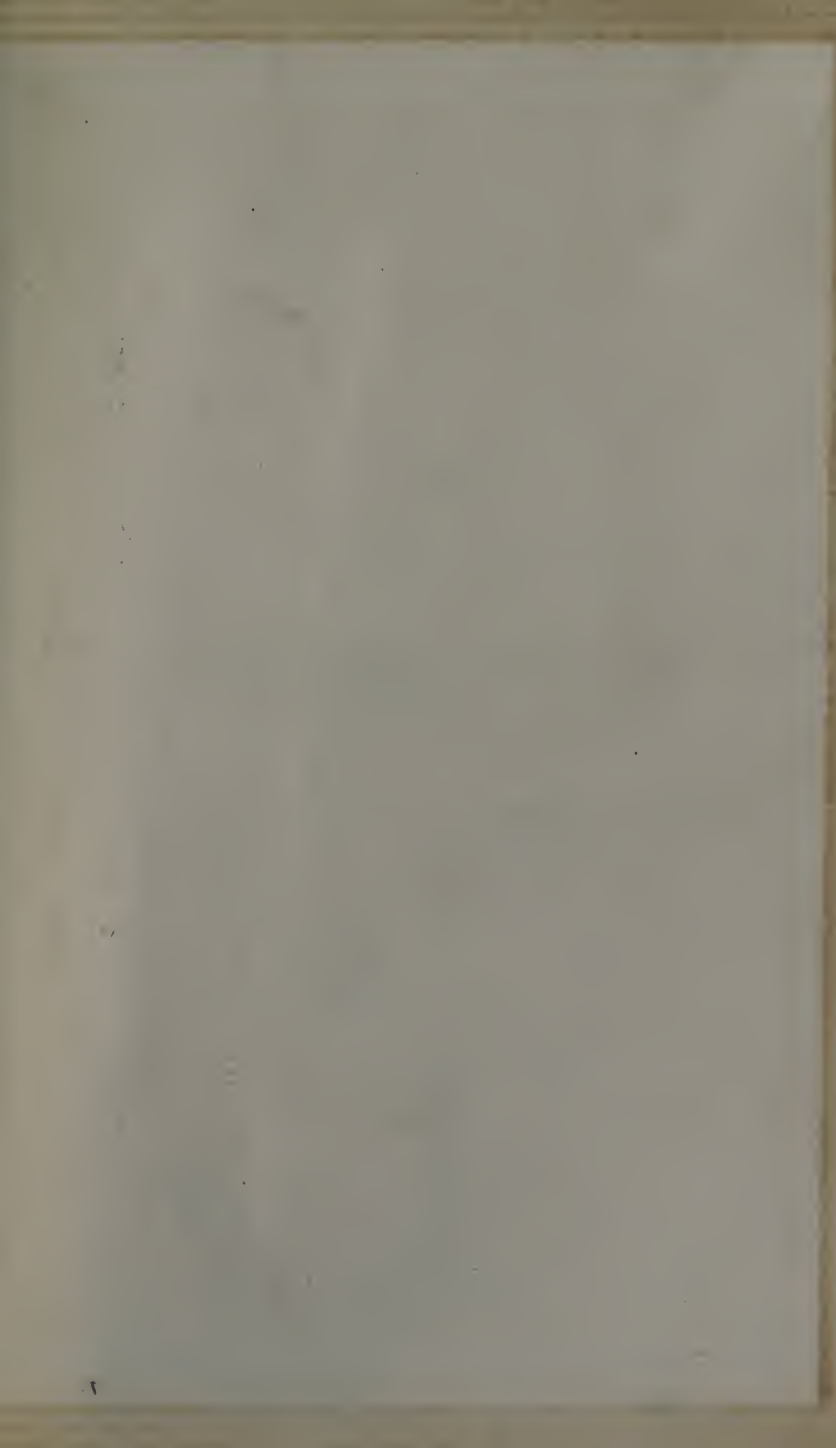


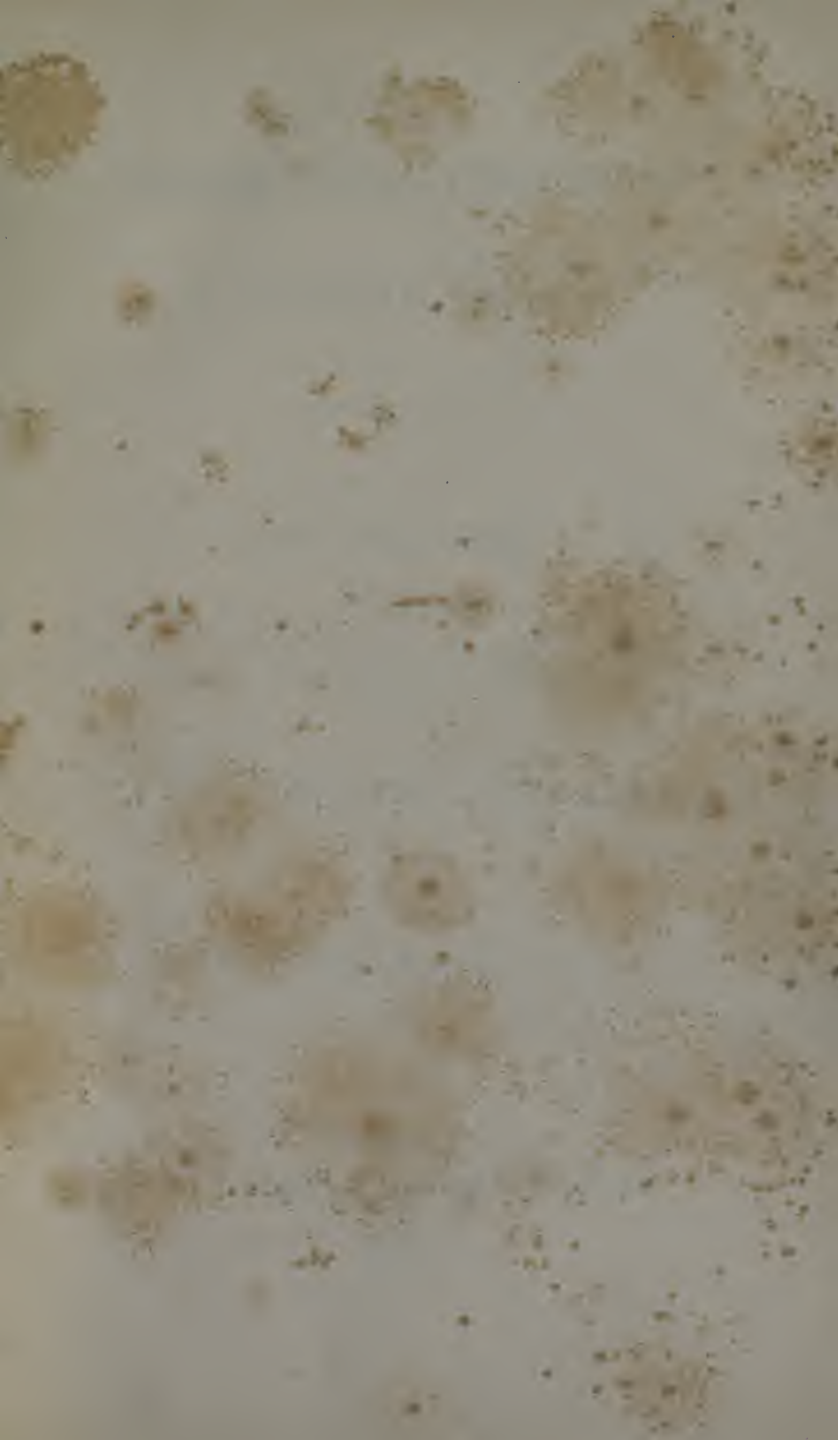


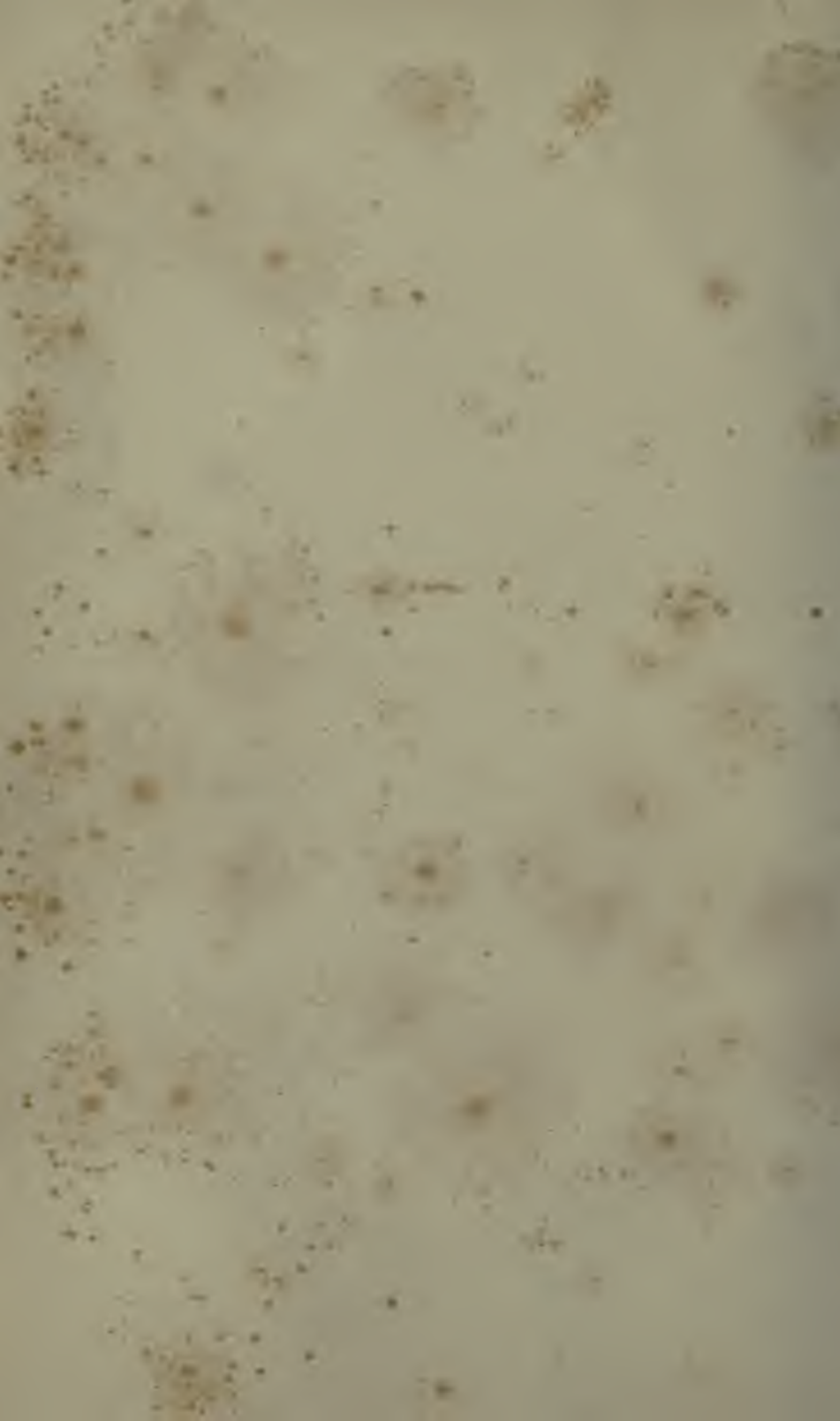
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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

AUDISNE HÆC, AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

LONDON

C AND J OLLIER VERE STREET BOND STREET

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CONTENTS.

	Page
Preface	vii
PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.....	1

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

The Sensitive Plant	157
A Vision of the Sea.....	174
Ode to Heaven	182
An Exhortation	186
Ode to the West Wind	188
An Ode, written October, 1819, before the Spaniards had recovered their Liberty	193
The Cloud.....	196
To a Skylark	201
Ode to Liberty	207

P R E F A C E.

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The "Prometheus Unbound" of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of

the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus; and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus; an ambition, which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as

exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the opera-

tions of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakspeare are full of instances of the same kind: Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power; and it is the study of their works, (since a higher merit would probably be denied me,) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of

the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakspeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and developement of the

same spirit : the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them : one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The

pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakspeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknow-

ledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, "a passion for reforming the world:" what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of

injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take *Æschylus* rather than *Plato* as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

The first part of the document is a letter from the Secretary of the
Board of Directors to the Shareholders. It contains a report on the
business of the company for the year ending 31st December 1900.
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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS.

DEMOGORGON.,

JUPITER.

THE EARTH.

OCEAN.

APOLLO.

MERCURY.

HERCULES.

ASIA

PANTHEA } Oceanides.

IONE

THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.

SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAWNS.

FURIES.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

ACT I.

SCENE, A RAVINE OF ICY ROCKS IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS.

PROMETHEUS IS DISCOVERED BOUND TO THE PRECIPICE.

PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SEATED AT HIS FEET. TIME,

NIGHT. DURING THE SCENE, MORNING SLOWLY BREAKS.

PRO. **MONARCH** of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who thron'g those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou
Requitest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn,

O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
And moments aye divided by keen pangs
Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire.
More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
From thine unenvied throne, O, Mighty God!
Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain,
Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt?
I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
Of their moon-freezing chrystals, the bright chains

Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips
His beak in poison not his own, tears up
My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
Mocking me : and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
When the rocks split and close again behind :
While from their loud abysses howling throng
The genii of the storm, urging the rage
Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
And yet to me welcome is day and night,
Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs
The leaden-coloured east ; for then they lead
The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
—As some dark Priest hales the reluctant victim—
Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood
From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
Disdain ! Ah no ! I pity thee. What ruin
Will hunt thee undefended thro' the wide Heaven !
How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
Gape like a hell within ! I speak in grief,

Not exultation, for I hate no more,
As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
Whose many-voiced Echoes, through the mist,
Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell !
Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
Shuddering thro' India ! Thou serenest Air,
Thro' which the Sun walks burning without beams !
And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poised wings
Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
The orb'd world ! If then my words had power,
Though I am changed so that aught evil wish
Is dead within ; although no memory be
Of what is hate, let them not lose it now !
What was that curse ? for ye all heard me speak.

FIRST VOICE : FROM THE MOUNTAINS.

Thrice three hundred thousand years
O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood :
Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
We trembled in our multitude.

SECOND VOICE: FROM THE SPRINGS.

Thunder-bolts had parched our water,
We had been stained with bitter blood,
And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter,
Thro' a city and a solitude.

THIRD VOICE: FROM THE AIR.

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
Its wastes in colours not their own,
And oft had my serene repose
Been cloven by many a rending groan.

FOURTH VOICE: FROM THE WHIRLWINDS.

We had soared beneath these mountains
Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
Nor any power above or under
Ever made us mute with wonder.

FIRST VOICE.

But never bowed our snowy crest
As at the voice of thine unrest.

SECOND VOICE.

Never such a sound before
To the Indian waves we bore.
A pilot asleep on the howling sea
Leaped up from the deck in agony,
And heard, and cried, " Ah, woe is me!"
And died as mad as the wild waves be.

THIRD VOICE.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
My still realm was never riven :
When its wound was closed, there stood
Darkness o'er the day like blood.

FOURTH VOICE.

And we shrank back : for dreams of ruin
To frozen caves our flight pursuing
Made us keep silence—thus—and thus—
Though silence is a hell to us.

THE EARTH. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy
hills
Cried, ' Misery!' then ; the hollow Heaven replied,

‘ Misery !’ And the Ocean’s purple waves,
Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds,
And the pale nations heard it, ‘ Misery !’

PRO. I hear a sound of voices : not the voice
Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove,
Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
The Titan ? He who made his agony
The barrier to your else all-conquering foe ?

Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams,
Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
Thro’ whose o’ershadowing woods I wandered once
With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes ;
Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
To commune with me ? me alone, who check’d,
As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses :
Why answer ye not, still ? Brethren !

THE EARTH. Theydare not.

PRO. Who dares ? for I would hear that curse again.
Ha, what an awful whisper rises up !

'Tis scarce like sound : it tingles thro' the frame
As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.

Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice

I only know that thou art moving near

And love. How cursed I him?

THE EARTH. How canst thou hear
Who knowest not the language of the dead?

PRO. Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

THE EARTH. I dare not speak like life, lest Hea-
ven's fell King

Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain

More torturing than the one whereon I roll.

Subtle thou art and good, and tho' the Gods

Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God

Being wise and kind : earnestly hearken now.

PRO. Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,

Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel

Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;

Yet 'tis not pleasure.

THE EARTH. No, thou canst not hear :
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
Only to those who die.

PRO. And what art thou,

O, melancholy Voice?

THE EARTH. I am the Earth,

Thy mother ; she within whose stony veins,
To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air,
Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy !
And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust,
And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
Grew pale until his thunder chained thee here.
Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
Around us : their inhabitants beheld
My sphered light wane in wide Heaven ; the sea
Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown ;
Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains ;
Blue thistles bloomed in cities ; foodless toads
Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled :
When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
And Famine : and black blight on herb and tree ;
And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds
Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry

With grief; and the thin air, my breath, was stained
With the contagion of a mother's hate
Breathed on her child's destroyer; aye, I heard
Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not,
Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
And the inarticulate people of the dead,
Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
In secret joy and hope those dreadful words
But dare not speak them.

PRO. Venerable mother!

All else who live and suffer take from thee
Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
But mine own words, I pray, deny me not.

THE EARTH. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was
dust,
The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
Met his own image walking in the garden.
That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
For know there are two worlds of life and death:
One that which thou beholdest; but the other
Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
The shadows of all forms that think and live.

Till death unite them and they part no more ;
Dreams and the light imaginings of men,
And all that faith creates or love desires,
Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains ; all the gods
Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds,
Vast, sceptred phantoms ; heroes, men, and beasts ;
And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom ;
And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
The curse which all remember. Call at will
Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
Ask, and they must reply : so the revenge
Of the Supreme may sweep thro' vacant shades,
As rainy wind thro' the abandoned gate
Of a fallen palace.

PRO. Mother, let not aught
Of that which may be evil, pass again
My lips, or those of aught resembling me.
Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear !

IONE.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears :
My wings are crossed o'er mine eyes :
Yet thro' their silver shade appears,
And thro' their lulling plumes arise,
A Shape, a throng of sounds ;
May it be no ill to thee
O thou of many wounds !
Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
Ever thus we watch and wake.

PANTHEA.

The sound is of whirwind underground,
Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven ;
The shape is awful like the sound,
Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
A sceptre of pale gold
To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
His veined hand doth hold.
Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

PHANTASM OF JUPITER. Why have the secret
powers of this strange world

Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

PRO. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

THE EARTH. Listen! And tho' your echoes must
be mute,
Grey mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

PHAN..A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

PAN. See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the
Heaven
Darkens above.

IONE. He speaks! O shelter me!

PRO. I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

PHANTASM.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
 All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do ;
 Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
 One only being shalt thou not subdue.
 Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
 Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear ;
 And let alternate frost and fire
 Eat into me, and be thine ire
 Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
 Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

Aye, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.
 O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
 And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
 To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.
 Let thy malignant spirit move
 In darkness over those I love :
 On me and mine I imprecate
 The utmost torture of thy hate ;
 And thus devote to sleepless agony,
 This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord : O, thou,
Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,
To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow
In fear and worship : all-prevailing foe !
I curse thee ! let a sufferer's curse
Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse ;
'Till thine Infinity shall be
A robe of envenomed agony ;
And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,
To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,
Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good ;
Both infinite as is the universe,
And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.
An awful image of calm power
Though now thou sittest, let the hour
Come, when thou must appear to be
That which thou art internally.
And after many a false and fruitless crime
Scorn track thy lagging fall thro' boundless space and
time.

PRO. Were these my words, O, Parent ?

Trampling the slant winds on high
With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
Under plumes of purple dye,
Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
A Shape comes now,
Stretching on high from his right hand
A serpent-cinctured wand.

PAN. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury.

IONE.

And who are those with hydra tresses
And iron wings that climb the wind,
Whom the frowning God represses
Like vapours steaming up behind,
Clanging loud, an endless crowd—

PANTHEA.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
When charioted on sulphurous cloud
He bursts Heaven's bounds.

IONE.

Are they now led, from the thin dead
On new pangs to be fed?

PAN. The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

FIRST FURY. Ha! I scent life!

SECOND FURY. Let me but look into his eyes!

THIRD FURY. The hope of torturing him smells like
a heap

Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle.

FIRST FURY. Darest thou delay, O Herald! take
cheer, Hounds

Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon

Should make us food and sport—who can please long
The Omnipotent?

MER. Back to your towers of iron,
And gnash beside the streams of fire and wail
Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
These shall perform your task.

FIRST FURY. Oh, mercy! mercy!
We die with our desire: drive us not back!

MER. Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
To execute a doom of new revenge.
Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
Returning, for a season, heaven seems hell,
So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good,
But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
That measure and divide the weary years
From which there is no refuge, long have taught
And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms
With the strange might of unimagined pains
The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
And my commission is to lead them here,
Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
People the abyss, and leave them to their task.
Be it not so! there is a secret known
To thee, and to none else of living things,

Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
The fear of which perplexes the Supreme :
Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne
In intercession ; bend thy soul in prayer,
And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart :
For benefits and meek submission tame
The fiercest and the mightiest.

PRO.

Evil minds

Change good to their own nature. I gave all
He has ; and in return he chains me here
Years, ages, night and day : whether the Sun
Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
The chrystal-winged snow cling round my hair :
Whilst my beloved race is trampled down
By his thought-executing ministers.
Such is the tyrants' recompense : 'tis just :
He who is evil can receive no good ;
And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost,
He can feel hate, fear, shame ; not gratitude :
He but requites me for his own misdeed.
Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
Submission, thou dost know I cannot try :

For what submission but that fatal word,
The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,
Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:
For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
Enduring thus, the retributive hour
Which since we spake is even nearer now.
But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

MER. Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:
Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

PRO. I know but this, that it must come.

MER. Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

PRO. They last while Jove must reign: nor more,
nor less

Do I desire or fear.

MER. Yet pause, and plunge

Into Eternity, where recorded time,
Even all that we imagine, age on age,
Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
Flags wearily in its unending flight,
Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless ;
Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved !

PRO. Perchance no thought can count them, yet
they pass.

MER. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the
while
Lapped in voluptuous joy ?

PRO. I would not quit
This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

MER. Alas ! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

PRO. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
As light in the sun, throned : how vain is talk !
Call up the fiends.

IONE. O, sister, look ! White fire
Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar ;
How fearfully God's thunder howls behind !

MER. I must obey his words and thine : alas !
Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart !

PAN. See where the child of Heaven, with winged feet,
Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

IONE. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
Lest thou behold and die : they come : they come
Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
And hollow underneath, like death.

FIRST FURY. Prometheus !

SECOND FURY. Immortal Titan !

THIRD FURY. Champion of Heaven's slaves !

PRO. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms,
What and who are ye ? Never yet there came
Phantasms so foul thro' monster-teeming Hell
From the all-miscreative brain of Jove ;
Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
Methinks I grow like what I contemplate,
And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

FIRST FURY. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
And clinging crime ; and as lean dogs pursue
Thro' wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn,
We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
When the great King betrays them to our will.

PRO. Oh ! many fearful natures in one name,
I know ye ; and these lakes and echoes know
The darkness and the clangour of your wings.
But why more hideous than your loathed selves
Gather ye up in legions from the deep ?

SECOND FURY. We knew not that : Sisters, rejoice,
rejoice !

PRO. Can aught exult in its deformity ?

SECOND FURY. The beauty of delight makes lovers
glad,

Gazing on one another : so are we.

As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
To gather for her festal crown of flowers
The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
So from our victim's destined agony
The shade which is our form invests us round,
Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

PRO. I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

FIRST FURY. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone
from bone,

And nerve from nerve, working like fire within ?

PRO. Pain is my element, as hate is thine ;
Ye rend me now : I care not.

SECOND FURY. Dost imagine

We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes ?

PRO. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer,
Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

THIRD FURY. Thou think'st we will live thro' thee,
one by one,

Like animal life, and tho' we can obscure not
The soul which burns within, that we will dwell
Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
Vexing the self-content of wisest men :
That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
And blood within thy labyrinthine veins
Crawling like agony.

PRO. Why, ye are thus now ;
Yet am I king over myself, and rule
The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

CHORUS OF FURIES.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth,
Come, come, come !

Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
When cities sink howling in ruin ; and ye
Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track,
Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck ;

 Come, come, come !

 Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
 Strewed beneath a nation dead ;
 Leave the hatred, as in ashes

 Fire is left for future burning :

 It will burst in bloodier flashes

 When ye stir it, soon returning :

 Leave the self-contempt implanted
 In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

 Misery's yet unkindled fuel :

 Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted

 To the maniac dreamer ; cruel

 More than ye can be with hate

 Is he with fear.

 Come, come, come !

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
And we burthen the blasts of the atmosphere,
But vainly we toil till ye come here.

IONE. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

PAN. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
Even as the tremulous air : their shadows make
The space within my plumes more black than night.

FIRST FURY.

Your call was as a winged car
Driven on whirlwinds fast and far ;
It rapt us from red gulphs of war.

SECOND FURY.

From wide cities, famine-wasted ;

THIRD FURY.

Groans half heard, and blood untasted ;

FOURTH FURY.

Kingly conclaves stern and cold,
Where blood with gold is bought and sold ;

FIFTH FURY.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A FURY.

Speak not : whisper not :

I know all that ye would tell,

But to speak might break the spell

Which must bend the Invincible,

The stern of thought ;

He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

FURY.

Tear the veil !

ANOTHER FURY.

It is torn.

CHORUS.

The pale stars of the morn

Shine on a misery, dire to be borne.

Dost thou faint, mighty Titan ? We laugh thee to
scorn.

Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for
man ?

Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran

Those perishing waters ; a thirst of fierce fever,

Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for
ever.

One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth ;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
 Withering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look ! where round the wide horizon
 Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Mark that outcry of despair !
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
 Wailing for the faith he kindled :
Look again, the flames almost
 To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled :
The survivors round the embers
 Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy !

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

SEMICHORUS I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow.

Grant a little respite now :
 See a disenchantèd nation
 Springs like day from desolation ;
 To truth its state is dedicate,
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate ;
 A legionèd band of linked brothers
 Whom Love calls children—

SEMICHORUS II.

'Tis another's :
 See how kindred murder kin :
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin :
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within :
 'Till Despair smothers
 The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.
 [*All the FURIES vanish, except one.*]

IONE. Hark, sister ! what a low yet dreadful groan
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him ?

PAN. Alas ! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

IONE. What didst thou see ?

PAN. A woful sight : a youth
With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

IONE. What next ?

PAN. The heaven around, the earth below
Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
And some appeared the work of human hearts,
For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles :
And other sights too foul to speak and live
Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
By looking forth : those groans are grief enough.

FURY. Behold an emblem : those who do endure
Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

PRO. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare ;
Close those wan lips ; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood ; it mingles with thy tears !
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
O, horrible ! Thy name I will not speak,
It hath become a curse. I see, I see
The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,

Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
 An early-chosen, late-lamented home ;
 As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind ;
 Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells :
 Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud ?—
 Impaled in lingering fire : and mighty realms
 Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
 Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
 By the red light of their own burning homes.

FURY. Blood thou canst see, and fire ; and canst
 hear groans ;

Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

PRO. Worse ?

FURY. In each human heart terror survives
 The ruin it has gorged : the loftiest fear
 All that they would disdain to think were true :
 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
 The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
 They dare not devise good for man's estate,
 And yet they know not that they do not dare.
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want : worse need for them.
 The wise want love ; and those who love want wisdom ;
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.

Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
But live among their suffering fellow-men
As if none felt: they know not what they do.

PRO. Thy words are like a cloud of winged snakes;
And yet I pity those they torture not.

FURY. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!

[*Vanishes.*]

PRO. Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
Thy works within my woe-illumed mind,
Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
I am a God and cannot find it there,
Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
With new endurance, till the hour arrives
When they shall be no types of things which are.

PAN. Alas! what sawest thou?

PRO. There are two woes;
To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
Names are there, Nature's sacred watch-words, they
Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;

The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

THE EARTH. I felt thy torture, son, with such
mixed joy
As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state
I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind,
Its world-surrounding ether: they behold
Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

PAN. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather,
Thronging in the blue air!

IONE. And see! more come,
Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
And, hark? is it the music of the pines?
Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall?

PAN. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

From unremembered ages we
Gentle guides and guardians be
Of heaven-oppressed mortality ;
And we breathe, and sicken not,
The atmosphere of human thought :
Be it dim, and dank, and grey,
Like a storm-extinguished day,
Travelled o'er by dying gleams ;
 Be it bright as all between
Cloudless skies and windless streams,
 Silent, liquid, and serene ;
As the birds within the wind,
 As the fish within the wave,
As the thoughts of man's own mind
 Float thro' all above the grave ;
We make these our liquid lair,
Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
Thro' the boundless element :
Thence we bear the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee !

IONE. More yet come, one by one : the air around
 them

Looks radiant as the air around a star.

FIRST SPIRIT.

On a battle-trumpet's blast
I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
'Mid the darkness upward cast.
From the dust of creeds outworn,
From the tyrant's banner torn,
Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
There was mingled many a cry—
Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
Till they faded thro' the sky;
And one sound, above, around,
One sound beneath, around, above,
Was moving; 'twas the soul of love;
'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
Which begins and ends in thee.

SECOND SPIRIT.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
Which rocked beneath, immoveably;
And the triumphant storm did flee,
Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
Between with many a captive cloud
A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
Each by lightning riven in half:
I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:

Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
And spread beneath a hell of death
O'er the white waters. I alit
On a great ship lightning-split,
And speeded hither on the sigh
Of one who gave an enemy
His plank, then plunged aside to die.

THIRD SPIRIT.

I sate beside a sage's bed,
And the lamp was burning red
Near the book where he had fed,
When a Dream with plumes of flame,
To his pillow hovering came,
And I knew it was the same
Which had kindled long ago
Pity, eloquence, and woe ;
And the world awhile below
Wore the shade, its lustre made.
It has born me here as fleet
As Desire's lightning feet :
I must ride it back ere morrow,
Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

FOURTH SPIRIT.

On a poet's lips I slept
Dreaming like a love-adept
In the sound his breathing kept ;
Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
But feeds on the aerial kisses
Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
He will watch from dawn to gloom
The lake-reflected sun illum
The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be ;
But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality !
One of these awakened me,
And I sped to succour thee.

IONE.

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
Come, as two doves to one beloved nest,
Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere ?
And, hark ! their sweet, sad voices ! 'tis despair
Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

PANTHEA.

Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

IONE. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they
float

On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
Orange and azure deepening into gold :
Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

FIFTH SPIRIT.

As over wide dominions
I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's
wildernesses,
That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided
pinions,
Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses :
His footsteps paved the world with light ; but as I past
'twas fading,
And hollow Ruin yawned behind : great sages bound
in madness,
And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished,
unupbraiding,

Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O
King of sadness,
Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected
gladness.

SIXTH SPIRIT.

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
But treads with silent footstep, and fans with silent
wing
The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and
gentlest bear;
Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
Dream visions of ærial joy, and call the monster, Love,
And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now
we greet.

CHORUS.

Tho' Ruin now Love's shadow be,
Following him, destroyingly,
On Death's white and winged steed,
Which the fleetest cannot flee,
Trampling down both flower and weed,

Man and beast, and fowl and fair,
Like a tempest thro' the air ;
Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
Woundless though in heart or limb.

PRO. Spirits ! how know ye this shall be ?

CHORUS.

In the atmosphere we breathe,
As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
From spring gathering up beneath,
Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
And the wandering herdsmen know
That the white-thorn soon will blow :
Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
When they struggle to increase,
Are to us as soft winds be
To shepherd boys, the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee.

IONE. Where are the Spirits fled ?

PANTHEA.

Only a sense
Remains of them, like the omnipotence

Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
Which thro' the deep and labyrinthine soul,
Like echoes thro' long caverns, wind and roll.

PRO. How fair these air-born shapes ! and yet I feel
Most vain all hope but love ; and thou art far,
Asia ! who, when my being overflowed,
Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
All things are still : alas ! how heavily
This quiet morning weighs upon my heart ;
Tho' I should dream I could even sleep with grief
If slumber were denied not. I would fain
Be what it is my destiny to be,
The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
Or sink into the original gulph of things :
There is no agony, and no solace left ;
Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

PAN. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
The shadow of thy spirit falls on her ?

PRO. I said all hope was vain but love : thou lovest.

PAN. Deeply in truth ; but the eastern star looks
white,

And Asia waits in that far Indian vale
The scene of her sad exile ; rugged once
And desolate and frozen, like this ravine ;
But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,
And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
Among the woods and waters, from the ether
Of her transforming presence, which would fade
If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell !

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

MORNING. A LOVELY VALE IN THE INDIAN CAUCASUS. ASIA
ALONE.

ASIA. From all the blasts of heaven thou hast
descended :

Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes
Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,
And beatings haunt the desolated heart,
Which should have learnt repose : thou hast descended
Cradled in tempests ; thou dost wake, O Spring !
O child of many winds ! As suddenly
Thou comest as the memory of a dream,
Which now is sad because it hath been sweet ;
Like genius, or like joy which riseth up
As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds
The desert of our life.

This is the season, this the day, the hour ;
At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,
Too long desired, too long delaying, come !
How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl !
The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains : thro' a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it : now it wanes : it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air :
'Tis lost ! and thro' yon peaks of cloudlike snow
The roseate sun-light quivers : hear I not
The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn ?

PANTHEA ENTERS.

I feel, I see
Those eyes which burn thro' smiles that fade in tears,
Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.
Beloved and most beautiful, who wearest
The shadow of that soul by which I live,
How late thou art ! the sphered sun had climbed
The sea ; my heart was sick with hope, before
The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

PAN. Pardon, great Sister ! but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds
Satiated with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep
Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm
Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy
Unhappy love, had made, thro' use and pity,
Both love and woe familiar to my heart
As they had grown to thine : erewhile I slept
Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
Within dim bowers of green and purple moss,
Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom :
But not as now, since I am made the wind
Which fails beneath the music that I bear
Of thy most wordless converse ; since dissolved
Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
Was troubled and yet sweet ; my waking hours
Too full of care and pain.

ASIA. Lift up thine eyes,
And let me read thy dream.

PAN. As I have said
With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.

The mountain mists, condensing^o at our voice
Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep.
Then two dreams came. One, I remember not,
But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
Grew radiant with the glory of that form
Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell
Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
Faint with intoxication of keen joy ;
“ Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
“ With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
“ Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.”
I lifted them : the overpowering light
Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
By love ; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
Steamed forth like vaporous fire ; an atmosphere
Which wrapt me in its all-dissolving power,
As the warm ether of the morning sun
Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew,
I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
His presence flow and mingle thro' my blood
Till it became his life, and his grew mine,

And I was thus absorb'd, until it past,
And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
And tremulous as they, in the deep night
My being was condensed ; and as the rays
Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died
Like footsteps of weak melody : thy name
Among the many sounds alone I heard
Of what might be articulate ; tho' still
I listened through the night when sound was none.
Ione wakened then, and said to me :

“ Canst thou divine what troubles me to night ?

“ I always knew what I desired before,

“ Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.

“ But now I cannot tell thee what I seek ;

“ I know not ; something sweet, since it is sweet

“ Even to desire ; it is thy sport, false sister ;

“ Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,

“ Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept

“ And mingled it with thine : for when just now

“ We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips

“ The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth

“ Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,

“ Quivered between our intertwining arms.”

I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
But fled to thee.

ASIA. Thou speakest, but thy words
Are as the air : I feel them not : Oh, lift
Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul !

PAN. I lift them tho' they droop beneath the load
Of that they would express : what canst thou see
But thine own fairest shadow imaged there ?

ASIA. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless
heaven

Contracted to two circles underneath
Their long, fine lashes ; dark, far, measureless,
Orb within orb, and line thro' line inwoven.

PAN. Why lookest thou as if a spirit past ?

ASIA. There is a change : beyond their inmost depth
I see a shade, a shape : 'tis He, arrayed
In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded morn.
Prometheus, it is thine ! depart not yet !
Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
Within that bright pavilion which their beams
Shall build on the waste world ? The dream is told.
What shape is that between us ? Its rude hair
Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard

Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air
For thro' its grey robe gleams the golden dew
Whose stars the noon has quench'd not.

DREAM.

Follow ! Follow !

PAN. It is mine other dream.

ASIA. It disappears.

PAN. It passes now into my mind. Methought
As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost :
I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down ;
But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ASIA. As you speak, your words
Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
With shapes. Methought among the lawns together
We wandered, underneath the young grey dawn,
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains

Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind ;
And the white dew on the new bladed grass,
Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently ;
And there was more which I remember not :
But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW ! As they vanished by,
And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
The like was stamped, as with a withering fire,
A wind arose among the pines ; it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
Were heard : OH, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME !
And then I said : “ Panthea, look on me.”
But in the depth of those beloved eyes
Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW !

ECHO.

Follow, follow !

PAN. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock
our voices
As they were spirit-tongued.

ASIA. It is some being
Around the crags. What fine clear sounds ! O, list !

ECHOES, UNSEEN.

Echoes we: listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean!

ASIA. Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
Of their aerial tongues yet sound.

PAN. I hear.

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow,

As our voice recedeth

Thro' the caverns hollow,

Where the forest spreadeth;

(MORE DISTANT)

O, follow, follow!

Thro' the caverns hollow,

As the song floats thou pursue,

Where the wild bee never flew,

Thro' the noon-tide darkness deep,

By the odour-breathing sleep

Of faint night flowers, and the waves

At the fountain-lighted caves,

While our music, wild and sweet,
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

ASIA. Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more
faint

And distant.

PAN. List! the strain floats nearer now.

ECHOES.

In the world unknown
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean!

ASIA. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind!

ECHOES.

O, follow, follow!
Thro' the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noon-tide dew;
By the forests, lakes, and fountains
Thro' the many-folded mountains;

To the rents, and gulphs, and chasms,
 Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
 On the day when He and thou
 Parted, to commingle now;
 Child of Ocean!

ASIA. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
 And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II.

A FOREST, INTERMINGLED WITH ROCKS AND CAVERNS. ASIA AND
 PANTHEA PASS INTO IT. TWO YOUNG FAUNS ARE SITTING
 ON A ROCK, LISTENING.

SEMICHORUS I. OF SPIRITS.

The path thro' which that lovely twain
 Have past, by cedar, pine, and yew,
 And each dark tree that ever grew,
 Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue ;
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
 Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
 Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,

Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers
Of the green laurel, blown anew ;
And bends, and then fades silently,
One frail and fair anemone :
Or when some star of many a one
That climbs and wanders thro' steep night,
Has found the cleft thro' which alone
Beams fall from high those depths upon
Ere it is borne away, away,
By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
It scatters drops of golden light,
Like lines of rain that ne'er unite :
And the gloom divine is all around ;
And underneath is the mossy ground.

SEMICHORUS II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,
Are awake thro' all the broad noon-day,
When one with bliss or sadness fails,
And thro' the windless ivy-boughs,
Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
On its mate's music-panting bosom ;
Another from the swinging blossom,
Watching to catch the languid close

Of the last strain, then lifts on high
The wings of the weak melody,
'Till some new strain of feeling bear
The song, and all the woods are mute ;
When there is heard thro' the dim air
The rush of wings, and rising there
Like many a lake-surrounding flute,
Sounds overflow the listener's brain
So sweet, that joy is almost pain.

SEMICHORUS I.

There those enchanted eddies play
Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
By Demogorgon's mighty law,
With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
All spirits on that secret way ;
As inland boats are driven to Ocean
Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw :
And first there comes a gentle sound
To those in talk or slumber bound,
And wakes the destined soft emotion,
Attracts, impels them : those who saw
Say from the breathing earth behind
There steams a plume-uplifting wind

Which drives them on their path, while they
Believe their own swift wings and feet
The sweet desires within obey:
And so they float upon their way,
Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
The storm of sound is driven along,
Sucked up and hurrying as they fleet
Behind, its gathering billows meet
And to the fatal mountain bear
Like clouds amid the yielding air.

FIRST FAUN. Canst thou imagine where those
spirits live

Which make such delicate music in the woods?
We haunt within the least frequented caves
And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
Yet never meet them, tho' we hear them oft:
Where may they hide themselves?

SECOND FAUN. 'Tis hard to tell:

I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
Are the pavilions where such dwell and float

Under the green and golden atmosphere
Which noon-tide kindles thro' the woven leaves ;
And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
Ascends to flow like meteors thro' the night,
They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
Under the waters of the earth again.

FIRST FAUN. If such live thus, have others other
lives,

Under pink blossoms or within the bells
Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
Or on their dying odours, when they die,
Or on the sunlight of the sphered dew ?

SECOND FAUN. Aye, many more which we may
well divine.

But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
Of fate, and chance, and God, and Chaos old,
And Love, and the chained Titan's woful dooms,
And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
One brotherhood : delightful strains which cheer
Our solitary twilights, and which charm
To silence the unenvying nightingales.

SCENE III.

A PINNACLE OF ROCK AMONG MOUNTAINS. ASIA AND
PANTHEA.

PAN. Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication; and uplift,
Like Mænads who cry loud, Evœ! Evœ!
The voice which is contagion to the world.

ASIA. Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
Though evil stain its work, and it should be
Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
I could fall down and worship that and thee.
Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:

Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
With azure waves which burst in silver light,
Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
Under the curdling winds, and islanding
The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests,
Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illuminated caves,
And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist ;
And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray,
From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines
Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast,
Awful as silence. Hark ! the rushing snow !
The sun-awakened avalanche ! whose mass,
Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth
Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

PAN. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
In crimson foam, even at our feet ! it rises
As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon
Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

ASIA. The fragments of the cloud are scattered up ;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain
Grows dizzy ; I see thin shapes within the mist.

PAN. A countenance with beckoning smiles : there
burns
An azure fire within its golden locks !
Another and another : hark ! they speak !

SONG OF SPIRITS.

To the deep, to the deep,
Down, down !
Through the shade of sleep,
Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life ;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down !

While the sound whirls around,
Down, down!
As the fawn draws the hound,
As the lightning the vapour,
As a weak moth the taper;
Death, despair; love, sorrow;
Time both; to day, to morrow;
As steel obeys the spirit of the stone,
Down, down.

Through the grey, void abysm,
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is one pervading, one alone,
Down, down!

In the depth of the deep
Down, down!
Like veiled lightning asleep,

Like the spark nursed in embers,
The last look Love remembers,
Like a diamond, which shines
On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasur'd but for thee alone.

Down, down!

We have bound thee, we guide thee;

Down, down!

With the bright form beside thee;
Resist not the weakness,
Such strength is in meekness
That the Eternal, the Immortal,
Must unloose through life's portal
The snake-like Doom coiled underneath his throne
By that alone.

SCENE IV.

THE CAVE OF DEMOGORGON. ASIA AND PANTHEA.

PAN. What veiled form sits on that ebon throne?

ASIA. The veil has fallen.

PAN. I see a mighty darkness
Filling the seat of power, and rays of gloom
Dart round, as light from the meridian sun,
Ungazed upon and shapeless ; neither limb,
Nor form, nor outline ; yet we feel it is
A living Spirit.

DEM. Ask what thou wouldst know.

ASIA. What canst thou tell ?

DEM. All things thou dar'st demand.

ASIA. Who made the living world ?

DEM. God.

ASIA. Who made all

That it contains ? thought, passion, reason, will,
Imagination ?

DEM. God : Almighty God.

ASIA. Who made that sense which, when the winds
of spring

In rarest visitation, or the voice
Of one beloved heard in youth alone,
Fills the faint eyes with falling tears which dim
The radiant looks of unbewailing flowers,
And leaves this peopled earth a solitude
When it returns no more ?

DEM. Merciful God.

ASIA. And who made terror, madness, crime, remorse,
Which from the links of the great chain of things,
To every thought within the mind of man
Sway and drag heavily, and each one reels
Under the load towards the pit of death ;
Abandoned hope, and love that turns to hate ;
And self-contempt, bitterer to drink than blood ;
Pain, whose unheeded and familiar speech
Is howling, and keen shrieks, day after day ;
And Hell, or the sharp fear of Hell ?

DEM. He reigns.

ASIA. Utter his name : a world pining in pain
Asks but his name : curses shall drag him down.

DEM. He reigns.

ASIA. I feel, I know it : who ?

DEM. He reigns.

ASIA. Who reigns ? There was the Heaven and
Earth at first,
And Light and Love ; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow : such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway,
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms ; but he refused

The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love ;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, ' Let man be free,'
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law ; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign ;
And Jove now reigned ; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell ; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves :
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent,
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sléep within folded Elysian flowers,
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings

The shape of Death ; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart ;
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man ; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe ;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not ; and the harmonious mind
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song ;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,
Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound ;
And human hands first mimicked and then mocked,
With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
The human form, till marble grew divine ;
And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
He told the hidden power of herbs and springs,
And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.

He taught the implicated orbits woven
Of the wide-wandering stars ; and how the sun
Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye
Gazes not on the interlunar sea :
He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
The tempest-winged chariots of the Ocean,
And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed
The warm winds, and the azure æther shone,
And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
Such, the alleviations of his state,
Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
Withering in destined pain : but who reigns down
Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
Man looks on his creation like a God
And sees that it is glorious, drives him on
The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
The outcast, the abandoned, the alone ?
Not Jove : while yet his frown shook heaven, aye
when
His adversary from adamantine chains
Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
Who is his master ? Is he too a slave ?

DEM. All spirits are enslaved which serve things
evil :

Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.

ASIA. Whom called'st thou God ?

DEM. I spoke but as ye speak,
For Jove is the supreme of living things.

ASIA. Who is the master of the slave ?

DEM. If the abysm
Could vomit forth its secrets. But a voice
Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless ;
For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
On the revolving world ? What to bid speak
Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance and Change ? To these
All things are subject but eternal Love.

ASIA. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
The response thou hast given ; and of such truths
Each to itself must be the oracle.

One more demand ; and do thou answer me
As my own soul would answer, did it know
That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world :
When shall the destined hour arrive ?

DEM. Behold !

ASIA. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple
night

I see cars drawn by rainbow-winged steeds
Which trample the dim winds : in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars :
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair : they all
Sweep onward.

DEM. These are the immortal Hours,
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

ASIA. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulph.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak!

SPIRIT. I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect : ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

ASIA. What meanest thou ?

PAN. That terrible shadow floats
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!

ASIA. Thus I am answered: strange!

PAN. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope;
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures winged insects thro' the lampless air.

SPIRIT.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is brightning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire : and their speed makes night kindle ;
I fear : they outstrip the Typhoon ;
Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
We encircle the earth and the moon :
We shall rest from long labours at noon :
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

SCENE V.

THE CAR PAUSES WITHIN A CLOUD ON THE TOP OF A SNOWY MOUNTAIN. ASIA, PANTHEA, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

SPIRIT.

On the brink of the night and the morning
My coursers are wont to respire ;
But the Earth has just whispered a warning
That their flight must be swifter than fire :
They shall drink the hot speed of desire !

ASIA. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my
breath

Would give them swifter speed.

SPIRIT. Alas ! it could not.

PAN. Oh Spirit ! pause, and tell whence is the light
Which fills the cloud ? the sun is yet unrisen.

SPIRIT. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
Is held in heaven by wonder ; and the light
Which fills this vapour, as the aerial hue
Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
Flows from thy mighty sister.

PAN. Yes, I feel—

ASIA. What is it with thee, sister ? Thou art pale.

PAN. How thou art changed ! I dare not look on thee ;
I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
Is working in the elements, which suffer
Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
That on the day when the clear hyaline
Was cloven at thy uprise, and thou didst stand
Within a veined shell, which floated on
Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
Among the Egean isles, and by the shores
Which bear thy name ; love, like the atmosphere
Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
And the deep ocean and the sunless caves

And all that dwells within them ; till grief cast
 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came :
 Such art thou now ; nor is it I alone,
 Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
 But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
 Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
 Of all articulate beings ? Feelest thou not
 The inanimate winds enamoured of thee ? List !
(*Music.*)

ASIA. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
 Whose echoes they are : yet all love is sweet,
 Given or returned. Common as light is love,
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
 Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
 It makes the reptile equal to the God :
 They who inspire it most are fortunate,
 As I am now ; but those who feel it most
 Are happier still, after long sufferings,
 As I shall soon become.

PAN. List ! Spirits speak.

VOICE IN THE AIR, SINGING.

Life of Life ! thy lips enkindle
 With their love the breath between them ;

And thy smiles before they dwindle
 Make the cold air fire ; then screen them
In those looks, where whoso gazes
Faints, entangled in their mazes.

Child of Light ! thy lips are burning
 Thro' the vest which seems to hide them ;
As the radiant lines of morning
 Thro' the clouds ere they divide them ;
And this atmosphere divinest
Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.

Fair are others ; none beholds thee,
 But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
 From the sight, that liquid splendour,
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now, lost for ever !

Lamp of Earth ! where'er thou movest
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness
And the souls of whom thou lovest
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,

Till they fail, as I am failing,
Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing !

ASIA.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
And thine doth like an angel sit
Beside the helm conducting it,
Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
It seems to float ever, for ever,
Upon that many-winding river,
Between mountains, woods, abysses,
A paradise of wildernesses !
Till, like one in slumber bound,
Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound :
 Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions
 In music's most serene dominions ;
Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
 And we sail on, away, afar,
 Without a course, without a star,
But, by the instinct of sweet music driven ;

Till through Elysian garden islets
By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
Where never mortal pinnace glided,
The boat of my desire is guided :
Realms where the air we breathe is love,
Which in the winds on the waves doth move,
Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have pass'd Age's icy caves,
And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray :
Beyond the glassy gulphs we flee
Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day ;
A paradise of vaulted bowers,
Lit by downward-gazing flowers,
And watery paths that wind between
Wildernesses calm and green,
Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
And rest, having beheld ; somewhat like thee ;
Which walk upon the sea, and chaunt melodiously !

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

HEAVEN. JUPITER ON HIS THRONE; THETIS AND THE OTHER
DEITIES ASSEMBLED.

JUP. YE congregated powers of heaven, who share
The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
All else had been subdued to me; alone
The soul of man, like an unextinguished fire,
Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and
doubt,
And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection, which might make
Our antique empire insecure, though built
On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear;
And tho' my curses thro' the pendulous air,
Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,

Of the desire which makes thee one with me,
 Thetis, bright image of eternity!
 When thou didst cry, " Insufferable might!
 " God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
 " The penetrating presence; all my being,
 " Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw
 " Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
 " Sinking thro' its foundations:" even then
 Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
 Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
 Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld,
 Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
 (Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
 Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
 Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world,
 The earthquake of his chariot thundering up
 Olympus?

[*The Car of the HOUR arrives. DEMOGORGON descends, and moves towards the Throne of JUPITER.*

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

DEM. Eternity. Demand no direr name.
 Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
 I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
 Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together

Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.
The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee :
Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead,
Put forth thy might.

JUP. Detested prodigy !
Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
I trample thee ! thou lingerest ?

Mercy ! mercy !
No pity, no release, no respite ! Oh,
That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge,
Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
On Caucasus ! he would not doom me thus.
Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
The monarch of the world ? What art thou ?
No refuge ! no appeal !

Sink with me then,
We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire,

And whelm on them into the bottomless void
This desolated world, and thee, and me,
The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
Of that for which they combated.

Ai! Ai!

The elements obey me not. I sink
Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.

THE MOUTH OF A GREAT RIVER IN THE ISLAND ATLANTIS.
OCEAN IS DISCOVERED RECLINING NEAR THE SHORE;
APOLLO STANDS BESIDE HIM.

OCEAN. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

APOLLO. Aye, when the strife was ended which
made dim
The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts

Of the victorious darkness, as he fell :
Like the last glare of day's red agony,
Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

OCEAN. He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void ?

APOLLO. An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded
By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the aerial ice clings over it.

OCEAN. Henceforth the fields of Heaven-reflecting
sea

Which are my realm, will heave, unstain'd with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn
Swayed by the summer air ; my streams will flow
Round many peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles ; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see
The floating bark of the light laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea ;

Sweet to remember, thro' your love and care :
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave,
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light :
And there is heard the ever-moying air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees ; and all around are mossy seats,
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass ;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own ;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability ?
And if ye sigh, then I will smile ; and thou,
Ione, shalt chaunt fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,

Like human babes in their brief innocence ;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last,
Our unexhausted spirits ; and like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be ;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds,
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower aerial Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard,
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free ;
And lovely apparitions, dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright
From the embrace of beauty, whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms, casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality,
Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
Of Painting, Sculpture, and wrapt Poesy,
And arts, tho' unimagined, yet to be.

The wandering voices and the shadows these
Of all that man becomes, the mediators
Of that best worship love, by him and us
Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which
 grow
More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
And veil by veil, evil and error fall :
Such virtue has the cave and place around.

(Turning to the Spirit of the Hour.)

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
Give her that curved shell, which Proteus old
Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

IONE. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and
 lovely

Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell ;
See the pale azure fading into silver
Lining it with a soft yet glowing light :
Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there ?

SPIRIT. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean :
Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange.

PRO. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
On whirlwind-footed coursers : once again

The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float
Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers
Shall suck unwitting hues in their repose :
And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
Strength for the coming day, and all its joy :
And death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
Folding her child, says, " Leave me not again."

ASIA. Oh, mother ! wherefore speak the name of
death ?

Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
Who die ?

THE EARTH. It would avail not to reply :
Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
But to the uncommunicating dead.
Death is the veil which those who live call life :
They sleep, and it is lifted : and meanwhile
In mild variety the seasons mild
With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild,
Shall clothe the forests and the fields, aye, even

The crag-built desarts of the barren deep,
With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit
Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain
Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
Became mad too, and built a temple there,
And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
The erring nations round to mutual war,
And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee;
Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
A violet's exhalation, and it fills
With a serener light and crimson air
Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine,
And the dark linked ivy tangling wild,
And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
As they rain thro' them, and bright golden globes
Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven,
And thro' their veined leaves and amber stems
The flowers whose purple and translucent bowls
Stand ever mantling with aërial dew,
The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams,

Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.
Arise ! Appear !

[*A Spirit rises in the likeness of a winged child.*

This is my torch-bearer ;
Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
On eyes from which he kindled it anew
With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
And guide this company beyond the peak
Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers,
Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
And up the green ravine, across the vale,
Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
Where ever lies, on unerasing waves,
The image of a temple, built above,
Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
And populous most with living imagery,
Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles
Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
It is deserted now, but once it bore

Thy name, Prometheus ; there the emulous youths
Bore to thy honour thro' the divine gloom
The lamp which was thine emblem ; even as those
Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
Into the grave, across the night of life,
As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
Beside that temple is the destined cave.

SCENE IV.

A FOREST. IN THE BACKGROUND A CAVE. PROMETHEUS,
ASIA, PANTHEA, IONE, AND THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.

IONE. Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
Under the leaves ! how on its head there burns
A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
Are twined with its fair hair ! how, as it moves,
The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass !
Knowest thou it ?

PAN. It is the delicate spirit
That guides the earth thro' heaven. From afar

The populous constellations call that light
The loveliest of the planets; and sometimes
It floats along the spray of the salt sea,
Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
Or walks thro' fields or cities while men sleep,
Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
Or thro' the green waste wilderness, as now,
Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned
It loved our sister Asia, and it came
Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
It made its childish confidence, and told her
All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her,
For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I,
Mother, dear mother.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. (RUNNING TO ASIA.)

Mother, dearest mother;
May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
May I then play beside thee the long noons,
When work is none in the bright silent air?

ASIA. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
Can cherish thee unenvied : speak, I pray :
Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. Mother, I am grown wiser,
 though a child
Cannot be wise like thee, within this day ;
And happier too ; happier and wiser both.
Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly
 worms,
And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world :
And that, among the haunts of humankind,
Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,
Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man ;
And women too, ugliest of all things evil,
(Tho' fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
When good and kind, free and sincere like thee,)
When false or frowning made me sick at heart
To pass them, tho' they slept, and I unseen.
Well, my path lately lay thro' a great city

Into the woody hills surrounding it :
A sentinel was sleeping at the gate :
When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all ;
A long, long sound, as it would never end :
And all the inhabitants leapt suddenly
Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet
The music pealed along. I hid myself
Within a fountain in the public square,
Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
Seen in a wave under green leaves ; and soon
Those ugly human shapes and visages
Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
Past floating thro' the air, and fading still
Into the winds that scattered them ; and those
From whom they past seemed mild and lovely forms
After some foul disguise had fallen, and all
Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
And greetings of delighted wonder, all
Went to their sleep again : and when the dawn
Came, would'st thou think that toads, and snakes,
and efts,

Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were,
And that with little change of shape or hue:
All things had put their evil nature off:
I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
Upon a drooping bough with night-shade twined,
I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward
And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;
So with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
We meet again, the happiest change of all.

ASIA. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
Will look on thy more warm and equal light
Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
And love thee.

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. What; as Asia loves Prometheus?

ASIA. Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
With sphered fires the interlunar air?

SPIRIT OF THE EARTH. Nay, mother, while my
sister trims her lamp
'Tis hard I should go darkling.

ASIA. Listen ; look !

The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters.

PRO. We feel what thou hast heard and seen : yet
speak.

SPIRIT OF THE HOUR. Soon as the sound had
ceased whose thunder filled
The abysses of the sky and the wide earth,
There was a change : the impalpable thin air
And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
As if the sense of love dissolved in them
Had folded itself round the sphered world.
My vision then grew clear, and I could see
Into the mysteries of the universe :
Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
My coursers sought their birth-place in the sun,
Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil
Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire.
And where my moonlike car will stand within

A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms
Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel ;
In memory of the tidings it has borne ;
Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
And open to the bright and liquid sky.
Yoked to it by an amphisbenic snake
The likeness of those winged steeds will mock
The light from which they find repose. Alas,
Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
When all remains untold which ye would hear?
As I have said I floated to the earth :
It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss
To move, to breathe, to be ; I wandering went
Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
And first was disappointed not to see
Such mighty change as I had felt within
Expressed in outward things ; but soon I looked,
And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
One with the other even as spirits do,
None fawned, none trampled ; hate, disdain, or fear,
Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell,

“ All hope abandon ye who enter here;”
None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
Gazed on another’s eye of cold command,
Until the subject of a tyrant’s will
Became, worse fate, the abject of his own,
Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak ;
None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
The sparks of love and hope till there remained
Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
Infecting all with his own hideous ill ;
None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes,
Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
On the wide earth, past ; gentle radiant forms,
From custom’s evil taint exempt and pure ;
Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
And changed to all which once they dared not be,

Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame,
The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no more remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round
Those imaged to the pride of kings and priests,
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark, and execrable,

Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world ;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines :
The painted veil, by those who were, called life,
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside ;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself ; just, gentle, wise : but man
Passionless ; no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, tho' ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE, A PART OF THE FOREST NEAR THE CAVE OF PROMETHEUS.

PANTHEA AND IONE ARE SLEEPING: THEY AWAKEN GRADUALLY DURING THE FIRST SONG.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

The pale stars are gone!
For the sun, their swift shepherd,
To their folds them compelling,
In the depths of the dawn,
Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee
Beyond his blue dwelling,
As fawns flee the leopard.
But where are ye?

A TRAIN OF DARK FORMS AND SHADOWS PASSES BY CONFUSEDLY,
SINGING.

Here, oh, here:
We bear the bier
Of the Father of many a cancelled year!

Spectres we
Of the dead Hours be,
We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew
Hair, not yew !
Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew !
Be the faded flowers
Of Death's bare bowers
Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours !

Haste, oh, haste !
As shades are chased,
Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
We melt away,
Like dissolving spray,
From the children of a diviner day,
With the lullaby
Of winds that die
On the bosom of their own harmony !

IONE.

What dark forms were they ?

PANTHEA.

The past Hours weak and grey,
With the spoil which their toil
Raked together
From the conquest but One could foil.

IONE.

Have they past?

PANTHEA.

They have past;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled:

IONE.

Whither, oh, whither?

PANTHEA.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

VOICE OF UNSEEN SPIRITS.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,

Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth.
But where are ye ?

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea ;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye ?

IONE. What charioteers are these ?

PAN. Where are their chariots ?

SEMICHORUS OF HOURS.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A VOICE.

In the deep ?

SEMICHORUS II.

Oh, below the deep.

SEMICHORUS I.

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

SEMICHORUS II.

Worse than his visions were !

SEMICHORUS I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ;
We have known the voice of Love in dreams,
We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

SEMICHORUS II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams !

CHORUS.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
Pierce with song heaven's silent light,
Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
To check its flight ere the cave of night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
And it limped and stumbled with many wounds
Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A VOICE.

Unite!

PAN. See, where the Spirits of the human mind
Wrapt in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We join the throng
Of the dance and the song,
By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ;
As the flying-fish leap
From the Indian deep,
And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
For sandals of lightning are on your feet,
And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
And your eyes are as love which is veiled not ?

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

We come from the mind
Of human kind
Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind,
Now 'tis an ocean
Of clear emotion,
A heaven of serene and mighty motion.

From that deep abyss
Of wonder and bliss,
Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;
From those skiey towers
Where Thought's crowned powers
Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours !

From the dim recesses
Of woven caresses,
Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses ;
From the azure isles,
Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
Delaying your ships with her syren wiles.

From the temples high
Of Man's ear and eye,
Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy ;
From the murmurings
Of the unsealed springs
Where Science bedews his Dædal wings.

Years after years,
Through blood, and tears,
And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
We waded and flew,
And the islets were few
Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.

Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm,
And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm;
And, beyond our eyes,
The human love lies
Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS AND HOURS.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth,
Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

Our spoil is won,
Our task is done,
We are free to dive, or soar, or run ;
Beyond and around,
Or within the bound
Which clips the world with darkness round.

We'll pass the eyes
Of the starry skies
Into the hoar deep to colonize :
Death, Chaos, and Night,
From the sound of our flight,
Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
And the Spirit of Might,
Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight ;
And Love, Thought, and Breath,
The powers that quell Death,
Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.

And our singing shall build
In the void's loose field
A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield ;
We will take our plan
From the new world of man,
And our work shall be called the Promethean.

CHORUS OF HOURS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song ;
Let some depart, and some remain.

SEMICHORUS I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along :

SEMICHORUS II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain :

SEMICHORUS I.

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
And a heaven where yet heaven could never be.

SEMICHORUS II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
With the powers of a world of perfect light.

SEMICHORUS I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear
From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

SEMICHORUS II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
And the happy forms of its death and birth
Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

CHORUS OF HOURS AND SPIRITS.

Break the dance, and scatter the song,
Let some depart, and some remain,
Wherever we fly we lead along
In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

PAN. Ha ! they are gone !

IONE. Yet feel you no delight
From the past sweetness ?

PAN. As the bare green hill
When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,
Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky !

IONE. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound ?

PAN. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air,
Æolian modulations.

IONE. Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

PAN. But see where through two openings in the
forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters

Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts ;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

IONE. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the mother of the months is borne
By ebbing night into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams,
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods
Distinctly seen through that dusk airy veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass ;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunder-storm,
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea
When the sun rushes under it ; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind ;
Within it sits a winged infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds

Of its white robe, woof of ætherial pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in string ; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,
With fire that is not brightness ; in its hand
It sways a quivering moon-beam, from whose point
A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
Over its wheeled clouds, which as they roll
Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew.

PAN. And from the other opening in the wood
Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
Solid as chrystal, yet through all its mass
Flow, as through empty space, music and light :
Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
Purple and azure, white, green, and golden,
Sphere within sphere ; and every space between
Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep,
Yet each inter-transparent, and they whirl

Over each other with a thousand motions,
Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on,
Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
Intelligible words and music wild.
With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
Of elemental subtlety, like light;
And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
The music of the living grass and air,
The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
Seem kneaded into one aerial mass
Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep,
And you can see its little lips are moving,
Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

IONE. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

PAN. And from a star upon its forehead, shoot,

Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtined,
Embleming heaven and earth united now,
Vast beams like spoke of some invisible wheel
Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought,
Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
And perpendicular now, and now transverse,
Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart ;
Infinite mine of adamant and gold,
Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
And caverns on crystalline columns poured
With vegetable silver overspread ;
Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed,
Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
And make appear the melancholy ruins
Of cancelled cycles ; anchors, beaks of ships ;
Planks turned to marble ; quivers, helms, and spears,
And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
Of scythed chariots, and the emblazonry
Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems

Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin !
The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
Whose population which the earth grew over
Was mortal, but not human ; see, they lie
Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
Their statues, homes and fanes ; prodigious shapes
Huddled in grey annihilation, split,
Jammed in the hard, black deep ; and over these,
The anatomies of unknown winged things,
And fishes which were isles of living scale,
And serpents, bony chains, twisted around
The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
Had crushed the iron crags ; and over these
The jagged alligator, and the might
Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once
Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
Increased and multiplied like summer worms
On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
Wrapt deluge round it like a cloke, and they
Yelled, gasped, and were abolished ; or some God
Whose throne was in a comet, past, and cried,
Be not ! And like my words they were no more.

THE EARTH.

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vapourous exultation not to be confined!

Ha! ha! the animation of delight

Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

THE MOON.

Brother mine, calm wanderer,

Happy globe of land and air,

Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,

Which penetrates my frozen frame,

And passes with the warmth of flame,

With love, and odour, and deep melody

Through me, through me!

THE EARTH.

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,

My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains

Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.

The oceans, and the desarts, and the abysses,

And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,

Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
Who all our green and azure universe
Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction,
 sending
A solid cloud to rain hot thunder-stones,
And splinter and knead down my children's bones
All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and
 blending.

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn,
My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow,
 and fire ;
My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire.

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up
By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all ;
And from beneath, around, within, above,
Filling thy void annihilation, love
Bursts in like light on caves cloven by thunder-ball.

THE MOON.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
Is loosened into living fountains,
My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine :
A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
It clothes with unexpected birth
My cold bare bosom : Oh ! it must be thine
On mine, on mine !

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,
And living shapes upon my bosom move :
Music is in the sea and air,
Winged clouds soar here and there,
Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of :
'Tis love, all love !

THE EARTH.

It interpenetrates my granite mass,
Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass,
Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers ;
Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,
It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers.

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being :
With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever,
Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows,
fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many sided mirror,
Which could distort to many a shape of error,
This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love ;
Which over all his kind as the sun's heaven
Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even
Darting from starry depths radiance and light, doth
move.

Leave man, even as a leprous child is left,
Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs
is poured ;
Then when it wanders home with rosy smile,
Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men ! a chain of linked thought,
Of love and might to be divided not,
Compelling the elements with adamantine stress ;
As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
The unquiet republic of the maze
Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wil-
derness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine controul,
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea ;
Familiar acts are beautiful through love ;
Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they
could be !

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
Is as a tempest-winged ship, whose helm
Love rules, through waves which dare not over-
whelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold
mass
Of marble and of colour his dreams pass ;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their
children wear ;
Language is a perpetual orphic song,
Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shape-
less were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air ;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have
none.

THE MOON.

The shadow of white death has past
From my path in heaven at last,
A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep ;
And through my newly-woven bowers,
Wander happy paramours,
Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
Thy vales more deep.

THE EARTH.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
A half infrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

THE MOON.

Thou art folded, thou art lying
In the light which is undying
Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine ;
All suns and constellations shower
On thee a light, a life, a power
Which doth array thy sphere ; thou pourest thine
On mine, on mine !

THE EARTH.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
Which points into the heavens dreaming delight,
Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep ;
As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth
keep.

THE MOON.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull ;
So when thy shadow falls on me,
Then am I mute and still, by thee
Covered ; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
Full, oh, too full !

Thou art speeding round the sun
Brightest world of many a one ;
Green and azure sphere which shinest
With a light which is divinest
Among all the lamps of Heaven
To whom life and light is given ;
I, thy crystal paramour
Borne beside thee by a power
Like the polar Paradise,
Magnet-like of lovers' eyes ;
I, a most enamoured maiden
Whose weak brain is overladen
With the pleasure of her love,
Maniac-like around thee move

Gazing, an insatiate bride,
On thy form from every side
Like a Mænad, round the cup
Which Agave lifted up
In the wierd Cadmæan forest.
Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
I must hurry, whirl and follow
Through the heavens wide and hollow,
Sheltered by the warm embrace
Of thy soul from hungry space,
Drinking from thy sense and sight
Beauty, majesty, and might,
As a lover or a cameleon
Grows like what it looks upon,
As a violet's gentle eye
Gazes on the azure sky
Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
As a grey and watery mist
Glowes like solid amethyst
Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
When the sunset sleeps
Upon its snow.

THE EARTH.

And the weak day weeps

That it should be so.

Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight

Falls on me like thy clear and tender light

Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,

Through isles for ever calm ;

Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce

The caverns of my pride's deep universe,

Charming the tiger joy, whose tramlings fierce

Made wounds which need thy balm.

PAN. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,

A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,

Out of the stream of sound.

IONE.

Ah me ! sweet sister,

The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,

And you pretend to rise out of its wave,

Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew

Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

PAN. Peace ! peace ! A mighty Power, which is as

darkness,

Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky

Is showered like night, and from within the air
Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

IONE. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

PAN. An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
The love which paves thy path along the skies:

THE EARTH.

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

DEMOGORGON.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

THE MOON.

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

DEMOGORGON.

Ye kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
 Ætherial Dominations, who possess
 Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
 Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness :

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye happy dead, whom beams of brightest verse
 Are clouds to hide, not colours to pourtray,
 Whether your nature is that universe
 Which once ye saw and suffered—

A VOICE FROM BENEATH.

Or as they
 Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
 From man's high mind even to the central stone
 Of sullen lead ; from Heaven's star-fretted domes
 To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on :

A CONFUSED VOICE.

We hear : thy words waken Oblivion.

DEMOGORGON.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh : ye beasts and
birds,

Ye worms, and fish ; ye living leaves and buds ;
Lightning and wind ; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes :

A VOICE.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

DEMOGORGON.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave ;

A dupe and a deceiver ; a decay ;

A traveller from the cradle to the grave

Through the dim night of this immortal day :

ALL.

Speak : thy strong words may never pass away.

DEMOGORGON.

This is the day, which down the void abyss
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep :
Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dead endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength ;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,
Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length ;
These are the spells by which to re-assume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ;

To love, and bear ; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;
Neither to change, nor flatter, nor repent ;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

REPRODUCED FROM THE

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

PART FIRST.

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the Spirit of Love felt every where ;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noon-tide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snow-drop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness ;

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green ;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense ;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath address,
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare :

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Mænad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky ;

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows ;
And all rare blossoms from every clime
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
Was pranked under boughs of embowering blossom,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water lilies lay tremulously,
And starry river-buds glimmered by,
And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
Which led through the garden along and across,
Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
And flowrets which drooping as day drooped too
Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

And from this undefiled Paradise
The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it,)

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun ;

For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,

For the sensitive plant has no bright flower ;
Radiance and odour are not its dower ;
It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not, the beautiful !

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings ;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar ;

The plumed insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass ;

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears ;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream ;

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the sensitive plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

And when evening descended from heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, tho' less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were
drowned

In an ocean of dreams without a sound ;
Whose waves never mark, tho' they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness ;

(Only over head the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the sensitive plant.)

The sensitive plant was the earliest
Up-gathered into the bosom of rest ;

A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of night.

PART SECOND.

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling grace
Which to the flowers did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind
Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even:
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face

Told, whilst the moon kissed the sleep from her eyes
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise:

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Tho' the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest ;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind:

And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers thro' all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and ozier bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,

In a basket, of grasses and wild flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

This fairest creature from earliest spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of summer tide,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died!

PART THIRD.

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baïæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chaunt,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners deep and low ;

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin plank ;

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass ;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lively as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

The rose leaves, like flakes of crimson now,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf after leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay.

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and grey, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind past;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast.

And the gusty winds waked the winged seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them.

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air.

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks,
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless net-work of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back.

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank.

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew.

And agarics and fungi, with mildew and mould
Started like mist from the wet ground cold ;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated !

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by.

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill :
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noon-day
Unseen ; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

The Sensitive Plant like one forbid
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves which together grew
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn ;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

For Winter came : the wind was his whip :
One choppy finger was on his lip :
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles ;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound ;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the arctic zone.

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost !

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want :
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again,
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew ;

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When winter had gone and spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck ;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and
 darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

CONCLUSION.

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a spirit sat
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light,
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess ; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream,

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there,
In truth have never pass'd away :
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed ; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

A VISION OF THE SEA.

'TIS the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale :
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from heaven,
She sees the black trunks of the water-spouts spin,
And bend, as if heaven was raining in,
Which they seem'd to sustain with their terrible mass
As if ocean had sank from beneath them : they pass
To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
And the waves and the thunders made silent around
Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now toss'd
Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost

In the skirts of the thunder-cloud : now down the sweep
Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale
Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
Dim mirrors of ruin hang gleaming about ;
While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron
With splendour and terror the black ship environ,
Or like sulphur-flakes hurl'd from a mine of pale fire
In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea.
The great ship seems splitting ! it cracks as a tree,
While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has past.
The intense thunder-balls which are raining from heaven
Have shatter'd its mast, and it stands black and riven.
The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
Like a corpse on the clay which is hung'ring to fold
Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
One deck is burst up from the waters below,
And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow

O'er the lakes of the desert ! Who sit on the other ?
Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast ? Are those
Twin tygers, who burst, when the waters arose,
In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold ;
(What now makes them tame, is what then made them
bold ;)

Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank.
Are these all ? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain
On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
And there seem'd to be fire in the beams of the moon,
Till a lead-colour'd fog gather'd up from the deep
Whose breath was quick pestilence ; then, the cold sleep
Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field
of corn,

O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,
With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
Down the deep, which closed on them above and around,
And the sharks and the dog-fish their grave-clothes un-
bound,

And were glutt'd like Jews with this manna rain'd down
From God on their wilderness. One after one
The mariners died ; on the eve of this day,
When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array,
But seven remain'd. Six the thunder has smitten,
And they lie black as mummies on which Time has
written

His scorn of the embalmer ; the seventh, from the deck
An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back,
And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck.
No more ? At the helm sits a woman more fair
Than heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
She clasps a bright child on her upgather'd knee,
It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder
Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
It is beckoning the tygers to rise and come near,
It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
Is outshining the meteors ; its bosom beats high,
The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye ;
Whilst its mother's is lustreless. " Smile not, my child,
" But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
" Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
" So dreadful since thou must divide it with me !

“ Dream, sleep ! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed,
“ Will it rock thee not, infant ? ’Tis beating with dread !
“ Alas ! what is life, what is death, what are we,
“ That when the ship sinks we no longer may be ?
“ What ! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more ?
“ To be after life what we have been before ?
“ Not to touch those sweet hands ? Not to look on
 those eyes.
“ Those lips, and that hair, all that smiling disguise
“ Thou yet wearest, sweet spirit, which I, day by day,
“ Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
“ Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower ?” Lo ! the ship
Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip ;
The tygers leap up when they feel the slow brine
Crawling inch by inch on them, hair, ears, limbs, and
 eyne,
Stand rigid with horror ; a loud, long, hoarse cry
Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously,
And ’tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
Hurried on by the might of the hurricane :
The hurricane came from the west, and past on
By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,

Transversely dividing the stream of the storm ;
As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
Black as a cormorant the screaming blast,
Between ocean and heaven, like an ocean, past,
Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
Which, based on the sea and to heaven upcurl'd,
Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
The dome of the tempest ; it rent them in twain,
As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag :
And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has past,
Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast ;
They are scatter'd like foam on the torrent ; and where
The wind has burst out from the chasm, from the air
Of clear morning, the beams of the sunrise flow in,
Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
Banded armies of light and of air ; at one gate
They encounter, but interpenetrate.
And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
And the caverns of clouds are torn up by the day,
And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings
Lulled by the motion and murmurings,

And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea,
And over head glorious, but dreadful to see
The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
The deep calm of blue heaven dilating above,
And, like passions made still by the presence of Love,
Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with heaven's azure
smile.

The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where
Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
One tyger is mingled in ghastly affray
With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
Of solid bones crush'd by the infinite stress
Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
Where the gripe of the tyger has wounded the veins,
Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and
the splash

As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash
The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean streams,

Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other
Is winning his way from the fate of his brother,
To his own with the speed of despair. Lo ! a boat
Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
Urge on the keen keel, the brine foams. At the stern
Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn
In the breast of the tyger, which yet bears him on
To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,
'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,
Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
With her left hand she grasps it impetuously,
With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere ;
Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
Like a meteor of light o'er the waters ! her child
Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring ; so smiled
The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
Whilst——

ODE TO HEAVEN.

CHORUS OF SPIRITS.

FIRST SPIRIT.

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights !
Paradise of golden lights !

Deep, immeasurable, vast,
Which art now, and which wert then !

Of the present and the past,
Of the eternal where and when,
Presence-chamber, temple, home,
Ever-canopying dome,
Of acts and ages yet to come !

Glorious shapes have life in thee,
Earth, and all earth's company ;
 Living globes which ever throng
Thy deep chasms and wildernesses ;
 And green worlds that glide along ;
And swift stars with flashing tresses ;
 And icy moons most cold and bright,
 And mighty suns beyond the night,
 Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
Heaven ! for thou art the abode
 Of that power which is the glass
Wherein man his nature sees.
 Generations as they pass
Worship thee with bended knees.
 Their unremaining gods and they
 Like a river roll away :
 Thou remainest such alway.

SECOND SPIRIT.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
Round which its young fancies clamber,

Like weak insects in a cave,
 Lighted up by stalactites ;
 But the portal of the grave,
 Where a world of new delights
 Will make thy best glories seem
 But a dim and noontday gleam
 From the shadow of a dream !

THIRD SPIRIT.

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with scorn
 At your presumption, atom-born!
 What is heaven? and what are ye
 Who its brief expanse inherit?
 What are suns and spheres which flee
 With the instinct of that spirit
 Of which ye are but a part?
 Drops which Nature's mighty heart
 Drives through thinnest veins. Depart!

What is heaven? a globe of dew,
 Filling in the morning new

Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken
On an unimagined world :
 Constellated suns unshaken,
Orbits measureless, are furled
 In that frail and fading sphere,
 With ten millions gathered there,
 To tremble, gleam, and disappear.

AN EXHORTATION.

CAMELIONS feed on light and air :

Poets' food is love and fame :

If in this wide world of care

Poets could but find the same

With as little toil as they,

Would they ever change their hue

As the light camelions do,

Suiting it to every ray

Twenty times a-day ?

Poets are on this cold earth,

As camelions might be,

Hidden from their early birth

In a cave beneath the sea ;

Where light is camelions change :
Where love is not, poets do :
Fame is love disguised : if few
Find either never think it strange
That poets range.

Yet dare not stain with wealth or power
A poet's free and heavenly mind :
If bright camelions should devour
Any food but beams and wind,
They would grow as earthly soon
As their brother lizards are.
Children of a sunnier star,
Spirits from beyond the moon,
O, refuse the boon!

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.*

I.

O, WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

* This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathises with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O, thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving every where;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O, hear!

II.

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst : O, hear !

III.

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them ! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow grey with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves : O, hear !

IV.

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear ;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee ;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O, uncontrollable ! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh ! lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud !
I fall upon the thorns of life ! I bleed !

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

AN ODE,

[WRITTEN, OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD RECOVERED
THEIR LIBERTY.]

ARISE, arise, arise!

There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;

Be your wounds like eyes

To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.

What other grief were it just to pay?

Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;

Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken!

The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;

Be the cold chains shaken

To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:

Their bones in the grave will start and move,
 When they hear the voices of those they love,
 Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner !
 When freedom is riding to conquest by :
 Though the slaves that fan her
 Be famine and toil, giving sigh for sigh.
 And ye who attend her imperial car,
 Lift not your hands in the banded war,
 But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,
 To those who have greatly suffered and done !
 Never name in story
 Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
 Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
 Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown :
 Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
 With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine :
 Hide the blood-stains now
 With hues which sweet nature has made divine :

Green strength, azure hope, and eternity:
But let not the pansy among them be;
Ye were injured, and that means memory.

THE CLOUD.

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams ;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
 The sweet birds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast ;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits,

In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits ;

Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,

Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea ;

Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
 Over the lakes and the plains,

Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains ;

And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread,

Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning star shines dead.

As on the jag of a mountain crag,
 Which an earthquake rocks and swins,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
 Its ardours of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden,
 Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer ;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,

When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl ;
The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-coloured bow ;
The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
I change, but I cannot die.

For after the rain when with never a stain,
 The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams,
 Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.

TO A SKYLARK.

HAIL to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire ;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are brightning,
Thou dost float and run ;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight ;
Like a star of heaven,
In the broad day-light
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not ;
What is most like thee ?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see,
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not :

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower :

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering un beholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the
view :

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet these heavy-winged
thieves :

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass :

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine :
I have never heard,
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine would be all
But an empty vaunt,
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Langour cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear ;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground !

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now.

ODE TO LIBERTY.

Yet, Freedom, yet thy banner torn but flying,
Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.

BYRON.

I.

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
The lightning of the nations : Liberty
From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
Scattering contagious fire into the sky,
Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
And, in the rapid plumes of song,
Clothed itself, sublime and strong ;

As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,
 Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey ;
 Till from its station in the heaven of fame
The Spirit's whirlwind rapt it, and the ray
 Of the remotest sphere of living flame
Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
 As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
A voice out of the deep : I will record the same.

II.

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth :
 The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
Into the depths of heaven. The dædal earth,
 That island in the ocean of the world,
Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air :
 But this divinest universe
 Was yet a chaos and a curse,
For thou wert not : but power from worst producing worse,
 The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
 And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
And there was war among them, and despair
 Within them, raging without truce or terms :

The bosom of their violated nurse
 Groan'd, for beasts warr'd on beasts, and worms on worms,
 And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III.

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
 His generations under the pavilion
 Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
 Temple and prison, to many a swarming million,
 Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
 This human living multitude
 Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
 For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
 Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves
 Hung tyranny; beneath, sate deified
 The sister-pest, congregator of slaves
 Into the shadow of her pinions wide;
 Anarchs and priests who feed on gold and blood,
 Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
 Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
Of favouring heaven: from their enchanted caves
Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
On the unapprehensive wild
The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
Of Parian stone; and yet a speechless child,
Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Ægean main

V.

Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers

Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
 Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
 Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
 Its portals are inhabited
 By thunder-zoned winds, each head
 Within its cloudy wings with sunfire garlanded,
 A divine work! Athens diviner yet
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
 Peopled with forms that mock the eternal dead
 In marble immortality, that hill
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI.

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immoveably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past;

Religion veils her eyes ; Oppression shrinks aghast :
 A winged sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
 Which soars where Expectation never flew,
 Rending the veil of space and time asunder !
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew ;
 One sun illumines heaven ; one spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever new,
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII.

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmæan Mænad,*
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
 From that Elysian food was yet unweaned ;
 And many a deed of terrible uprightness
 By thy sweet love was sanctified ;
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,
 Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
 But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
 And gold prophaned thy capitolian throne,

* See the Bacchæ of Euripides.

Thou didst desert, with spirit-winged lightness,
 The senate of the tyrants : they sunk prone
 Slaves of one tyrant : Palatinus sighed
 Faint echoes of Ionian song ; that tone
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII.

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
 Or utmost islet inaccessible,
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
 Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
 To talk in echoes sad and stern,
 Of that sublimest love which man had dared unlearn ?
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
 What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
 When from its sea of death to kill and burn,
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
 And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX.

A thousand years the Earth cried, Where art thou?
And then the shadow of thy coming fell
On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow :
And many a warrior-peopled citadel,
Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
Arose in sacred Italy,
Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty ;
That multitudinous anarchy did sweep,
And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
Dissonant arms ; and Art, which cannot die,
With divine wand traced on our earthly home
Fit imagery to pave heaven's everlasting dome.

X.

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon ! thou terror
Of the world's wolves ! thou bearer of the quiver,

Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-winged Error,
As light may pierce the clouds when they dis sever
In the calm regions of the orient day!
Luther caught thy wakening glance,
Like lightning, from his leaden lance
Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay ;
And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen,
In songs whose music cannot pass away,
Though it must flow for ever: not unseen
Before the spirit-sighted countenance
Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien.

XI.

The eager hours and unreluctant years
As on a dawn-illuminated mountain stood,
Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
Darkening each other with their multitude,
And cried aloud, Liberty! Indignation
Answered Pity from her cave ;
Death grew pale within the grave,

And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
 When like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation
 Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
 Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
 Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes.

XII.

Thou heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then,
 In ominous eclipse? a thousand years
 Bred from the slime of deep oppression's den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away;
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
 Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
 When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers
 Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
 Of serene heaven. He, by the past pursued,

Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers.

XIII.

England yet sleeps : was she not called of old ?
Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
Vesuvius wakens *Ætna*, and the cold
Snow-crag by its reply are cloven in sunder :
O'er the lit waves every *Æolian* isle
From *Pithecusa* to *Pelorus*
Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus :
They cry, Be dim ; ye lamps of heaven suspended o'er us.
Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
And they dissolve ; but Spain's were links of steel,
Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
Twins of a single destiny ! appeal
To the eternal years enthroned before us,
In the dim West ; impress us from a seal,
All ye have thought and done ! Time cannot dare conceal.

XIV.

Tomb of Arminius ! render up thy dead,
Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
His soul may stream over the tyrant's head ;
Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine,
King-deluded Germany,
His dead spirit lives in thee.

Why do we fear or hope ? thou art already free !
And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
And glorious world ! thou flowery wilderness !
Thou island of eternity ! thou shrine
Where desolation clothed with loveliness,
Worships the thing thou wert ! O Italy,
Gather thy blood into thy heart ; repress
The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces.

XV.

O, that the free would stamp the impious name
Of * * * * into the dust ! or write it there,

So that this blot upon the page of fame

Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
Erases, and the flat sands close behind!

Ye the oracle have heard :

Lift the victory-flashing sword,

And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,

Which weak itself as stubble, yet can bind

Into a mass, irrefragably firm,

The axes and the rods which awe mankind ;

The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred ;

Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,

To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm.

XVI.

O, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle

Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,

That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle

Into the hell from which it first was hurled,

A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure ;

Till human thoughts might kneel alone

Each before the judgement-throne

Of its own aweless soul, or of the power unknown !
 O, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
 From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
 From a white lake blot heaven's blue portraiture,
 Were stript of their thin masks and various hue
 And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
 Till in the nakedness of false and true
 They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due.

XVII.

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
 Can be between the cradle and the grave
 Crowned him the King of Life. O vain endeavour!
 If on his own high will a willing slave,
 He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
 What if earth can clothe and feed
 Amplest millions at their need,
 And power in thought be as the tree within the seed ?
 O, what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
 Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
 Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
 And cries: Give me, thy child, dominion
 Over all height and depth ? if Life can breed

New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousand fold for one.

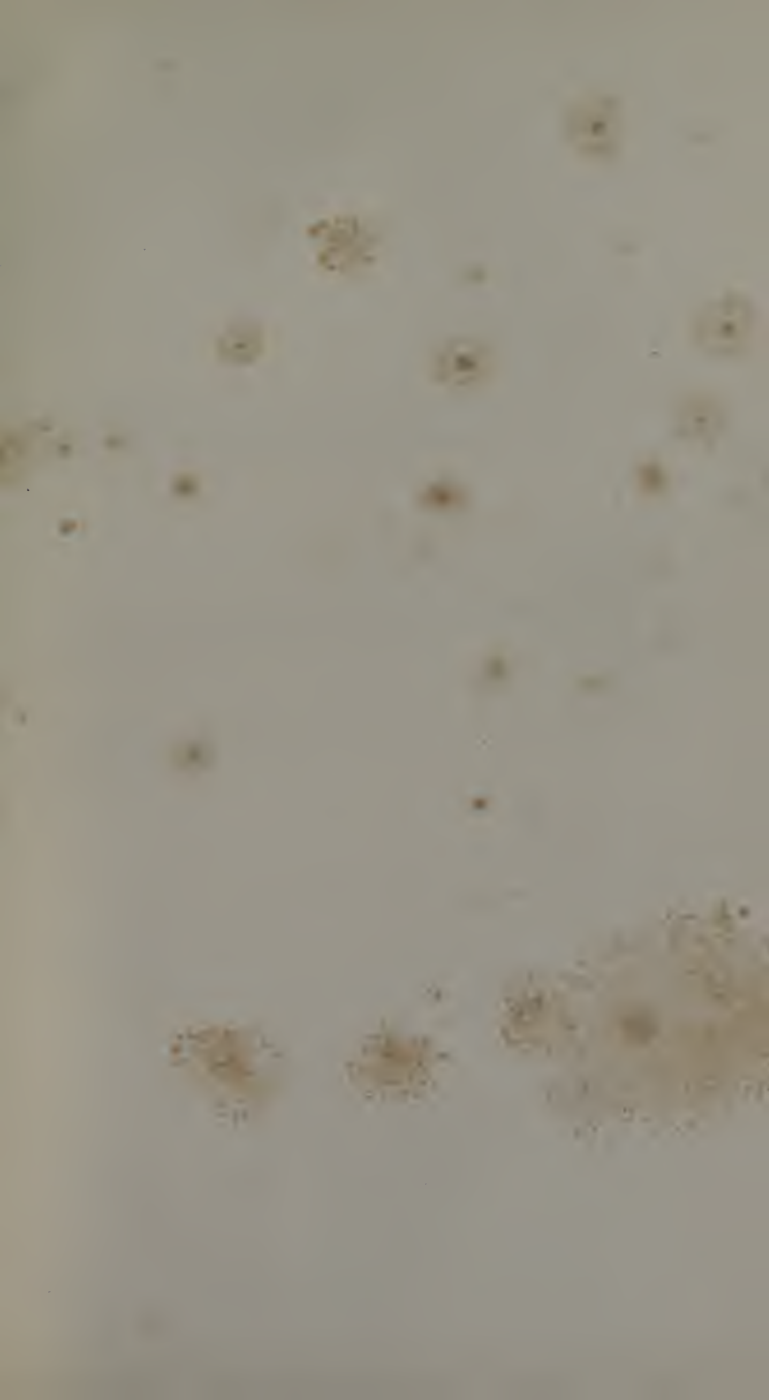
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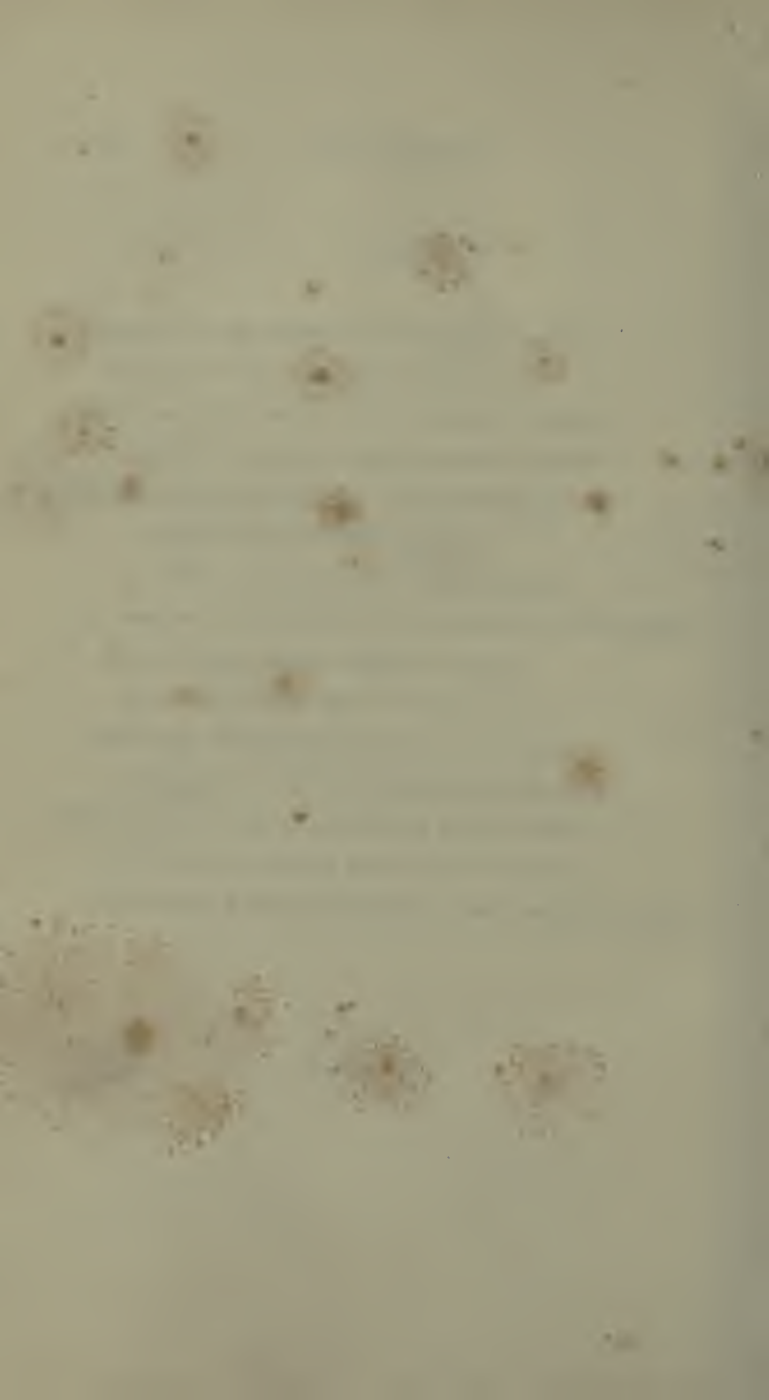
Come Thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,
Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame ;
Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,
To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot ?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame
Of what has been, the Hope of what will be ?
O, Liberty ! if such could be thy name
Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee :
If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
Wept tears, and blood like tears ? The solemn harmony

XIX.

Paused, and the spirit of that mighty singing
 To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn ;
Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
 Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
Sinks headlong through the aerial golden light
 On the heavy sounding plain,
 When the bolt has pierced its brain ;
As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain ;
 As a far taper fades with fading night,
 As a brief insect dies with dying day,
My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
 Drooped ; o'er it closed the echoes far away
Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
 As waves which lately paved his watery way
 Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

THE END.





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