'd spirit soar'd,
 And on ambition's untir'd wing,

 All the enchanted worlds of sense explor'd
 Teeming with fantasies which know no name,
 With feeling,—felt,—but not to be portray'd,
 Fir'd with the God-enkindled thirst of fame,—
 I heeded not the voice that would have stay'd,
 With kind monition ; spurning all beneath—
 The pageantry of earth—for fame's undying wreath.

But ah! the vision fled—the spring-time bloom
 Of dreamy life was gone; full soon I wept
 O'er years irrevocably gone; around was gloom.
 That fame I curs'd, which like a mildew crept
 O'er feelings, which had else contented slept,
 Envyng the hind, who o'er the threshold stepp'd—
 What time, his daily task, and labor done,
 Slow speeding homeward at the setting sun,
 He finds a home, a fireside, and an eye,
 Dew'd with affection's heartfelt witchery.

Mary, thou soon from earth didst pass away,
 Ere thou hadst read this monitory rhyme,
 And now art, where one bright unclouded day
 For ever beams. I little deem'd that time,
 Who spares the scathéd oak,—with tyrant sway
 Would spoil that flower, fairer than that which bloom'd
 In Enna's vale, where Ceres' daughter roam'd.
 And here thou restest, maiden, all entomb'd;
 Yet O, not so; thou'st join'd that choir on high,

Where choral strains are ever heard. Thy dwelling
Is by the source of sacred minstrelsy.
'Tis there, thou drink'st inspiring draughts, excelling
All which from crystal streams of earth are welling,
Or Aganippe's fount, or Castaly.

1813.

“NACOOCHEE.”

THY vale, sweet Nacoochee,
Midst slumbers of night,
Comes over my vision
In garments of light ;
I see thee—still see thee—
A vestal all bright,
Array'd in thy vestments
For eve's coming rite.

While Yonah, uplifting
His forehead on high,

Like prophet preparing
For sacrifice nigh—
Thou, sweetest of virgins,
Meek bending below,
Like an angel of peace
Wreath'st with chaplet thy brow!

And see in the distance,
Still rises to view
The pure glowing heavens
Of dazzling hue.
And bright tissu'd crimson,—
And, towering on high,
Dark Yonah scowls darkly
Against the bright sky.

While over thy valley,
Nacoochee, there gleams
The moon's early crescent,
Or sun's latest beams;

O, it seems as if Heaven
 Affianced, would be
Still nearer—still dearer,
 Nacoochee, to thee!

THE ARTIST.



THE ARTIST.

INSCRIBED TO J. P. M.

I KNOW not, if the ethic sage,
Whom thoughts excursive oft engage ;
Whose speculative flights begin
E'en at the origin of sin,—
Hath ever, in discursive vein,
Dwelt on this truth—no cynic strain—
That man, however constituted,
Whether exalted or imbruted,

Hath centred in him a shrewd sense
Of beauty and of excellence.

In apposition, bard or brother
Project their shadows on each other ;
So, in the zone of night, one star
Shines brightly—where no others are,—
Of satellites or so—a few—
But galaxies of wits won't do.

In science, true, these things are various,
But when was genius e'er gregarious ?

Herein we see the reason why
That dusk-brown dame, Antiquity,
Gives to the hazy past assistance,
By throwing authors into distance ;—
It softens down and quite subdues
The coarser shades, unblending hues ;
So, the fly in amber finely shows,
Whose buzzing teased around one's nose.

The ideal in bust is truly hit,
By the blank eye ; for that's unlit ;

Wanting locality of sight—
It seems to tell the critic-wight,
That orbless eye sends forth its ken
“ To other times and other men.”

Nay, look not thus,—I meant not now
To discompose that halcyon brow,
Which, like the rainbow, shows the storm
Of envy’s scath at distance borne ;
While dove-ey’d peace and truth sincere,
Twin-born of Heaven, are nestled there !

And, that the poet may dispense
With his vain modicum of sense,
Most aphoristically wise,—
A tale of old shall best suffice.

A painter, who with magic art,
E’er through the eye could reach the heart,
Would fain—his locks now blench’d with age,
Imp’d by the bosom’s noblest rage—
Essay once more the canvas’ might ;
Thus setting, like the sun, in light.

The idea fir'd—again his soul
Rush'd forth to reach th' alluring goal ;
Again would win the living bay,—
Such, Fame, is thy all potent sway !
His strokes a wizard power inherit,
Each magic wave calls forth a spirit ;
And while successive charms appear,
His soul, effusive, revels there !

Thrice had the sun his coursers driven
Through the elliptic line of Heaven,
When, 'neath his proud exulting view,
The tablet spoke to nature true :
Forth to the eye, his pencil gave,
Just rising from the Tyrrhene wave,
The Cyprian Queen. You would have thought
A life was in the colors wrought ;
So fraught with every breathing charm,
The tell-tale cheek with love was warm ;
The lip, with laughing, pointing dip,
Would tempt an anchorite to sip.

The eye spoke worlds, the dimple coy
Bore heaven's impress, and told of joy ;
And O, what witching foil was there
Of ebon lock and forehead fair ;
What flexile grace, and breathing swell,—
Angels had gaz'd, and deem'd it well !

Lo, whilst the vet'ran-genius pores,
And soul-plum'd aspiration soars ;
While, with time-silver'd lock, he bends,
Which waving o'er the frame descends,—
It seem'd like Beauty's self sublime,
Beneath the gaze of halting Time.

Now 'neath the Academic dome,
Where connoisseur and artist come ;
Where daub and genius, cheek-by-jowl,
Alternate shock and raise the soul ;
Where Raphael's soul-subduing touch
Yields to the cognoscente's smutch,—
Behold the laurell'd sage appears,
Bow'd 'neath 'bash'd diffidence and years !

Yet might you see in that dark eye,
A conscious, proud nobility,
Which spoke a soul ne'er vilely bending,
Whose eagle ken aloft extending,
Holds converse with that source supreme,
Whence genius draws its vestal flame.

 In noble rivalry array'd,
Around the hall, the eye survey'd
The pencil's godlike strife,—for there
Shone forth each emulous compeer,
Marshall'd in the proud career ;
And each would win the laureate crown
Which makes the future all his own !

 See, where amidst the list is plac'd,
By frieze or 'broidery ungrac'd,
The glowing tablet,—and beside,
To tempt the power of critic-pride,
His brush and palet, arm'd with jet,
A gage for rivalry are set.
And as, when 'midst the stellar host,

The wilder'd sense in rapture lost,
 Unsated roves,—if th' eastern moon,
 Bulges full orb'd,—their radiance soon
 Fades on the view,—e'en so the gaze
 Turns to where powers sublimely blaze ;
 E'en so, afore the master-fire,
 The lesser glories, pale retire.

With rapture, ecstasy, delight,
 Each bosom owns the artist's might ;
 Each too, with knowing air and eye,
 Declares the thing a prodigy ;
 Gazing with satyr-eye and awe,
 As 'twere the goddess' self he saw ;
 When erst, from forth primeval night
 She gave her beauties to the light.

At first, in eulogy each ran :
 " Sure such were ne'er the work of man !
 So just the finish ! and the air
 So *unique*, the *ideal* so fair !
Congruity—proportion—true—

The *ensemble chaste*, and full of *goût* ;
Expression, grouping, keeping such,
 Nought was deficient—nought too much !”

“ And yet,—methinks,” a coxcomb cried,
 Fraught with a *petit-maitre’s* pride,
 And bowing with submission meek,—
 “ And ’tis with reverence I speak,—
 The lip is somewhat here too curv’d ;
 ’Tis here, the artist sure has swerv’d ;
 The amendment’s *facile*,—pity ’tis,
 A thing so perfect were amiss.”
 He said, and with the proffer’d jet,
 Noted the fault his eye had met.

A travell’d diletante—next,
 With brow in wrinkled thought perplex’d,
 Who all the Vatican and Louvre,
 Had curiously inspected over ;
 Each grace could tell, *chef d’œuvre*, blemish,
 Florentine, Lombard, Roman, Flemish :
 So great a connoisseur, the man

An *Angel* with a frown could *damn* !
Or with enraptur'd, heavenward eyes,
A *Devil* apotheosize !
With swinging gait he makes advance ;
Steps forward, back, and looks askance ;
Talks much of Poussin, Raffaëlo,
Tints grave, warm, neutral, cold, and mellow.
“Th’ *antique in keeping* ! drapery fine !
The style correct ! the tints divine !
In short ’twere faultless, did but here
More of amenity appear.”
He said, then seiz’d the stygian dye,
And gave a spot to either eye !

And as when hostile chiefs prepare
To close in strife, at first in air
Few missiles sent, incite to rage,
Till close confronting, all engage ;
Even thus, prelude, critic ire
Provokes the war, and all aspire,
Grasping the brush in breathless haste,

To prove his judgment and his taste.
E'en thus, for so the Chian bard
Hath sung,—Æolia's chieftain* warr'd
With Beauty's Queen, and ichor ran
From wounds celestial—shed by man.
Thus, round the tablet, each would dare
A goddess—and assault the fair ;
Till lo ! before the invasive crew,
The picture vanish'd from the view !—

There is an alchemy divine
Whose treasure mocks Potosi's mine,
And shames the gorgeous eastern gem,
Cresting the Moslem diadem !
It grows not pale o'er tomes of eld,
'Tis not by midnight vigil spell'd,
It seeks not charms, nor filters rare,
Nor delves the earth, nor thrids the air,
Nor orgies holds with elfin crew,
Who lure to harm, by deeds untrue !

* Diomedes.

O no,—it blesses and is bless'd,—
Its crucible, the human breast ;—
'Tis this, sustains this ball of earth ;
'Twas present at existence' birth ;
The fiat which said, " Let there be light,"
Consign'd to earth the guardian sprite ;—
And when yon skyward vaulting sun,
Thro' heaven's blue arch hath ceas'd to run ;
And—snapp'd the golden cord, whose force
Retains the planets in their course—
When systems have in ruin rush'd,
In one primeval chaos crush'd,—
Thou, CHARITY, with outstretch'd plume
Uprising, shalt thy seat resume,
And 'midst the empyréan high,
Shall dwell for aye with Deity !

LA FAYETTE.

'TWAS Alleghan that first beheld thee,
Panoplied 'gainst freedom's foes,
When ascendant fame impell'd thee
To the clime, where erst she rose!
Where her birth-star proudly gleaming,
Hover'd o'er th' impurpled west—
There wert thou ; whilst honor beaming,
Lighted on thy gallant crest !
There, 'twill be told in future story,

Thou midst heroes led the van,—
Herald of Columbia's glory—
Envoy of the rights of man.
E'en despots, at thy voice appealing,
From prescriptive folly broke ;
And in thee, with kindred feeling,
Europe's chivalry awoke !
'Twas then, her noble spirit soaring,
Shook off the feudal dust of years,
And o'er the wave with banner tow'ring,
Came warrior-chiefs and chevaliers.
Ages of glory, stars of heaven,
Kingdoms and kings shall rise and set,
But this, thy gage, for freedom given,
No, never shall our sons forget.
Deeds like these, dear to our sires,
Shall live and deck the lofty rhyme,
Deeds like these, like signal fires,
Blazing through the lapse of time,—

Shall, midst thralldom's darkest night,
Be as a watchtower to the free,
And, blazing on the freeman's sight,
Bid him strike home for liberty !

T H E E N D .















D^o

American

4

30

L90-

YC161572

