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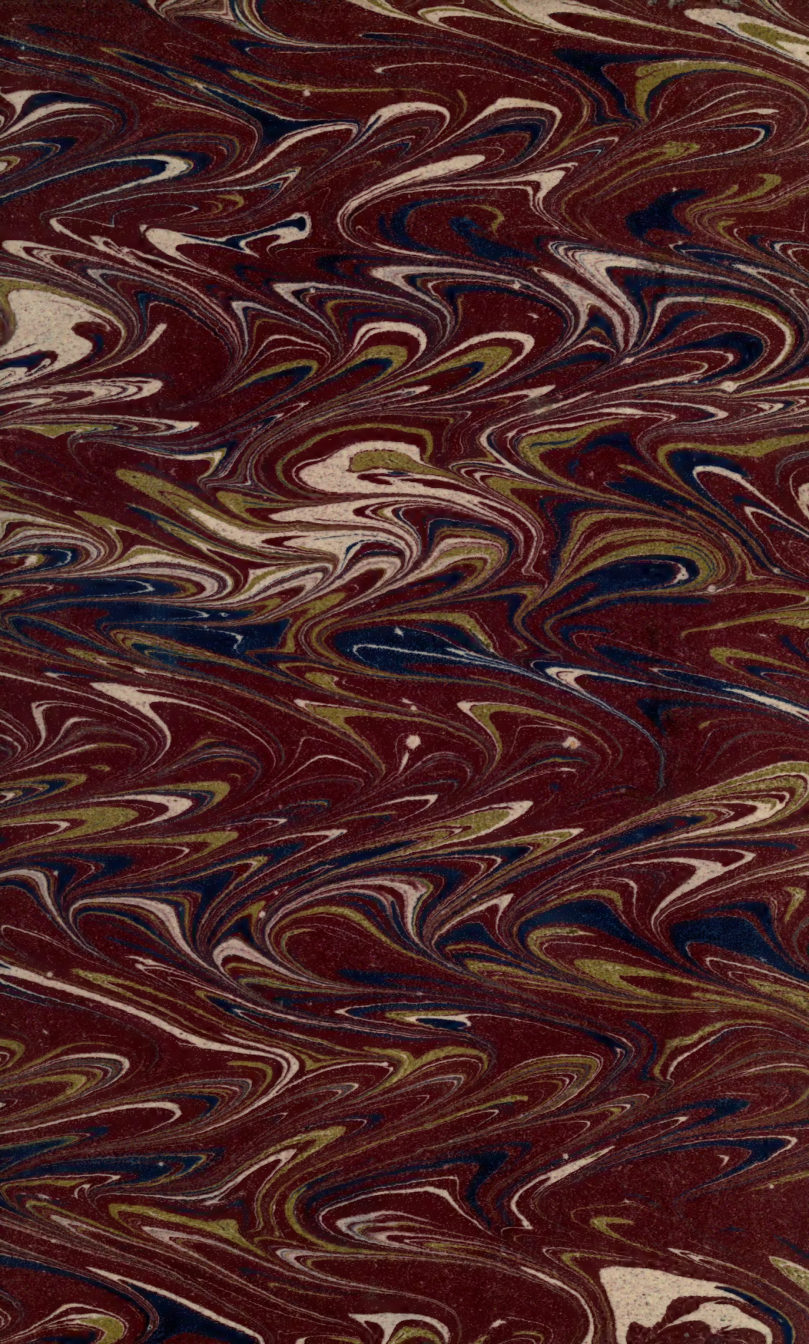
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GIFT OF

HENRY DOUGLASS BACON.

1877.

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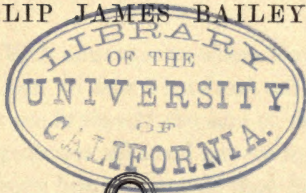


F E S T U S

A POEM

BY

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY



ALDI

DISCIR

ANGLVS



FIFTH EDITION

LONDON

WILLIAM PICKERING

1852



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DEDICATION.

MY FATHER! unto thee to whom I owe
All that I am, all that I have and can ;
Who madest me in thyself the sum of man
In all its generous aims and powers to know,
These first-fruits bring I ; nor do thou forego
Marking when I the boyish feat began,
Which numbers now near three years from its plan,
Not twenty summers had imbrowned my brow.
Life is at blood-heat every page doth prove.
Bear with it. Nature means Necessity.
If here be aught which thou canst love, it springs
Out of the hope that I may earn that love
More unto me than immortality ;
Or to have strung my harp with golden strings.

1839.



FESTUS.

SCENE—*Heaven.*

GOD.

Eternity hath snowed its years upon them ;
And the white winter of their age is come,
The world and all its worlds ; and all shall end.

SERAPHIM. God ! God ! God !

As flames in skies
We burn and rise
And lose ourselves in Thee ;
Years on years !
And nought appears
Save God to be.
God ! God ! God !
To us no thought
Hath Being brought
Toward Thee that doth not move ;
Years on years !
And what appears
Save God to love ?
God ! God ! God !
All Thou dost make
Lies like a lake
Below Thine infinite eye :

Years on years !
 And all appears
 Save God to die.

CHERUBIM. As sun and star,
 How high or far,
 Shew but a boundless sky ;
 So creature mind
 Is all confined
 To shew Thee, God, most High !
 The sun still burns,
 The sun still turns
 Round, round himself and round ;
 So creature mind
 To self's confined,
 But Thou God hast no bound.
 Systems arise,
 Or a world dies,
 Each constant hour in air ;
 But creature mind,
 In Heaven confined,
 Lives on like Thee, God ! there.

SERAPHIM AND CHERUBIM. God ! God ! God !
 Thou fill'st our eyes
 As were the skies
 One burning, boundless sun ;
 While creature mind,
 In path confined,
 Passeth a spot thereon.
 God ! God ! God !

LUCIFER. Ye thrones of Heaven, how bright how pure
 ye are !
 How have ye brightened since I saw ye first !
 How have I darkened since ye saw me last !
 What is the dark abyss of fire, and what
 The ravenous heights of air, o'er which I reign,
 In agony of glory, to these seats ?
 The loathsome cavern of the oracle,

O'er which ye rise in templed majesty,
 Filled with the incense of all worshippers,
 And echoing with the eloquence of God,
 Which rolls in sunny clouds around the heavens.
 Yet must I work through world and life my fate;
 And winding through the wards of human hearts,
 Steal their incarnate strength. Death does his work
 In secret and in joy intense, untold:
 As though an earthquake smacked its mumbling lips
 O'er some thick peopled city. But for me
 Exists not peace nor pleasure, even here,
 Where all beside, the very faintest thought,
 Is rapture. I will speak to God as erst.
 Father of spirit, as the sun of air!
 Beginning of all ends, and end of all
 Beginnings, throughout whole Eternity;
 From whom Eternity and every power
 Perfect, and pure cause, is and emanates;
 Originator without origin!
 End without end! Creator of all ages,
 And sabbath of all Being; who hast made
 All numbers sacred, who art all and one!
 At whose right hand the wisdom of all worlds
 Combined, is only fearful foolishness
 Or inarticulate madness,—and Thou, Lord!
 Maker and Perfecter of all, the one!
 Being above all Being, God the Life!
 Who art the way whereon the world proceeds
 From God, all-making, and whereby returns
 The ever generated universe!—
 Who rulest all worlds in the law of light,
 Thy nature and their own; who art before
 All ages, angels, blessed, times and worlds;
 Word that in every world art safe to save
 All souls, impregn'd with spirit, God-begot!
 And thou, eternal spirit-Deity;
 The sanctifier of the universe;

SAINTS. Another soul
 The Holy One
 Hath chosen out of earth;
 And there is none
 Throughout the whole
 Like worthy of his birth.

GUARDIAN ANGEL. Oh! who hath joy like mine? was
 I not here

When from Thy boundless bosom, as a star
 Out of the air, that soul was kindled, Lord!
 And to me given to guard and guide—while both,
 Mid starry strains out of the depths of Heaven,
 Fell at Thy feet in worship?—joy of joys!
 To you, ye saints and angels, let me speak;
 For ye I see rejoice with me. Ye know
 What 'tis to triumph o'er temptation, what
 To fall before it; how the young spirit faints—
 The virgin tremor, the heart's ebb and flow,
 When first some vast temptation calmly comes
 And states itself before it, like the sun
 Low looming in the west, above the wave
 Of whimpering streamlet, ere its waters grow
 To size aortal. Than the Fiend himself
 There is no greater evil. Less the shame
 Of yielding, more the glory of conquering,
 In him, to whom he goes, this soul elect.
 From infancy through childhood, up to youth,
 Have I this soul attended; marked him blest
 With all the sweet and sacred ties of life;—
 The prayerful love of parents, pride of friends,
 Prosperity, and health and ease, the aids
 Of learning, social converse with the good
 And gifted, and his heart all-lit with love,
 Like to the rolling sea with living light;—
 Hopeful and generous and earnest; rich
 In commune with high spirits, loving truth
 And wisdom for their own divinest selves:

Tracking the deeds of the world's glory, or
 Conning the words of wisdom, Heaven-inspired,
 As on the soul, in pure effectual ray,
 The bright, transparent atoms, thought by thought,
 Fall fixed for evermore. And thus his days,
 Through sunny noon, or moonéd eve, or night
 Star-armed, shining through the deathless air,
 All radiantly elapsed, in good or joy.
 And his heart opened to the Lord of life
 As flowers do to the sun; with prayer and praise
 Constant, for good besought and granted bliss.
 All this for long I marked. There grew, at length,
 A change within his spirit, and I feared
 A fatal and a final fall from good.
 God's love seemed lost upon him. He became
 Heart-deadened. Watching, warning, vain, I fled
 Hither to intercede with God our Lord,
 To bless him with salvation. We may plead
 Always for those we love, by leave divine.
 Nor knew I till this moment, with all Heaven,
 That, in the righteous providence of God,
 That soul was saved. Thou knowest, Lord! the mould
 Of mortals, and the infinite end whereto
 The souls Thou savest are predestinate;
 Oh! be Thy mercy mighty to this soul,
 Fiend threatened; nor permit him who presides
 O'er hell's eternal holocaust, too far
 To tempt or tamper with the heart of man!

GOD.

My mercy doth outstretch the universe;
 Shall it not be sufficient for one soul?

LUCIFER. I am the wrath of God unto myself,
 And by him made to do my part. Do thou
 Thine. They are far enough apart I ween.

GUARDIAN ANGEL. The heaven-strung chords of man's
 immortal soul
 Are not for thee to wither at thy will.

Bear witness, all ye blessed, to the word ;—
 Angels, intelligences, sons of God !
 Ye who know nought but truth, feel nought but love,
 Will nought but bliss, do nought but righteousness ;
 Whose life was ere the Heavens were conceived,
 The stars begotten, or the ages born ;
 Ye many ordered hierarchies, which are
 The love, truth, justice, majesty and might,
 Dominion, glory, wisdom, bliss of God ;
 Ye through whose ministry of mercy—His
 Immediate, ever instant, active, all
 Spirits and worlds are governed—age by age
 Gazing and gaining glory ; ye who stand,
 Stirless, before the throne, entranced in joy ;
 Or ye, whose life is to present all souls
 Reborn to their Creator ; or to search
 The golden globed skies for deeds of grace ;
 And ye who move all Heavens, in whose names
 The name of God is, as in angels' all ;
 The crown, the wisdom, the intelligence,
 Kindness, and strength and beauty, splendour, worth,
 Original and rule ; and ye who move
 Restless around the throne, the burning seven,
 The virtue, power, salvation, fire and rest,
 Blessing and praise of God ; and ye who rule
 Regions or kingdoms, states, tribes, families,
 Ages and times, and seasons, and events ;
 Systems and elements, material powers,
 Mental and spiritual ; or ye who bear
 Souls from the Heaven to earth, from earth to Heaven ;
 Ye tenants of the archetypal worlds
 And spiritual spheres ; and you, ye saints !
 Freed once on earth into the liberty
 Of the necessity which is of God ;
 Yours are the many multitudes of stars,
 And bliss and power for ever ; ye are gods
 And live an endless life, bespoken here ;

Bear witness, all, that happiness succeeds
 To godliness ; and that, despite of sin,
 The world may recognise in all time's scenes,
 Though belts of clouds bar half its burning disk,
 The overruling, overthrowing power,
 Which by our creature purposes works out
 Its deeds, and by our deeds its purposes.

LUCIFER. God ! for Thy glory only can I act,
 And for Thy creatures' good. When creatures stray
 Farthest from Thee, then warmest towards them burns
 Thy love, even as yon sun beams hotliest on
 The earth when distant most.

GOD.

The earth whereon
 He dwells, this grain selected from the sands
 Of life, dies with him.

LUCIFER. God ! I go to do
 Thy will.

GOD.

Thou, too, who watchest o'er the world
 Whose end I fix, prepare to have it judged.

ANGEL OF EARTH. Let me not then have watched o'er
 it in vain.

From age to age, from hour to hour, I still
 Have hoped it would grow better—hope so now ;
 'Tis better than it once was, and hath more
 Of mind and freedom than it ever had.
 I love it more than ever. Thou didst give
 It to me as a child. To me earth is
 Even as the boundless universe to Thee ;
 Nay, more ! for thou couldst make another. It is
 My world. Take it not from me, Lord ! Thou, Christ !
 Mad'st it the altar where Thou offeredst up
 Thyself for the creation. Let it be
 Immortal as Thy love. And altars are
 Holy ; and sister angels, sister orbs
 Hail it afar as such. Oh ! I have heard

World question world and answer ; seen them weep
 Each other if eclipsed for one red hour,
 And of all worlds most generous was mine,
 The tenderest and the fairest.

LUCIFER. Knowest thou not
 God's Son to be the brother and the friend
 Of spirit everywhere ? Or hath thy soul
 Been bound for ever to thy foolish world ?

ANGEL. Star unto star speaks light, and world to world
 Repeats the password of the universe
 To God ; the name of Christ—the one great word
 Well worth all languages in earth or Heaven.

SON OF GOD. Think not I lived and died for thine alone,
 And that no other sphere hath hailed me Christ.
 My life is ever suffering for love.
 In judging and redeeming worlds is spent
 Mine everlasting being.

LUCIFER. Earth He next
 Will judge ; for so saith God.

ANGEL OF EARTH. Be it not, Lord !
 Thou art a God of goodness and of love ;
 He is the evil of the universe,
 And loveth not the earth, Thy Son, nor Thee.
 Thou knowest best.

LUCIFER. Behold now all yon worlds !
 The space each fills shall be its successor.
 Accept the consolation.

ANGEL OF EARTH. Earth ! oh, Earth !

LUCIFER. 'Tis earth shall lead destruction ; she shall end.
 The stars shall wonder why she comes no more
 On her accustomed orbit, and the sun
 Miss one of his apostle lights ; the moon,
 An orphan orb, shall seek for earth for aye,
 Through time's untrodden depths, and find her not ;
 No more shall morn, out of the holy east,
 Stream o'er the amber air her level light ;
 Nor evening, with the spectral fingers, draw

Her star-sprent curtain round the head of earth ;
 Her footsteps never thence again shall grace
 The blue sublime of Heaven. Her grave is dug.
 I see the stars, night-clad, all gathering
 In long and sad procession. Death's at work.
 And, one by one, shall all yon wandering worlds,
 Whether in orbéd path they roll, or trail,
 In an inestimable length of light,
 Their golden train of tresses after them,
 Cease ; and the sun, centre and sire of light,
 The keystone of the world-built arch of Heaven,
 Be left in burning solitude. The stars,
 Which stand as thick as dewdrops on the fields
 Of Heaven, and all they comprehend, shall pass.
 The spirits of all worlds shall all depart
 To their great destinies ; and thou and I,
 Greater in grief than worlds, shall live as now.
 In hell's dark annals there is something writ,
 Which shall amaze man yet. There—to thy earth !

ANGEL OF EARTH. There is a blind world, yet unlit by God,
 Rolling around the extremest edge of light ;
 Where all things are disaster and decay,
 The outcast of all being ; no one thing
 Fitting another : that is fit for thee.
 Be that thy world, but not the living earth.
 Stretch forth Thy shining shield, O God ! the Heavens,
 Over the prostrate earth, an arméd friend,
 And save her from the swift and violent hell
 Her beauty hath enchanted ! from the wrath
 Of love like his, oh save her, though by death !

God.

Destruction and salvation are the hands
 Upon the face of time. When both unite,
 The day of death dawns. Every orb exists
 Unto its preappointed end : and earth,
 My creature, the elect of worlds, ere all
 Is saved. The world shall perish as a worm

Upon destruction's path ; the universe
 Evanish like a ghost before the sun,
 Yea like a doubt before the truth of God,
 Yet nothing more than death shall perish. Then,
 Rejoice ye souls of God regenerate,
 Ye indwellers divine of Deity ;
 In Him ye are immortal as Himself.

SON OF GOD. O'er all things are eternity and change,
 And special predilection of our God.
 Thou who createst souls, as the sun clouds,
 Out of the sea of spirit, sire of both
 The first and second natures of Thy Son,
 In whom the maker and the made make one
 Deific spirit ! who in every world
 Payeth creation's penalties ; in all
 Is heir of God and nature, and in Thee,
 And in self-worship, Deifies himself.
 And you blest spirits, for whom I died, for whom,
 Fore-fated, fore-atoned for from the first,
 All Heaven reserves the fullness of its bliss ;
 Creator and created ! witness both,
 How I have loved ye, as God-natured life
 Alone can love and suffer. Let the earth,
 And every orb, the offspring of all air,
 Perish ; but all I die for, live for me.

GOD.

The earth shall not be when her sabbath ends,
 In the high close of order.

LUCIFER. Heaven, farewell !
 Hell is more bearable than nothingness.

THEONES. Thou, God, art Lord of mercy ; and Thy
 thoughts
 Are high above the star-dust of the world !
 The spheres themselves are but as shining noughts
 Upon the mantle of the night impearled.
 From rank to rank in Thearchy divine,
 We angel raylets gladden in thy sight ;

Whose thousand thrones are holy in the heavens,
And hidden in thy universal light.

DOMINATIONS. Between Creation and Destruction now
The lull of creatural action intervenes.

God rests; and the world is working out its week;
His hand is in His bosom, and at rest.

But what was gradually made shall be
Most suddenly unmade. That arm which now
Slumbers upon His breast shall yet wave forth;
And from the lightning pathway of His feet,
Like to the gossamer woof, beaded with dew,
Which stretcheth o'er the morning traveller's walk,
The ætherial web, world-studded, of the skies,
Shall pass into perdition; for, behold!

His oath is on the altar of the heavens,
And never can be cancelled. All shall end.

The system of material worlds shall cease;
Replaced by spheres of spiritual light.

Matter is not the ultimate, but is born
Of the Eternal and the virgin void.

And Thee, O Lord, who holdest in thine hand
The infinite, as a ball, the worlds obey;

Yet o'er the meanest atom reignest Thou
Omnipotent, as o'er the universe.

POWERS. Thy might is self-creative, and Thy works
Immortal, temporal, destructible,

Are ever in thy sight and blessed there.

The Heavens are Thy bosom, and Thine eye
Is high o'er all existence; yea the worlds
Are but Thy shining foot-prints upon space.

PRINCEDOMS. Eternal Lord! Thy strength compels the
worlds,

And bows the heads of ages; at Thy voice
Their unsubstantial essence wears away.

VIRTUES. All-favouring God! we glory but in Thee.
Ye Heavens exalt, expand yourselves; they come,
The infinite generations, all Divine,

Of Deity, our brethren and our friends.

ARCHANGELS. Thou who hast thousand names, as night
 hath stars,
 Which light Thee up to eye create, yet not
 One thousandth part illumine Thy boundlessness,
 Nor that abyss of Being midst of which
 Thy countless wonders constellate themselves ;
 Thy light, the light we dwell in, shall at last
 Fulfil the universe, and all be bliss ;
 The consummation of all ages come.
 We praise Thee for Thy mercies, and for this,
 The first, and last, and greatest of all boons.

ANGELS. Thee, God! we praise
 Through our ne'er sunsetting days,
 And Thy just ways,
 Divine :
 In thy hand is every spirit,
 And the meed the same may merit ;
 All which all the worlds inherit
 Are Thine.
 It is not unto creatures given
 To scale the purposes of Heaven,
 Always just and kind ;
 But before Thy mighty breath,
 Life and spirit, dust and death,
 The boundless All is driven,
 Like clouds by wind.

ANGEL OF EARTH. Woe! woe at last in Heaven!
 Earth to death is given ;
 The ends of things hang still
 Over them as a sky ;
 Do what we will,
 All's for eternity!

SCENE—*Wood and Water—Sunset.*FESTUS *alone.*

FESTUS. This is to be a mortal and immortal !
 To live within a circle,—and to be
 That dark point where the shades of all things around
 Meet, mix, and deepen. All things unto me
 Shew their dark sides. Somewhere there must be light.
 Oh ! I feel like a seed in the cold earth ;
 Quickening at heart, and pining for the air.
 Passion is destiny. The heart is its own
 Fate. It is well youth's gold rubs off so soon.
 The heart gets dizzy with its drunken dance,
 And the voluptuous vanities of life
 Enchain, enchant, and cheat my soul no more.
 My spirit is on edge. I can enjoy
 Nought which has not the honied sting of sin ;
 That soothing fret which makes the young untried
 Longing to be beforehand with their nature,
 In dreams and liveness cry, they die to live ;
 That wanton whetting of the soul, which while
 It gives a finer, keener edge for pleasure,
 Wastes more and dulls the sooner. Rouse thee, heart ;
 Bow of my life, thou yet art full of spring !
 My quiver still hath many purposes.
 Yet what is worth a thought of all things here ?
 How mean, how miserable every care ;
 How doubtful, too, the system of the mind !
 And then the ceaseless, changeless, hopeless round
 Of weariness, and heartlessness, and woe,
 And vice, and vanity ! Yet these make life ;
 The life at least I witness, if not feel.
 No matter—we are immortal. How I wish
 I could love men ! for amid all life's quests
 There seems but worthy one—to do men good.

It matters not how long we live, but how.
 For as the parts of one manhood while here
 We live in every age : we think, and feel,
 And feed upon the coming and the gone
 As much as on the now time. Man is one :
 And he hath one great heart. It is thus we feel,
 With a gigantic throb athwart the sea,
 Each others' rights and wrongs ; thus are we men.
 Let us think less of men and more of God.
 Sometimes the thought comes swiftening over us,
 Like a small bird winging the still blue air ;
 And then again, at other times, it rises
 Slow, like a cloud which scales the skies all breathless,
 And just over head lets itself down on us.
 Sometimes we feel the wish across the mind
 Rush like a rocket tearing up the sky,
 That we should join with God and give the world
 The slip : but while we wish, the world turns round,
 And peeps us in the face—the wanton world ;
 We feel it gently pressing down our arm—
 The arm we had raised to do for truth such wonders ;
 We feel it softly bearing on our side—
 We feel it touch and thrill us through the body,—
 And we are fools, and there's an end of us.
 'Tis a fine thought that sometime end we must.
 There sets the sun of suns ! dies in all fire,
 Like Asshur's death-great monarch. God of might !
 We love and live on power. It is spirit's end.
 Mind must subdue. To conquer is its life.
 Why mad'st Thou not one spirit, like the sun,
 To king the world ? And oh ! might I have been
 That sun-mind, how I would have warmed the world
 To love and worship and bright life !

LUCIFER, *suddenly appearing.* Not thou !

Hadst thou more power the more would'st thou misuse.

FESTUS. Who art thou, pray ? I saw thee not before.
 It seems as thou hadst grown out of the air.

LUCIFER. Thou knowest me well. Though stranger to
thine eye
I am not to thine heart.

FESTUS. I know thee not.

LUCIFER. Come nearer. Look on me. I am above thee ;
Beneath thee, and around thee, and before thee.

FESTUS. Why, art thou all things, or dost go through all ?
A spirit, or embodied blast of air ?
I feel thou art a spirit.

LUCIFER. Yea, I am.

FESTUS. I knew it. I am glad, yet tremble so.
What hours upon hours have I longed for this,
And hoped that thought or prayer might produce.
I have besought the stars, with tears, to send
A power unto me ; and have set the clouds,
Until I thought I saw one coming : but
The shadowy giant always thinned away,
And I was fated unimmortalized.

What shall I do ? Oh ! let me kneel to thee.

LUCIFER. Nay, rise ? and I'll not say, for thine own sake,
That thou dost pray in private to the Devil.

FESTUS. Father of lies, thou liest.

LUCIFER. I am he !

It is enough to make the Devil merry,
To think that men call on me momentarily,
Deeming me ever dungeoned fast in hell ;
Swearers and swaggerers jeer at my name ;
And oft indeed it is a special jest
With witling gallants. Let me once appear !
Woe's me ! they faint and shudder—pale and pray ;
The burning oath which quivered on the lip,
Starts back, and sears and blisters up the tongue ;
Confusion ransacks the abandoned heart,
Quells the bold blood, and o'er the vaulted brow
Slips the white woman-hand. To judgment, ho !
The very pivot of the earth seems snapped ;
And down they drop like ruins to repent.

Such be the bravery of mighty man !

FESTUS. I must be mad ; or mine eye cheats my brain ;
And this strange phantom comes from overthought,
Like the white lightning from a day too hot.
It must be so. But I will pass it.

LUCIFER. Stay !

FESTUS. Oh save me, God ! He is reality !

LUCIFER. And now thou kneel'st to Heaven. Fye,
graceless boy !

Mocking thy Maker with a cast-off prayer ;
For had not I the first fruits of thy faith ?

FESTUS. Tempter, away ! From all the crowds of life
Why single me ? Why score the young green bole
For fellage ? Go ! Am I the youngest, worst ?
No. Light the fires of hell with other souls ;
Mine shall not burn with thee.

LUCIFER. Thou judgest harshly.
Can I not touch thee without slaying thee ?

FESTUS. Why art thou here ? What wouldst thou have
with me ?

LUCIFER. 'Fore all I would have gentle words and looks.

FESTUS. I pray thee, go.

LUCIFER. I cannot quit thee yet.
But why so sad ? Wilt kneel to me again ?
This leafy closet is most apt for prayer.

FESTUS. Yes ; I will pray for thee and myself.

LUCIFER. Waste not thy prayers ; I scatter them : they
reach

No further than thy breath—a yard or so.
And as for me, I heed them, need them not.
My nature God knows and hath fixed ; and He
Recks little of the manners of the world ;
Wicked He holdeth it and unrepentant.

FESTUS. Therefore the more some ought to pray.

LUCIFER. To blow
A kiss, a bubble and a prayer hath like
Effect and satisfaction.

To crown thy life with liberty and joy,
And make thee free and mighty even as I am.

FESTUS. I would not be as thou art for hell's throne;
Add earth's—add Heaven's.

LUCIFER. I knew thy proud high heart.
To test its worth and mark I held it brave,
In shape and being thus myself I came;
Not in disguise of opportunity—
Not as some silly toy, which serves for most—
Not in the mask of lucre, lust nor power—
Not in a goblin size nor cherub form—
But as the soul of hell and evil came I
With leave to give the kingdom of the world—
The freedom of thyself.

FESTUS. Good: prove thy powers.

LUCIFER. Do I not prove them? Who but I, that have
Immortal might o'er mine own mind, and o'er
All hearts and spirits of the living world,
Would share it with another, or forego,
One hour, the great enjoyment of the whole?
And who but I give men what each loves best?

FESTUS. Open the Heavens, and let me look on God.
Open my heart, and let me see myself.
Then I'll believe thee.

LUCIFER. Thou shalt not believe
For that I give thee, but for that I am.
Believe me first; then I will prove myself.
Though sick I know thee of the joys of sense,
Yet those thou lovest most I will make pure,
And render worthy of thy love; unfilm them,
That so thou mayst not dally with the blind.
Thou shalt possess them to their very souls.
Pleasure, and love, and unimagined beauty;
All, all that be delicious, brilliant, great,
Of worldly things are mine, and mine to give.

FESTUS. What can be counted pleasure after love?
Like the young lion which hath once lapped blood,

The heart can ne'er be coaxed back to aught else.

LUCIFER. I will sublime it for thee all to bliss :
As yet it hath but made thee wretched.

FESTUS. Spirit,
It is not bliss I seek ; I care not for it.
I am above the low delights of life.
The life I live is in a dark cold cavern,
Where I wander up and down, feeling for something
Which is to be—and must be—what I know not ;
But the incarnation of my destiny
Is nigh.

LUCIFER. It is thy fate which weighs upon thee.
Necessity sits on humanity,
Like to the world on Atlas' neck. 'Tis this,
And the sultry sense of overdrawn life.

FESTUS. True ;
The worm of the world hath eaten out my heart.

LUCIFER. I will renew it in thee. It shall be
The bosom favourite of every beauty,
Even like a rosebud. Thou shalt render happy,
By naming who may love thee. Come with me.

FESTUS. I have a love on earth, and one in Heaven.

LUCIFER. Thou shalt love ten as others love but one !

FESTUS. Oh ! I was glad when something in me said
Come, let us worship beauty ! and I bowed ;
And went about to find a shrine ; but found
None that my soul, when seeing, said enough to.
Many I met with where I put up prayers,
And had them more than answered ; some where love
Filled the whole place as 'twere oppressed with Heaven.
And I worshipped, partly because others did ;
Partly because I could not help myself.
But none of these were for me ; and away
I went champing and choking in proud pain ;
In a burning wrath that not a sea could slake.
So I betook me to the sounding sea ;
And overheard its slumberous mutterings

Of a revenge on man ; whereat almost
 I gladdened, for I felt savage as the sea.
 I had only one thing to behold—the sea ;
 I had only one thing to believe—I loved ;
 Until that lonesome sameness grew sublime
 And darkly beautiful as death, when some
 Bright soul regains its star-home, or as Heaven
 Just when the stars falter forth, one by one,
 Like the first words of love from a maiden's lips.
 There are points from which we can command our life ;
 When the soul sweeps the future like a glass ;
 And coming things, full freighted with our fate,
 jut out, dark, on the offing of the mind.
 Let them come ! Many will go down in sight ;
 In the billow's joyous dash of death go down.
 At last came love ; not whence I sought nor thought it ;
 As on a ruined and bewildered wight
 Rises the roof he meant to have lost for ever.
 On came the living vessel of all love ;
 Terrible in its beauty as a serpent ;
 Rode down upon me like a ship full sail,
 And, bearing me before it, kept me up
 Spite of the drowning speed at which we drave
 On, on, until we sank both. Was not this love ?

LUCIFER. Why, how can I tell ? I am not in love ;
 But I have ofttimes heard mine angels call
 Most piteously on their lost loves in Heaven ;
 And, as I suffer, I have seen them come ;
 Seen starlike faces peep between the clouds,
 And hell become a tolerable torment.
 Some souls lose all things but the love of beauty ;
 And by that love they are redeemable ;
 For in love and beauty they acknowledge good ;
 And good is God—the great Necessity.

FESTUS. I loved her for that she was beautiful ;
 And that to me she seemed to be all nature
 And all varieties of things in one :

Would set at night in clouds of tears, and rise
 All light and laughter in the morning : fear
 No petty customs nor appearances,
 But think what others only dreamed about,
 And say what others did but think, and do
 What others would but say, and glory in
 What others dared but do ; so pure withal
 In soul : in heart and act such conscious, yet
 Such careless innocence, she made round her
 A halo of delight ; 'twas these which won me ;—
 And that she never schooled within her breast
 One thought or feeling, but gave holiday
 To all ; and that she made all even mine
 In the communion of love : and we
 Grew like each other, for we loved each other ;
 She, mild and generous as the sun in spring ;
 And I, like earth, all budding out with love.

LUCIFER. And then, love's old end, falsehood ; nothing
 worse

I hope ?

FESTUS. What's worse than falsehood ? to deny
 The god that is within us, and in all
 Is love ? Love hath as many vanities
 As charms ; and this, perchance, the chief of both :
 To make our young heart's track upon the first,
 And snowlike fall of feeling which overspreads
 The bosom of the youthful maiden's mind,
 More pure and fair than even its outward type.
 If one did thus, was it from vanity ?
 Or thoughtlessness, or worse ? Nay, let it pass.
 The beautiful are never desolate ;
 But some one alway loves them—God or man.
 If man abandons, God himself takes them.
 And thus it was. She whom I once loved died.
 The lightning loathes its cloud—the soul its clay.
 Can I forget that hand I took in mine,
 Pale as pale violets ; that eye, where mind

And matter met alike divine ? ah, no !
 May God that moment judge me when I do !
 Oh ! she was fair : her nature once all spring,
 And deadly beauty like a maiden sword ;
 Startlingly beautiful. I see her now !
 Whate'er thou art thy soul is in my mind ;
 Thy shadow hourly lengthens o'er my brain,
 And peoples all its pictures with thyself.
 Gone, not forgot—passed, not lost—thou shalt shine
 In Heaven like a bright spot in the sun !
 She said she wished to die, and so she died ;
 For, cloudlike, she poured out her love, which was
 Her life to freshen this parched heart. It was thus :
 I said we were to part, but she said nothing.
 There was no discord—it was music ceased—
 Life's thrilling, bounding, bursting joy. She sate
 Like a house-god, her hands fixed on her knee ;
 And her dark hair lay loose and long around her,
 Through which her wild bright eye flashed like a flint.
 She spake not, moved not, but she looked the more,
 As if her eye were action, speech, and feeling.
 I felt it all ; and came and knelt beside her.
 The electric touch solved both our souls together.
 Then comes the feeling which unmakes, undoes ;
 Which tears the sealike soul up by the roots,
 And lashes it in scorn against the skies.
 Twice did I madly swear to God, hand clenched,
 That not even He nor death should tear her from me.
 It is the saddest and the sorest sight
 One's own love weeping ;—but why call on God,
 But that the feeling of the boundless bounds
 All feeling, as the welkin doth the world ?
 It is this which ones us with the whole and God.
 Then first we wept ; then closed and clung together ;
 And my heart shook this building of my breast,
 Like a live engine booming up and down.
 She fell upon me like a snow-wreath thawing.

Never were bliss and beauty, love and woe,
 Ravelled and twined together into madness,
 As in that one wild hour; to which all else,
 The past, is but a picture—that alone
 Is real, and for ever there in front;
 Making a black blank on one side of life,
 Like a blind eye. But after that I left her;
 And only saw her once again alive.
 And now I am alone. Say on! What more
 Can tempt save union of love with Death?
 But yester-eve it was she died, and now
 Scarce hath the spirit yet aspired to Heaven.
 I feel it hovering round me. Let mine eyes
 But realize their faith, and I am thine.
 The soul first, then the body and the grave
 Are welcome or indifferent as may be.

LUCIFER. With those whom Death hath drawn I meddle
 not.

My part is with the living solely here.
 I have not told thee half I will do for thee.
 All secrets thou shalt ken—all mysteries construe;
 At nothing marvel. All the veins which stretch,
 Unsearchable by human eyes, of lore
 Most precious, most profound, to thine shall bare
 And vulgar lie like dust. The world within,
 The world above thee, and the dark domain,
 Mine own thou shalt o'errule; and he alone
 Who rightly can esteem such high delights,
 He only merits—he alone shall have.

FESTUS. And if I have shall I be happier?
 What is pleasure? What, happiness?

LUCIFER. It is that
 I vouchsafe to thee.

FESTUS. Am I tempted thus
 Unto my fall?

LUCIFER. God wills or lets it be.
 How thinkest thou?

FESTUS. That I will go with thee.

LUCIFER. From God I come.

FESTUS. I do believe thee, spirit.

He will not let thee harm me. Him I love,

And thee I fear not. I obey him.

LUCIFER. Good.

Both time and ease are urgent. Come away.

FESTUS. Give me a breathing-time to fortify,
Within myself, the promise I have made.

LUCIFER. Expect me, then, at midnight, here. Remember,
That thou canst any time repent.

FESTUS. Ay, true.

LUCIFER. Repentance never yet did aught on earth ;
It undoes many good things. Of all men,
Heaven shield me from the wretch who can repent !

SCENE—*Water and Wood—Midnight.*

FESTUS, *alone.*

All things are calm, and fair, and passive. Earth
Looks as if lulled upon an angel's lap
Into a breathless dewy sleep : so still
That we can only say of things, they be !
The lakelet now, no longer vexed with gusts,
Replaces on her breast the pictured moon
Pearled round with stars. Sweet imaged scene of time
To come, perchance, when, this vain life o'erspent,
Earth may some purer beings' presence bear ;
Mayhap even God may walk among His saints,
In eminence and brightness like yon moon,
Mildly outbeaming all the beads of light
Strung o'er Night's proud dark brow. How strangely fair
Yon round still star, which looks half suffering from,
And half rejoicing in its own strong fire ;
Making itself a lonelihood of light,

Like Deity, where'er in Heaven it dwells.
 How can the beauty of material things
 So win the heart and work upon the mind,
 Unless like-natured with them? Are great things
 And thoughts of the same blood? They have like effect.

LUCIFER. Why doubt on mind? What matter how we call
 That which all feel to be their noblest part?
 Even spirits have a better and a worse:
 For every thing created must have form.
 Passions they have, somewhat like thine; but less
 Of grossness and that downwardness of soul
 Which men have. It is true they have no earth;
 For what they live on is above themselves.

FESTUS. There seems a sameness among things; for mind
 And matter speak, in causes, of one God.
 The inward and the outward worlds are like;
 The pure and gross but differ in degree.
 Tears, feeling's bright embodied form, are not
 More pure than dewdrops, Nature's tears, which she
 Sheds in her own breast for the fair which die.
 The sun insists on gladness; but at night,
 When he is gone, poor Nature loves to weep.

LUCIFER. There is less real difference among things
 Than men imagine. They overlook the mass,
 But fasten each on some particular crumb,
 Because they feel that they can equal that,
 Of doctrine, or belief, or party cause.

FESTUS. That is the madness of the world—and that
 Would I remove.

LUCIFER. It is imbecility,
 Not madness.

FESTUS. Oh! the brave and good who serve
 A worthy cause can only one way fail;
 By perishing therein. Is it to fail?
 No; every great or good man's death is a step
 Firm set toward their end—the end of being,
 Which is the good of all and love of God.

The world must have great minds, even as great spheres
 Or suns, to govern lesser restless minds,
 While they stand still and burn with life; to keep
 Them in their places, and to light and heat them.
 If I desire immortal life for aught,
 It is to learn the mystery of mind
 And somewhat more of God. Let others rule
 Systems or succour saints, if such things please;
 To live like light or die in light like dew,
 Either, I should be blest.

LUCIFER.

It may not be.

For as we do not see the sun himself,
 It is but the light about him, like a ring
 Of glory round the forehead of a saint, so
 God thou wilt never see. His naked love
 Is terrible; so great that saints dread more
 To be forgiven than sinners do to die.

FESTUS. Men have a claim on God; and none who hath
 A heart of kindness, reverence, and love,
 But dare look God in the face and ask His smile.
 He dwells in no fierce light—no cloud of flame;
 And if it were, Faith's eye can look through hell,
 And through the solid world. We must all think
 On God. Yon water must reflect the sky.
 Midnight! Day hath too much of light for us,
 To see things spiritually. Mind and Night
 Will meet, though in silence, like forbidden lovers,
 With whom to see each other's sacred form
 Must satisfy. The stillness of deep bliss,
 Sound as the silence of the high hill-top
 Where thunder finds no echo—like God's voice
 Upon the worldling's proud, cold, rocky heart—
 Fills full the sky; and the eye shares with Heaven
 That look, so like to feeling, which the bright
 And glorious things of Nature ever wear.
 There is much to think and feel of things beyond
 This earth; which lie, as we deem, upwards—far

From the day's glare and riot—they are Night's!
Oh! could we lift the future's sable shroud!

LUCIFER. Behind a shroud what should'st thou see but
death?

FESTUS. Spirit is like the thread whereon are strung
The beads or worlds of life. It may be here,
It may be there, that I shall live again;
In yon strange world whose long nights know no star,
But seven fair maidlike moons attending him
Perfect his sky—perchance in one of those—
But live again I shall wherever it be.

We long to learn the future—love to guess.

LUCIFER. The science of the future is to man,
But what the shadow of the wind might be.

Such thoughts are vain and useless.

FESTUS. Forced on us.

LUCIFER. All things are of necessity.

FESTUS. Then best.

But the good are never fatalists. The bad
Alone act by necessity, they say.

LUCIFER. It matters not what men assume to be;
Or good, or bad, they are but what they are.

FESTUS. What is necessity? Are we, and thou,
And all the worlds, and the whole infinite
We cannot see, but working out God's thoughts?
And have we no self-action? Are all God?

LUCIFER. Then hath He sin and all absurdity.

FESTUS. Yet, if created Being have free-will,
Is it not wrong to judge it may traverse
God's own high will, and yet impossible
To think on't otherwise?

LUCIFER. It may be so.

All creature wills, and all their ends and powers
Must come within the boundless scope of God's.

FESTUS. And all our powers are but weaknesses
To what we shall have, and to that God hath.
Doth not the wish, too, point the likelihood

From all. Mortality is mine—the green
 Unripened universe. But as the fruit
 Matures, and world by world drops mellowed off
 The wrinkling stalk of Time, as thine own race
 Hath seen of stars now vanished—all is hid
 From me. My part is done. What after comes
 I know not more than thou.

FESTUS.

Raise me a spirit!

Awake, ye dead! out with the secret, Death;
 The grave hath no pride, nor the rise-again.
 Let each one bring the bane whereof he died.
 Bring the man his, the maiden hers! Oh! half
 Mankind are murderers of themselves or souls.
 Yea, what is life but lingering suicide?
 Wake, dead! Ye know the truth; yet there ye lie
 All mingling, mouldering, perishing together,
 Like run sand in the hour-glass of old Time.
 Death is the mad world's asylum. There is peace;
 Destruction's quiet and equality.
 Night brings out stars as sorrow shews us truths:
 Though many, yet they help not; bright, they light not.
 They are too late to serve us: and sad things
 Are aye too true. We never see the stars
 Till we can see nought but them. So with truth.
 And yet if one would look down a deep well,
 Even at noon, we might see those same stars
 Far fairer than the blinding blue—the truth.
 Probe the profound of thine own nature, man!
 And thou may'st see reflected, e'en in life,
 The worlds, the Heavens, the ages; by and by,
 The coming come. Then welcome, world-eyed Truth!
 But there are other eyes men better love
 Than Truth's: for when we have her she is so cold,
 And proud, we know not what to do with her.
 We cannot understand her, cannot teach;
 She makes us love her, but she loves not us;
 And quits us as she came and looks back never.

Wherefore we fly to Fiction's warm embrace,
 With her to relax and bask ourselves at ease ;
 And, in her loving and unhindering lap
 Voluptuously lulled, we dream at most
 On death and truth ; she knows them, loves them not ;
 Therefore we hate them and deny them both.
 Call up the dead.

LUCIFER. Let rest while rest they may.
 For free from pain and from this world's wear and tear
 It may be a relief to them to rot ;
 And it must be that at the day of doom,
 If mortals should take up immortal life,
 They will curse me with a thunder which shall shake
 The sun from out the socket of his sphere.
 The curse of all created. Think on it.

FESTUS. Those souls thou meanest whom thou hast
 ruined, damned.

LUCIFER. Nor only those ; when once the virgin bloom
 Of soul is soiled—and rudely hath my hand
 Swept o'er the swelling clusters of all life—
 Little it matters whether crushed or touched
 Scarcely : each speaks the spoiler hath been there.
 The saved, the lost, shall curse me both alike :
 God too shall curse me, and I, I, myself.
 That curse is ever greatening—quick with hell ;
 The coming consummation of all woe.

FESTUS. O man, be happy. Die and cease for ever.
 Why wear we not the shroud alway, that robe
 Which speaks our rank on earth, our privilege ?
 To know I have a deathless soul I would lose it.

LUCIFER. Believest thou all I tell thee ?

FESTUS. All, I do.

Stringing the stars at random round her head,
 Like a pearl network, there she sits—bright night !
 I love night more than day—she is so lovely.
 But I love night the most because she brings
 My love to me in dreams which scarcely lie ;

Oh, all but truth and lovelier oft than truth ;
 Let me have dreams like these, sweet Night, for ever,
 When I shall wake no more ; an endless dream
 Of love and holy beauty 'mid the stars ;
 And earth and Heaven for me may share between them
 The rough realities of other bliss.

LUCIFER. I see thy heart and I will grant thy wish.
 I have lied to thee. I have command over spirits.
 I have beheld them, bodiless as space.
 Whom wilt thou that I call ?

FESTUS. Mine Angela !

LUCIFER. There is an Angel ever by thine hand.
 What seest thou ?

FESTUS. It is my love. It is she !
 My glory, spirit, beauty ! let me touch thee.
 Nay do not shrink back : well then I am wrong :
 Thou didst not use to shrink from me, my love.
 Angela ! dost thou hear me ? Speak to me.
 And thou art there—looking alive and dead.
 Thy beauty is then incorruptible.
 I thought so, oft as I have looked on thee.
 Thou art too much even now for me as once.
 I cannot gather what I raved to say ;
 Nor why I had thee hither. Stay, sweet sprite !
 Dear art thou to me now, as in that hour
 When first Love's wave of feeling, spray-like broke
 Into bright utterance, and we said we loved.
 Yea, but I must come to thee. Move no more !
 Art thou in death or Heaven, or from the stars ?
 Have I done wrong in calling for thee thus ?
 What art thou ? Speak, love ; whisper me as wont
 In the dear times gone by ; or durst thou not
 Unfold the mystery of thine and mine
 Own being ? Was it Death who hushed thy lips ?
 Is his cold finger there still ? Let me come !
 She is not !

LUCIFER. And thou canst not bring her back.

FESTUS. I will not, cannot be without her. Call her.

LUCIFER. I call on spirits and I make them come :
 But they depart according to their own will.
 Another time and she shall speak with thee—
 Ere long—and she shall shew thee where she dwells,
 And how doth pass her immortality ;—
 If lengthening decay can so be called.
 Can lines finite one way be infinite
 Another ? And yet such is deathlessness.

FESTUS. It is hard to deem that spirits cease, that thought
 And feeling flesh-like perish in the dust.
 Shall we know those again in a future state
 Whom we have known and loved on earth ? Say yes !

LUCIFER. The mind hath features as the body hath.

FESTUS. But is it mind which shall rerise ?

LUCIFER. Man were
 Not man without the mind he had in life.

FESTUS. Shall all defects of mind and fallacies
 Of feeling be immortalized ? all needs,
 All joys, all sorrows, be again gone through,
 Before the final crisis be imposed ?
 Shall Heaven but be old Earth created new ?
 Or earth, treelike, transplanted into Heaven,
 To flourish by the waters of all life,
 And we within its shade, as heretofore,
 Cropping its fruit, with life-seeds cored at heart ?

LUCIFER. Man's nature, physical and psychical,
 Will be together raised, changed, glorified ;
 And all shall be alike, like God ; and all
 Unlike each other, and themselves. The earth
 Shall vanish from the thoughts of those she bore,
 As have the idols of the olden time
 From men's hearts of the present. All delight
 And all desire shall be with Heavenly things,
 And the new nature God bestowed on man.

FESTUS. Then man shall be no more man, but an angel.

LUCIFER. When he is dead and buried what remains,—

That such an obscure, contradictory thing
Should be perpetuated anywhere ?

FESTUS. Oh! if God hates the flesh, why made He it
So beautiful that e'en its semblance maddens ?
Am I to credit what I think I have seen ?
Or am I suffering some deceit of thine ?

LUCIFER. I am explaining, not deluding.

FESTUS. True.

Defining night by darkness, death by dust.
I run the gauntlet of a file of doubts,
Each one of which down hurls me to the ground.
I ask a hundred reasons what they mean,
And every one points gravely to the ground,
With one hand, and to Heaven with the other.
In vain I shut mine eyes. Truth's burning beam
Forces them open, and when open, blinds them.

LUCIFER. Doubly unhappy !

FESTUS. I am too unhappy

To die ; as some too way-worn cannot sleep.
Planets and suns, that set themselves on fire
By their own rapid self-revolvements, are
But like some hearts. Existence I despise.
The shape of man is wearisome ; a bird's—
A worm's—a whirlwind's—I would change with aught.
Time ! dash thine hour-glass down. Have done with this.
The course of Nature seems a course of Death,
And nothingness the sole substantial thing.

LUCIFER. Corruption springs from light : 'tis the same
power

Creates, preserves, destroys : the matter which
It works on, being one ever-changing form,—
The living, and the dying, and the dead.

FESTUS. I'll not believe a thing which I have known.
Hell was made hell for me, and I am mad.

LUCIFER. True venom churns the froth out of the lips ;
It works, and works, like any waterwheel.
And she then was the maiden of thy heart.

Am but an atom of thee, and a breath,
 Passing unseen and unrecorded like
 The tiny throb here in my temple's pulse.
 Thou art for ever and the sacred bride
 Of Heaven—worthy the passion of our God,
 O! full of light, love, grace!—the grace of all
 Who owe to thee their life; thy Maker's love;
 His face's light. All thine rejoice in thee;
 Thou in thyself for aye; rolling through air
 As seraphs' song out of their trumpet lips
 Rolls round the skies of Heaven. See the sun!
 God's crest upon His azure shield the Heavens.
 Canst thou, a spirit, look upon him?

LUCIFER.

Ay.

I led him from the void, where he was wrought,
 By this right hand, up to the glorious seat
 His brightness overshadows; built his throne
 On piles of gold, and laid his chambers on
 Beams of gold; wrapped a veil of fire around
 His face, and bade him reign and burn like me.
 There, ever since, sat warming into life
 These worlds as in a nest, he has and is.
 But fall he must. I have done, do, nought else
 From my first thought to this and to my last.
 No matter; it is beneath this mind of mine
 To reckon of aught. I bear, have borne the ill
 Of ages, of eternities—and must.
 I care not. I shall sway the world as now,
 Which worse and worse sinks with me as I sink,
 Till finite souls vanish as a vapour;
 Till immortality, the proud thing, perish;
 And God alone be and eternity.
 Then will I clap my hands and cry to Him,
 I have done! Have Thy will now! There is none but Thee.
 I am the first created being. I
 Will be the last to perish and to die.

FESTUS. Thou art a fit monitor, methinks, of pleasure.

LUCIFER. To the high air sunshine and cloud are one ;
Pleasure and pain to me. Thou and the earth
Alone feel these as different—for ye
Are under them—the Heavens and I above.

FESTUS. But tell me, have ye scenes like this in hell ?

LUCIFER. Nay, not in Heaven.

FESTUS. What is Heaven ? not the toys
Of singing, love, and music ? Such a place
Were fit for women only.

LUCIFER. Heaven is no place ;
Unless it be a place with God, allwhere.
It is the being good—the knowing God—
The consciousness of happiness and power ;
With knowledge which no spirit e'er can lose,
But doth increase in every state ; and aught
It most delights in the full leave to do.
But why consume me with such questions ? Why
Add earth to hell, in the great chain of worlds
Which God in wrath hath bound about me ?

FESTUS. Why !
'Twas therefore that I closed with thee, great Fiend !
That thou might'st answer all things I proposed,
Or bring me those who would do.

LUCIFER. All these things
Thou wilt know sometime, when to see and know
Are one ; to see a thing and comprehend
The nature of it essentially ; perceive
The reason and the science of its being,
And the relations with the universe
Of all things actual or possible,
Mortal, immortal, spiritual, gross.
This, when the spirit is made free of Heaven,
Is the divine result ; proportioned still
To the intelligence as human ; for
There are degrees in Heaven, as everything,
By God's will. Unimaginable space
As full of suns as is earth's sun of atoms,

Faileth to match His boundless variousness ;
 And ever must do, though a thousand worlds,
 As diverse from each other as is thine
 From any of thy system's, were elanced
 Each minute into life unendingly.
 All of yon worlds, and all who dwell in them,
 Stand in diverse degrees of bliss and being.
 Through the ten thousand times ten thousandth grade
 Of blessedness, above this world's and man's
 Ability to feel or to conceive,
 The soul may pass and yet know nought of Heaven,
 More than a dim and miniature reflection
 Of its most bright infinity ;—for God
 Makes to each spirit its peculiar Heaven ;—
 And yet is Heaven a bright reality,
 As this or any of yon worlds ; a state
 Where all is loveliness, and power, and love ;
 Where all sublimest qualities of mind
 Not infinite, are limited alone
 By the surrounding Godhood, and where nought
 But what produceth glory and delight
 To creature and Creator is ; where all
 Enjoy entire dominion o'er themselves,
 Acts, feelings, thoughts, conditions, qualities,
 Spirit, and soul, and mind ; all under God,
 For spirit is soul Deified ;—while earth,
 To the immortal vast, God-natured spirit,
 Is but a spell, which having served to light
 A lamp, is cast into consuming fire.

FESTUS. And hell ? Is it nought but pits, and chains,
 and flames ?

LUCIFER. An ever greatening sense of ill and woe,
 Aye crushing down the soul, but filling never
 Its infinite capacity of pain.

FESTUS. But human nature is not infinite,
 And therefore cannot suffer endlessly.

LUCIFER. God may create in time what shall endure

Unto eternity. With Him is no
Distinction, nor in that which is of Him.

FESTUS. Then is not soul of God, but man and earth.
Soul when made spirit is of earth no more,
Nor time, but of eternity and Heaven.
It is but when in the body, and bent down
To worldly ends, that human souls become
Objects of time, as most are, till the hour
Comes when the soul of man shall be made one
With God's spirit; and where shall woe be then?
Where sin? where suffering? when the mortal soul
Shall be Divinized and eternized by
God's very spirit put upon it?

LUCIFER. How
Can souls begotten to predestined doom,
From and before all worlds, be deemed of earth?

FESTUS. Things spiritual, as belonging God,
Are known unto Him, and predestined from
Eternity, nor these alone; but flesh
Forms not nor does it need the care of Fate.

LUCIFER. The object of eternal knowledge must
Have like existence.

FESTUS. Then it cannot be
Bound unto torment; that would be to bring
Torture on godlike essence.

LUCIFER. Hast not heard,
How thine existence here, on earth, is but
The dark and narrow section of a life
Which was with God, long ere the sun was lit,
And shall be yet, when all the bold bright stars
Are dark as death-dust—Immortality
And Wisdom tending thee on either hand,
Thy divine sisters? But do thou believe
E'en what thou wilt. It matters not to me.

FESTUS. Is it the nature or the deed of God
To render finite follies infinite,
Or to eternize sin and death in fire?

For so long as the punishment endures,
The crime lasts. Were it not for thy presence,
Spirit! I would not deem hell were.

LUCIFER. Let not
My presence pass for more than it is worth,
I pray, nor yet my absence. Trust me, I
Could wish, with thee, that hell were blotted out
Of utmost space. 'Tis man himself aye makes
His own God and his hell. But this is truth.

FESTUS. The truth is perilous never to the true,
Nor knowledge to the wise; and to the fool,
And to the false, error and truth alike.
Error is worse than ignorance. But say:—
How can eternal punishment be due
To temporal offences, to a pulse
Of momentary madness?

LUCIFER. Pardon me.
Sin is not temporary. Nothing is,
Of spiritual nature, but hath cause
Immortal and immortal end in all,
As spirits. Therefore till the soul shall be
By grace redeified, as is the soul,
So is the sin, for ever before God.

FESTUS. Sin is not of the spirit, but of that
Which blindeth spirit, heart and brain.

LUCIFER. Believe so.
The law of all the worlds is retribution.

FESTUS. But is it so of God?

LUCIFER. The laws of Heaven
Are not of earth; there law is liberty.

FESTUS. Thou thundercloud of spirits, darkening
The skies and wrecking earth! Could I hate men
How I should joy with thee, even as an eagle,
Nigh famished, in the fellowship of storms;
But I still love them. What will come of men?

LUCIFER. Whatever may, perdition is their meed.
Were Heaven dispeopled for a ministry

To warn them of their ways ; were thou and I
 To monish them ; were Heaven, and Earth, and Hell
 To preach at once, they still would mock and jeer
 As now ; but never repent until too late—
 Until the everlasting hour had struck.

FESTUS. Men might be better if we better deemed
 Of them. The worst way to improve the world
 Is to condemn it. Men may overget
 Delusion—not despair.

LUCIFER. Why love mankind ?
 The affections are thy system's weaknesses ;
 The wasteful outlets of self-maintenances.

FESTUS. The wild flower's tendril, proof of feebleness,
 Proves strength ; and so we fling our feelings out,
 The tendrils of the heart, to bear us up.
 O Earth ! how drear to think to tear oneself,
 Even for an hour, from looks like this of thine ;
 From features, oh ! so fair ; to quit for aye
 The luxury of thy side. Why, why art thou
 Thus glorious, and 'twere not to sate the soul,
 And chide us for the senseless dream of Heaven ?
 The still strong stream sweeps onward to its end,
 Like one of the great purposes of God ;
 Or like, may be, a soul like mine to Him.
 Along yon deep blue vein upon thy bosom,
 Earth ! I could float for ever. See it there—
 Winding among its green and smiling isles,
 Like Charity amidst her children dear ;
 Or Peace, rejoicing in her olive wreaths,
 And gladdening as she glides along the lands.

LUCIFER. And yet all this must end—must pass ; drop
 down
 Oblivion, like a pebble in a pit :
 For God shall lay His hand upon the earth,
 And crush it up like a red leaf.

FESTUS. Not be ?
 I cannot root the thought, nor hold it firm.

LUCIFER. This same sweet world which thou would'st
fondly deem

Eternal, may be ; which I soon shall see
Destruction suck back as the tide a shell.

FESTUS. It will not be yet. I'll woo thee, world, again,
And revel in thy loveliness and love.

I have a heart with room for every joy :
And since we must part some time, while I may,
I'll quaff the nectar in thy flowers, and press
The richest clusters of thy luscious fruit
Into the cup of my desires. I know
My years are numbered not in units yet.
But I cannot live unless I love and am loved ;
Unless I have the young and beautiful
Bound up like pictures in my book of life.

It is the intensesst vanity alone
Which makes us bear with life. Some seem to live,
Whose hearts are like those unlightened stars
Of the first darkness—lifeless, timeless, useless—
With nothing but a cold night air about them ;
Not suns—not planets—darkness organized :
Orbs of a desert darkness : with no soul
To light its watchfire in the wilderness,
And civilize the solitude one moment.

There are such seemingly ; but how or why
They live I know not. This to me is life :
That if life be a burden, I will join
To make it but the burden of a song :
I hate the world's coarse thought. And this is life ;
To watch young beauty's budlike feelings burst
And load the soul with love ;—as that pale flower,
Which opes at eve, spreads sudden on the dark
Its yellow bloom, and sinks the air down with sweets.
Let Heaven take all that's good—Hell all that's foul ;
Leave us the lovely ! and we will ask no more.

LUCIFER. To me it seems time all should end. The sky
Grows gray. It is not so bright nor blue as once.

Well I remember, as it were yesterday,
 When earth and Heaven went happy, hand in hand,
 With all the morning dew of youth about them ;
 With the bright unworldly hearts of youth and truth,
 And the maiden bosoms of the beautiful :—
 Ere earth sinned, or the pure indignant Heavens
 Retreated high, nigh God ; when earth was all
 A creeping mass alive with shapeless things :
 And when there were but three things in the world—
 Monsters, mountains, and water : before age
 Had thickened the eyes of stars ; and while the sea,
 Rejoicing like a ring of saints round God,
 Or Heaven on Heaven about some newborn sun,
 In its sublime samesoundingness, laughed out
 And cried, not I ! Like God I never rest.

FESTUS. God hath His rest ; earth hers. Let me have
 mine.

Yet must I look on thee, fair scene, again,
 Ere I depart. The glory of the world
 Is on all hands. In one encircling ken,
 I gaze on river, sea, isle, continent,
 Mountain, and wood, and wild, and fire-lipped hill,
 And lake, and golden plain, and sun, and Heaven,
 Where the stars brightly die, whose death is day.
 City and port and palace, ships and tents,
 Lie massed and mapped before me. All is here.
 The elements of the world are at my feet,
 Above me and about me. Now would I
 Be and do somewhat beside that I am.
 Canst thou not give me some æthereal slave,
 Of the pure essence of an element—
 Such as my bondless brain hath oftentimes drawn
 In the divine insanity of dreams—
 To stand before me and obey me, spirit ?

LUCIFER. Call out, and see if aught arise to thee.

FESTUS. Green dewy Earth, who standest at my feet,
 Singing and pouring sunshine on thy head,

As naïad native water, speak to me !
 I am thy son. Canst thou not now, as once,
 Bring forth some being dearer, liker to thee
 Than is my race,—titan or tiny fay,
 Stream-nymph or wood-nymph ? She hath ceased to speak,
 Like God, except in thunder, or to look,
 Unless in lightning. Miracles, with earth,
 Are out of fashion as with Heaven.

LUCIFER. More's
 The pity. Call elsewhere. Old earth is hard
 Of hearing, maybe.

FESTUS. I beseech thee, Sea !
 Tossing thy wavy locks in sparkling play,
 Like to a child awakening with the light
 To laughter. Canst not thou disgulp for me,
 From thy deep bosom, deep as Heaven is high,
 Of all thy sea-gods one, or sea-maids ?

LUCIFER. None !

FESTUS. I half despair. Fire ! that art slumbering there,
 Like some stern warrior in his rocky fort,
 After the vast invasion of the world,
 Hast not some flaming imp, or messenger
 Of empyrean element, to whom,
 In virtue of his nature, are both known
 The secrets of the burning, central, void below,
 And yon bright Heaven, out of whose aëry fire
 Are wrought the forms of angels and the thrones ?
 Hast none at hand to do my bidding ? Come !
 Breathe out a spirit for me ! One I ask
 That shall be with me always, as a friend,
 And not like thee, who despotisest o'er
 The heart thou seek'st to serve. I must be free.

LUCIFER. All finite souls must serve ; their widest sway
 Is but the rule of service. This fair earth
 Which thou dost boast so much of, why, thou see'st
 'Tis but the particoloured, scummy, dross
 Of the original element wherefrom

The fiery worlds were framed.

FESTUS.

Air! and thou, Wind!

Which art the unseen similitude of God
 The Spirit, His most meet and mightiest sign;
 The earth with all her steadfastness and strength,
 Sustaining all, and bound about with chains
 Of mountains, as is life with mercies, ranging round
 With all her sister orbs the whole of Heaven,
 Is not so like the unlikenable One
 As thou. Ocean is less divine than thee;
 For although all but limitless, it is yet
 Visible, many a land not visiting.
 But thou art, Lovelike, everywhere; o'er earth,
 O'er ocean triumphing, and aye with clouds,
 That like the ghosts of ocean's billows roll,
 Decking or darkening Heaven. The sun's light
 Floweth and ebbeth daily like the tides;
 The moon's doth grow or lessen, night by night;
 The stirless stars shine forth by fits and hide,
 And our companion planets come and go;—
 And all are known, their laws and liberties.
 But no man can foreset thy coming, none
 Reason against thy going; thou art free,
 The type impalpable of Spirit, thou.
 Thunder is but a momentary thing,
 Like a world's deathrattle, and is like death;
 And lightning, like the blaze of sin, can blind
 Only and slay. But what are these to thee,
 In thine all-present variousness? Now,
 So light as not to wake the snowiest down
 Upon the dove's breast, winning her bright way
 Calm and sublime as Grace unto the soul,
 Towards her far native grove; now, stern and strong
 As ordnance, overturning tree and tower;
 Cooling the white brows of the peaks of fire,—
 Turning the sea's broad furrows like a plough,—
 Fanning the fruitening plans, breathing the sweets

Of meadows, wandering o'er blinding snows,
 And sands like sea-beds and the streets of cities,
 Where men as garnered grain lie heaped together ;
 Freshening the cheeks, and mingling oft the locks
 Of youth and beauty 'neath star-speaking eve ;
 Swelling the pride of canvas, or, in wrath,
 Scattering the fleets of nations like dead leaves :
 In all, the same o'er-mastering sightless force,
 Bowing the highest things of earth to earth,
 And lifting up the dust unto the stars ;
 Fatelike confounding reason, and like God's
 Spirit, conferring life upon the world,—
 Midst all corruption incorruptible ;
 Monarch of all the elements ! hast thou
 No soft Æolian sylph, with sightless wing,
 To spare a mortal for an hour ?

LUCIFER. Peace, peace !

All nature knows that I am with thee here,
 And that thou need'st no minor minister.
 To thee I personate the world—its powers,
 Beliefs, and doubts, and practices.

FESTUS. Are all
 Mine invocations fruitless, then ?

LUCIFER. They are.
 Let us enjoy the world !

FESTUS. If 'twas God's will
 That thou shouldst visit me, He shall not send
 Temptation to my heart in vain. Sweet world !
 We all still cling to thee. Though thou thyself
 Passest away, yet men will hanker about thee,
 Like mad ones by their moping haunts. Men pass,
 Cleaving to things themselves which pass away,
 Like leaves on waves. Thus all things pass for ever,
 Save mind and the mind's need.

LUCIFER. Let us too pass !

SCENE—*A Country Town—Market-place—Noon.*

LUCIFER *and* FESTUS.

LUCIFER. These be the toils and cares of mighty men!
Earth's vermin are as fit to fill her thrones
As these high Heaven's bright seats.

FESTUS. Men's callings all
Are mean and vain; their wishes more so: oft
The man is bettered by his part or place.
How slight a chance may raise or sink a soul!

LUCIFER. What men call accident is God's own part.
He lets ye work your will—it is His own:
But that ye mean not, know not, do not, He doth.

FESTUS. What is life worth without a heart to feel
The great and lovely, and the poetry
And sacredness of things? for all things are
Sacred,—the eye of God is on them all,
And hallows all unto it. It is fine
To stand upon some lofty mountain-thought
And feel the spirit stretch into a view;
To joy in what might be if will and power
For good would work together but one hour.
Yet millions never think a noble thought:
But with brute hate of brightness bay a mind
Which drives the darkness out of them, like hounds.
Throw but a false glare round them, and in shoals
They rush upon perdition: that's the race.
What charm is in this world-scene to such minds
Blinded by dust? What can they do in Heaven,
A state of spiritual means and ends?
Thus must I doubt—perpetually doubt.

LUCIFER. Who never doubted never half believed.
Where doubt there truth is—'tis her shadow. I
Declare unto thee that the past is not.
I have looked over all life, yet never seen

The age that had been. Why then fear or dream
 About the future? Nothing but what is, is;
 Else God were not the Maker that He seems,
 As constant in creating as in being.
 Embrace the present! Let the future pass.
 Plague not thyself about a future. That
 Only which comes direct from God, His spirit,
 Is deathless. Nature gravitates without
 Effort; and so all mortal natures fall
 Deathwards. All aspiration is a toil;
 But inspiration cometh from above,
 And is no labour. The earth's inborn strength
 Could never lift her up to yon stars, whence
 She fell; nor human soul, by native worth,
 Claim Heaven as birthright, more than man may call
 Cloudland his home. The soul's inheritance,
 Its birth-place, and its death-place, is of earth,
 Until God maketh earth and soul anew;
 The one like Heaven the other like Himself.
 So shall the new Creation come at once;
 Sin, the dead branch upon the tree of Life,
 Shall be cut off for ever; and all souls
 Concluded in God's boundless amnesty.

FESTUS. Thou windest and unwindest faith at will.
 What am I to believe?

LUCIFER. Thou mayst believe
 But that which thou art forced to.

FESTUS. Then I feel
 That instinct of immortal life in me,
 Which prompts me to provide for it.

LUCIFER. Perhaps.

FESTUS. Man hath a knowledge of a time to come—
 His most important knowledge: the weight lies
 Nearest the short end: and the world depends
 Upon what is to be. I would deny
 The present, if the future. Oh! there is
 A life to come, or all's a dream.

In one day than a creeping century
 Of sameness. But youth loves and lives on change
 Till the soul sighs for sameness; which at last
 Becomes variety, and takes its place.
 Yet some will last to die out thought by thought,
 And power by power, and limb of mind by limb,
 Like lamps upon a gay device of glass,
 Till all of soul that's left be dry and dark;
 Till even the burden of some ninety years
 Hath crashed into them like a rock; shattered
 Their system as if ninety suns had rushed
 To ruin earth—or heaven had rained its stars;
 Till they become, like scrolls, unreadable
 Through dust and mould. Can they be cleaned and read?
 Do human spirits wax and wane like moons?

LUCIFER. The eye dims and the heart gets old and slow;
 The lithe limb stiffens, and the sun-hued locks
 Thin themselves off, or whitely wither;—still
 Ages not spirit, even in one point,
 Immeasurably small; from orb to orb,
 In ever rising radiance, shining like
 The sun upon the thousand lands of earth.
 Look at the medley, motley throng we meet!
 Some smiling—frowning some; their cares and joys
 Alike not worth a thought—some sauntering slowly,
 As if destruction never could o'ertake them;
 Some hurrying on as fearing judgment swift
 Should trip the heels of death and seize them living.

FESTUS. Grief hallows hearts even while it ages heads;
 And much hot grief, in youth, forces up life
 With power which too soon ripens and which drops.

[*A Funeral passes.*

Whose funeral is this ye follow, friends?

LUCIFER. Would ye have grief, let me come! I am woe.

MOURNER. We want no grief: Festus! she died of grief.

FESTUS. Did ye say she died? oh! I knew her then.
 Set down the body; let me look upon her.

Now, Son of God! what dost Thou now in Heaven
 While one so beautiful lies earthening here?
 I will give up the future for the past;
 The wingéd spirit and the starry home,
 If Thou wilt let her live, and make me love.

MOURNER. She was a lock of Heaven which Heaven
 gave earth,
 And took again, because unworthy of her.

FESTUS. Her air was an immortal's; I have seen
 Stars look on it with feeling; and her eye,
 Wherever she went, it won her way like wine.
 Men bowed to it as to the lifted Host.
 How could I be so cruel? Who but I?
 And now, corruption come; sit; feast thyself;
 This is the choicest banquet thou hast been at.
 Thou art my happier, only rival: thou
 Who takest love from the living—life from beauty—
 Beauty from death—whole robber of the world!

MOURNER. The moment after thou desertedst her
 A cloud came over the prospect of her life;
 And I foresaw how evening would set in
 Early, and dark, and deadly. She was true.

FESTUS. Did I not love thee too? pure, perfect thing!
 This is a soul I see and not a body.
 Go, beauty, rest for aye; go, starry eyes,
 And lips like rosebuds peeping out of snow;
 Go, breast love-filled as a boat's sail with wind,
 Leaping from wave to wave as leaps a child
 Thoughtless o'er grassy graves; go, locks, which have
 The golden embrownment of a lion's eye.
 Yet one more look; farewell, thou well and fair!
 All who but loved thee shall be deathless. Nought
 Named but with thee can perish. Thou and Death
 Have made each other purer, lovelier seem,
 Like snow and moonlight. Never more for thee
 Let eyes be swollen like streams with latter rains!
 To die were rapture having lived with thee.

Thy soul hath passed out of a bodily Heaven
 Into a spiritual. Rest for aye!—
 Pure after love as ere thou wast before ;
 Pure as the dead, in life ; the dead are holy.
 I would I were among them. Let us pass!
 Living is but a habit ; and I mean
 To break myself of it soon.

LUCIFER.

Too soon thou canst not.

Men heed not of the day, how nigh none knows,
 Which brings the consummation of the world.
 But in mine ear the old machine already
 Begins to grate. They would not credit warning,
 Or I would up and cry repent! I will.
 Here's a fair gathering and I feel moved.
 Mortals, repent! the world is nigh to its end ;
 On its last legs, and desperately sick.
 See ye not how it reels round all day long?

BOYS. Oh! here's a ranter. Come, here's fun. Amen.
 I know the church service by heart.

BYSTANDER.

Be off!

You'll serve the church by keeping out of it.

LUCIFER. I am a preacher come to tell ye truth.
 I tell ye too there is no time to be lost ;
 So fold your souls up neatly, while ye may ;
 Direct to God in Heaven ; or some one else
 May seize them, seal them, send them—you know where.
 The world must end. I weep to think of it.
 But you, you laugh! I knew ye would. I know
 Men never will be wise till they are fools
 For ever. Laugh away! The time will come,
 When tears of fire are trickling from your eyes,
 You will blame yourselves for having laughed at me.
 I warn ye, men : prepare ; repent ; be saved!
 I warn ye, not because I love but know ye.
 God will dissolve the world, as she of old
 Her pearl, within His cup, and swallow ye
 In wrath : although to taste ye would be poison,

And death and suicide to aught but God.
 Again I warn ye. Save himself who can!
 Do ye not oft begin to seek salvation?
 You? you? and fail, as oft, to find? Sink? Cease?
 And shall I tell ye, brethren, why ye fail
 Once and for ever? why, there is no past;
 And the future is the fiction of a fiction;
 The present moment is eternity;
 It is that ye have sucked corruption from the world
 Like milk from your own mothers: it is in
 Your soul-blood and your soul-bones. Earth does not
 Wean one out of a thousand sons to Heaven.
 Beginnings are alike: it is ends which differ.
 One drop falls, lasts, and dries up—but a drop;
 Another begins a river: and one thought
 Settles a life, an immortality:
 And that one thought ye will not take to good.
 Now I will tell ye just one other truth:
 Ye hate the truth as snails salt—it dissolves ye,
 Body and soul—but I don't mind. So, now:
 Up to this moment ye are all, each, damned.
 What are ye now? still damned! It will be the same
 To-morrow—and the next day—and the next:
 Till some fine morning ye will wake in fire.
 Ye see I do not mince the truth for ye.
 Belike you think your lives will dribble out
 As brooks in summer dry up. Let us see!
 Try: dike them up: they stagnate—thicken—scum.
 That would make life worse than death. Well, let go!
 Where are ye then? for life, like water, will
 Find its last level; what level? The grave.
 It is but a fall of five feet after all;
 That cannot hurt ye; it is but just enough
 To work the wheel of life; so work away!
 Ye may think that I do not know the terms
 And treasures whereupon ye live so high.
 But I know more than most men, modestly

Speaking. I know I am lost, and you too. God
 Could only save me by destroying me ;
 So that I have no advantage over you ;
 And therefore think ye will the rather bear
 One of your own state to advise for ye.
 Now don't you envy me, good folks, I pray,—
 Envy's a coal comes hissing hot from hell.
 'Twill be such coals will burn ye by the way.
 Your other preachers first think they are safe.
 Now I say broadly I am the worst among ye ;
 And God knows I have no need to wrong myself,
 Nor you. I boast not of it, but as truth :
 It is little to be proud of, credit me.
 What is salvation ? What is safety ? Think !
 Who wants to know ? Does any ?

THE CROWD.

All of us.

LUCIFER. Then I will not tell ye. You shall wait until
 Some angel come and stir your stagnant souls :
 Then plunge into yourselves and rise redeemed.
 Come, I'll unroll your hearts and read them to ye.
 To say ye live is but to say ye have souls,
 That ye have paid for them and mean to play them,
 Till some brave pleasure wins the golden stake,
 And rakes it up to death as to a bank.
 Ye live and die on what your souls will fetch ;
 And all are of different prices : therefore Hell
 Cannot well bargain for mankind in gross ;
 But each soul must be purchased, one by one.
 This it is makes men rate themselves so high :
 While truly ye are worth little : but to God
 Ye are worth more than to yourselves. By sin
 Ye wreak your spite against God—that ye know ;
 And knowing, will it. But I pray, I beg,
 Act with some smack of justice to your Maker,
 If not unto yourselves. Do ! It is enough
 To make the very Devil chide mankind—
 Such baseness, such unthankfulness ! Why he

Thanks God he is no worse. You don't do that.
 I say, be just to God. Leave off these airs :
 Know your place ; speak to God—and say, for once,
 Go first, Lord ! Take your finger off your eye.
 It blocks the universe and God from sight.
 Think ye your souls are worth nothing to God ?
 Are they so small ? What can be great with God ?
 What will ye weigh against the Lord ? Yourselves ?
 Bring out your balance : get in, man by man :
 Add earth, heaven, hell, the universe ; that's all.
 God puts his finger in the other scale,
 And up we bounce, a bubble. Nought is great
 Nor small with God—for none but He can make
 The atom indivisible, and none
 But He can make a world : He counts the orbs,
 He counts the atoms of the universe,
 And makes both equal—both are infinite.
 Giving God honour, never underrate
 Yourselves : after Him ye are everything.
 But mind ! God's more than everything ; He is God.
 And what of me ? No, us ? no ! I mean the Devil ?
 Why see ye not he goes before both you
 And God ? Men say—as proud as Lucifer—
 Pray who would not be proud with such a train ?
 Hath he not all the honour of the earth ?
 Why Mammon sits before a million hearths
 Where God is bolted out from every house.
 Well might He say He cometh as a thief ;
 For He will break your bars and burst your doors
 Which slammed against Him once, and turn ye out,
 Roofless and shivering, 'neath the doom-storm ; Heaven
 Shall crack above ye like a bell in fire,
 And bury all beneath its shining shards.
 He calls : ye hear not. Lo ! He comes—ye see not.
 No ; ye are deaf as a dead adder's ear :
 No ; ye are blind as never bat was blind,
 With a burning, bloodshot blindness of the heart ;

A swimming, swollen senselessness of soul.
 Listen! Whom love ye most? Why, him to whom
 Ye in your turn are dearest. Need I name?
 Oh no! But all are devils to themselves;
 And every man his own great foe. Hell gets
 Only the gleanings; earth hath the full wain;
 And hell is merry at its harvest-home.
 But ye are generous to sin and grudge
 The gleaners nothing; ask them, push them in.
 Let not an ear, a grain of sin be lost;
 Gather it, grind it up; it is our bread:
 We should be ashamed to waste the gifts of God.
 Why is the world so mad? Why runs it thus
 Raving and howling round the universe?
 Because the Devil bit it from the birth!
 The fault is all with him. Fear nothing, friends;
 It is fear which beds the far to-come with fire
 As the sun does the west: but the sun sets;
 Well: still ye tremble—tremble, first at light,
 Then darkness. Tremble! ye dare not believe.
 No, cowards! sooner than believe ye would die;
 Die with the black lie flapping on your lips
 Like the soot-flake upon a burning bar.
 Be merry, happy if ye can: think never
 Of him who slays your souls, nor Him who saves.
 There is time enough for that when ye are a-dying.
 Keep your old ways! It matters not this once.
 Be brave! Ye are not men whom meat and wine
 Serve to remind but of the Sacrament;
 To whom sweet shapes and tantalizing smiles
 Bring up the Devil and the ten commandments—
 And so on—but I said the world must end.
 I am sorry; it is such a pleasant world;
 With all its faults it is perfect—to a fault;
 And you, of course, end with it. Now how long
 Will the world take to die? I know ye place
 Great faith upon death-bed repentances;

The suddener the better. I know ye often
 Begin to think of praying and repenting ;
 But second thoughts come and ye are worse than ever ;
 As over new white snow a filthy thaw.
 Ye do amaze me verily. How long
 Will ye take heart on your own wickedness,
 And God's forbearance ? Have ye cast it up ?
 Come now ; the year and month, day, hour and minute,
 Sin's golden cycle ? Do ye know how long
 Exactly Heaven will grant ye ? how long God,—
 Who when He had slain the world and wasted it,
 Hung up His bow in Heaven, as in His hall
 A warrior after battle—will yet bear
 Your contumely and scorn of His best gifts,—
 Man's mockery of man ? But never mind !
 Some of us are magnificently good,
 And hold the head up high like a giraffe ;
 You, in particular, and you—and you.
 Good men are here and there, I know ; but then,—
 You must excuse me if I mention this,
 My duty is to tell it you—the world,
 Like a black block of marble, jagged with white,
 As with a vein of lightning petrified,
 Looks blacker than without such ; looks, in truth,
 So gross the heathen, gross the Christian too—
 Like the original darkness of void space,
 Hardened. Instead of justice, love, and grace,
 Each worth to man the mission of a God,
 Injustice, hate, uncharitableness,
 Triaequal reign round earth, a Trinity of Hell.
 Ye think ye never can be bad enough ;
 And as ye sink in sin ye rise in hope.
 And let the worst come to the worst, you say,
 There always will be time to turn ourselves,
 And cry for half an hour or so to God :
 Salvation, sure, is not so very hard—
 It need not take one long ; and half an hour

Is quite as much as we can spare for it.
 We have no time for pleasures. Business! business!
 No! ye shall perish sudden and unsaved.
 The priest shall, dipping, die. Can man save man?
 Is water God? The counsellor, wise fool!
 Drop down amid his quirks and sacred lies.
 The judge, while dooming unto death some wretch,
 Shall meet at once his own death, doom, and judge.
 The doctor, watch in hand and patient's pulse,
 Shall feel his own heart cease its beats—and fall.
 Professors shall spin out, and students strain
 Their brains no more; art, science, toil, shall cease.
 The world shall stand still with a rending jar,
 As though it struck at sea. The halls where sit
 The heads of nations shall be dumb with death.
 The ship shall after her own plummet sink,
 And sound the sea herself and depths of death.
 At the first turn Death shall cut off the thief,
 And dash the gold bag in his yellow brain.
 The gambler, reckoning gains, shall drop a piece:
 Stoop down and there see death;—look up, there God.
 The wanton, temporizing with decay,
 And qualifying every line which vice
 Writes bluntly on the brow, inviting scorn,
 Shall pale through plastered red: and the loose low sot
 See clear, for once, through his misty, o'erbrimmed eye.
 The just, if there be any, die in prayer.
 Death shall be everywhere among your marts,
 And giving bills which no man may decline—
 Drafts upon hell one moment after date.
 Then shall your outcries tremble amid the stars:
 Terrors shall be about ye like a wind;
 And fears come down upon ye like a house.

FESTUS. Yon man looks frightened.

LUCIFER.

Then it is time to stop.

I hope I have done no good. He will soon forget
 His soul. Flesh soaks it up as sponge does water.

Now wait ; I will rub them backwards like a cat ;
 And you shall see them spit and sparkle up.
 Let us suppose a case, friends. You are men ;
 And there is God ! and I will be the Devil.
 Very well. I am the Devil.

ONE *says*. I think you are.
 You look as if you lived on buttered thunder.

LUCIFER. Nay, be not wroth. Ye would crucify the Devil,
 I do believe, if he a moment vexed you.
 I know well which ye choose ; but choose again !
 Time or eternity ? Speak, Hell or Heaven ?

THE CROWD. He's a mad ranter : down with him !—

FESTUS. Let him be !

LUCIFER. Stand by me, Festus ! and I will by thee.
 Why, God and man ! this is the second time
 That I have run for my life.

FESTUS. Nay, nay, come back !
 They will not harm thee : they would chair thee round
 The market-place, knew they but whom thou art.
 Peace there, my friends ! one minute ; let us pray !
 Grant us, O God ! that in Thy holy love
 The universal people of the world
 May grow more great and happy every day ;
 Mightier, wiser, humbler, too, towards Thee.
 And that all ranks, all classes, callings, states
 Of life, so far as such seem right to Thee,
 May mingle into one, like sister trees,
 And so in one stem flourish :—that all laws
 And powers of government be based and used
 In good, and for the people's sake ;—that each
 May feel himself of consequence to all,
 And act as though all saw him ;—that the whole,
 The mass of every nation, may so do
 As is most worthy of the next to God ;
 For a whole people's souls, each one worth more
 Than a mere world of matter, make combined
 A something godlike—something like to Thee.

We pray Thee for the welfare of all men.
 Let monarchs who love truth and freedom feel
 The happiness of safety and respect
 From those they rule, and guardianship from Thee.
 Let them remember they are set on thrones
 As representatives, not substitutes,
 Of nations, to implead with God and man.
 Let tyrants who hate truth, or fear the free,
 Know that to rule in slavery and error,
 For the mere ends of personal pomp and power,
 In such a sin as doth deserve a hell
 To itself sole. Let both remember, Lord!
 They are but things like-natured with all nations;
 That mountains issue out of plains, and not
 Plains out of mountains, and so likewise kings
 Are of the people, not the people of kings.
 And let all feel, the rulers and the ruled,
 All classes and all countries, that the world
 Is Thy great halidom; that Thou art King,
 Lord! only owner and possessor. Grant
 That nations may now see, it is not kings,
 Nor priests, they need fear so much as themselves;
 That if they keep but true to themselves, and free,
 Sober, enlightened, godly—mortal men
 Become impassible as air, one great
 And indestructible substance as the sea.
 Let all on thrones and judgment-seats reflect
 How dreadful Thy revenge through nations is
 On those who wrong them; but do Thou grant, Lord!
 That when wrongs are to be redressed, such may
 Be done with mildness, speed, and firmness, not
 With violence or hate, whereby one wrong
 Translates another—both to Thee abhorrent.
 The bells of time are ringing changes fast.
 Grant, Lord! that each fresh peal may usher in
 An era of advancement, that each change
 Prove an effectual, lasting, happy gain.

And we beseech Thee, overrule, O God!
 All civil contests to the good of all;
 All party and religious difference
 To honourable ends, whether secured
 Or lost; and let all strife, political
 Or social, spring from conscientious aims,
 And have a generous, self-ennobling end,
 Man's good and Thine own glory in view always!
 The best may then fail and the worst succeed,
 Alike with honour. We beseech Thee, Lord!
 For bodily strength, but more especially
 For the soul's health and safety. We entreat Thee
 In Thy great mercy to decrease our wants,
 And add autumnal increase to the comforts
 Which tend to keep men innocent, and load
 Their hearts with thanks to Thee as trees in bearing:—
 The blessings of friends, families, and homes,
 And kindnesses of kindred. And we pray
 That men may rule themselves in faith in God,
 In charity to each other, and in hope
 Of their own souls' salvation:—that the mass,
 The millions in all nations, may be trained,
 From their youth upwards, in a nobler mode,
 To loftier and more liberal ends. We pray
 Above all things, Lord! that all men be free
 From bondage, whether of the mind or body;—
 The bondage of religious bigotry,
 And bald antiquity, servility
 Of thought or speech to rank and power; be all
 Free as they ought to be in mind and soul
 As well as by state-birth right;—and that Mind,
 Time's giant pupil, may right soon attain
 Majority, and speak and act for himself.
 Incline Thou to our prayers, and grant, O Lord!
 That all may have enough, and some safe mean
 Of worldly goods and honours, by degrees,
 Take place, if practicable, in the fitness

And fulness of Thy time. And we beseech Thee,
 That Truth no more be gagged, nor conscience dungeoned,
 Nor Science be impeached of godlessness,
 Nor Faith be circumscribed, which as to Thee,
 And the soul's self affairs, is infinite ;
 But that all men may have due liberty
 To speak an honest mind, in every land,
 Encouragement to study, leave to act
 As conscience orders. We entreat Thee, Lord !
 For Thy Son's sake, to take away reproach
 Of all kinds from Thy church, and all temptation
 Of pomp or power political, that none
 May err in the end for which they were appointed
 To any of its orders, low or high ;
 And no ambition, of a worldly cast,
 Leaven the love of souls unto whose care
 They feel propelled by Thy most holy spirit.
 Be every church established, Lord ! in truth.
 Let all who preach the word, live by the word,
 In moderate estate ; and in Thy church,—
 One universal, and invisible
 World-wards, yet manifest unto itself,
 May it seem good, dear Saviour, in Thy sight,
 That orders be distinguished, not by wealth,
 But piety and power of teaching souls.
 Equalize labour, Lord ! and recompense.
 Let not a hundred humble pastors starve,
 In this or any land of Christendom,
 While one or two, impalaced, mitred, throned
 And banquetted, burlesque if not blaspheme
 The holy penury of the Son of God ;
 The fastings, the footwanderings, and the preachings
 Of Christ and His first followers. Oh that the Son
 Might come again ! There should be no more war,
 No more want, no more sickness ; with a touch,
 He should cure all disease, and with a word,
 All sin ; and with a look to Heaven, a prayer,

Provide bread for a million at a time.
 But till that perfect advent grant us, Lord !
 That all good institutions, orders, claims,
 Charitably proposed, or in the aid
 Of Thy divine foundation, may much prosper,
 And more of them be raised and nobly filled ;
 That Thy word may be taught throughout all lands,
 And save souls daily to the thrones of Heaven !—
 And we entreat Thee, that all men whom Thou
 Hast gifted with great minds may love Thee well,
 And praise Thee for their powers, and use them most
 Humbly and holily, and, lever-like,
 Act but in lifting up the mass of mind
 About them ; knowing well that they shall be
 Questioned by Thee of deeds the pen hath done,
 Or caused, or glozed ; inspire them with delight
 And power to treat of noble themes and things,
 Worthily, and to leave the low and mean—
 Things born of vice or day-lived fashion, in
 Their naked native folly :—make them know
 Fine thoughts are wealth, for the right use of which
 Men are and ought to be accountable,—
 If not to Thee, to those they influence.
 Grant this we pray Thee, and that all who read
 Or utter noble thoughts may make them theirs,
 And thank God for them, to the betterment
 Of their succeeding life ;—that all who lead
 The general sense and taste, too apt, perchance,
 To be led, keep in mind the mighty good
 They may achieve, and are in conscience bound,
 And duty, to attempt unceasingly
 To compass. Grant us, All-maintaining Sire !
 That all the great mechanic aids to toil
 Man's skill hath formed, found, rendered,—whether used
 In multiplying works of mind, or aught
 To obviate the thousand wants of life,
 May much avail to human welfare now

And in all ages henceforth and for ever.
 Let their effect be, Lord! to lighten labour,
 And give more room to mind, and leave the poor
 Some time for self-improvement. Let them not
 Be forced to grind the bones out of their arms
 For bread, but have some space to think and feel
 Like moral and immortal creatures. God!
 Have mercy on them till such time shall come;
 Look Thou with pity on all lesser crimes,
 Thrust on men almost when devoured by want,
 Wretchedness, ignorance, and outcast life!
 Have mercy on the rich, too, who pass by
 The means they have at hand to fill their minds
 With serviceable knowledge for themselves,
 And fellows, and support not the good cause
 Of the world's better future. Oh, reward
 All such who do, with peace of heart and power
 For greater good. Have mercy, Lord! on each
 And all, for all men need it equally.
 May peace, and industry, and commerce, weld
 Into one land all nations of the world,
 Rewedding those the Deluge once divorced.
 Oh! may all help each other in good things,
 Mentally, morally, and bodily.
 Vouchsafe, kind God! Thy blessing to this isle,
 Specially. May our country ever lead
 The world, for she is worthiest; and may all
 Profit by her example, and adopt
 Her course, wherever great, or free, or just.
 May all her subject colonies and powers
 Have of her freedom freely, as a child
 Receiveth of its parents. Let not rights
 Be wrested from us to our own reproach,
 But granted. We may make the whole world free,
 And be as free ourselves as ever, more!
 If policy or self-defence call forth
 Our forces to the field, let us in Thee

Place, first, our trust, and in Thy name we shall
 O'ercome, for we will only wage the right.
 Let us not conquer nations for ourselves,
 But for Thee, Lord ! who hast predestined us
 To fight the battles of the future now,
 And so have done with war before Thou comest.
 Till then, Lord God of armies ! let our foes
 Have their swords broken and their cannon burst,
 And their strong cities levelled ; and while we
 War faithfully and righteously, improve,
 Civilize, christianize, the lands we win
 From savage or from nature, Thou, O God !
 Wilt aid and hallow conquest, as of old,
 Thine own immediate nation's. But we pray
 That all mankind may make one brotherhood,
 And love and serve each other ; that all wars
 And feuds die out of nations, whether those
 Whom the sun's hot light darkens, or ourselves
 Whom he treats fairly, or the northern tribes
 Whom ceaseless snows and starry winters blench,
 Savage or civilized,—let every race,
 Red, black or white, olive, or tawny-skinned,
 Settle in peace and swell the gathering hosts
 Of the great Prince of Peace. Oh ! may the hour
 Soon come when all false gods, false creeds, false prophets,—
 Allowed in Thy good purpose for a time,
 Demolished,—the great world shall be at last
 The mercy-seat of God, the heritage
 Of Christ, and the possession of the Spirit,
 The Comforter, the Wisdom ! shall all be
 One land, one home, one friend, one faith, one law,
 Its ruler God, its practice righteousness,
 Its life peace ! For the one true faith we pray ;
 There is but one in Heaven, and there shall be
 But one on earth, the same which is in Heaven.
 Prophecy is more true than history.
 Grant us our prayers, we pray, Lord ! in the name

And for the sake of Thy Son Jesus Christ,
 Our Saviour and Redeemer, who with Thee,
 And with the Holy Spirit, reigneth God
 Over all worlds, one blessed Trinity.—

THE CROWD. Amen!

LUCIFER. Well, friends, we'll sing a hymn; then part.
 I give it out, and you sing—all of you.

Oh! Earth is cheating Earth
 From age to age for ever;
 She laughs at faith and worth,
 And dreams she shall die never;
 Never, never, never!
 And dreams she shall die never.

And Hell is cursing Hell
 From age to age for ever;
 Its groans ring out the knell
 Of souls that may die never!
 Never, never, never!
 Of souls that may die never.

But Heaven is blessing Heaven
 From age to age for ever;
 And its thanks to God are given
 For bliss that can die never;
 Never, never, never!
 For bliss that can die never.

My blessing be upon ye all; now go!

FESTUS. I wonder what these people make of thee.

LUCIFER. Ay, manner's a great matter.

FESTUS.

They deserve

All the rebuke thou gavest them, and more.
 What mountains of delusion men have reared!
 How every age hath bustled on to build
 Its shadowy mole—its monumental dream!

How faith and fancy, in the mind of man,
 Have spuriously mingled, and how much
 Shall pass away for aye, as pass before
 Yon sun, the Lord of steadfastness and change,
 The visionary landscapes of the skies ;—
 The golden capes far stretching into Heaven,
 The snow-piled cloud crags, the bright winged isles
 Which dot the deep, impassive ocean air,
 Like a disbanded rainbow, of all hues,
 Fit for translated fairy's Paradise ;—
 Or as before the eye of musing child,
 The faces Fancy forms in clouds and fire
 Of glowing angel or of darkening fiend.
 Arts, superstition, arms, philosophy,
 Have each in turn possessed, betrayed, and mocked us.
 Yes, vain philosophy, thine hour is come !
 Thy lips were lined with the immortal lie,
 And dyed with all the look of truth. Men saw,
 Believed, embraced, detested, cast thee off.
 Those lights, the morn of Truth's immortal day,
 As thou didst falsely swear them, have they not
 Vanished, the mere auroras of the mind ?
 And thou didst vow to gather clear again
 The fallen waters of humanity ;
 To smooth the flaw from out an eye ; to piece
 A pounded pearl. Thank God ! I am a man ;
 Not a philosopher. Rivers may rot,
 Never revive the root of oak firebolted.
 Come, let us to the hills ! where none but God
 Can overlook us ; for I hate to breathe
 The breaths and think the thoughts of other men,
 In close and clouded cities, where the sky
 Frowns like an angry father mournfully.
 I love the hills and I love loneliness.
 And oh ! I love the woods, those natural fanes
 Whose very air is holy ; and we breathe
 Of God ; for He doth come in special place,

And, while we worship, He is there for us.

LUCIFER. It is time that something should be done for
the poor.

The sole equality on earth is death ;
Now, rich and poor are both dissatisfied.
I am for judgment : that will settle both.
Nothing is to be done without destruction.
Death is the universal salt of states ;
Blood is the base of all things—law and war.
I could tame this lion age to follow me.
I should like to macadamize the world ;
The road to Hell wants mending.

FESTUS.

Come away !

SCENE—*Alcove and Garden.*

FESTUS and CLARA.

FESTUS. What happy things are youth and love and
sunshine !

How sweet to feel the sun upon the heart !
To know it is lighting up the rosy blood,
And with all joyous feelings, prism-hued,
Making the dark breast shine like a spar grot.
We walk among the sunbeams as with angels.

CLARA. Yes, there are feelings so serene and sweet,
Coming and going with a musical lightness,
That they can make amends for their passingness,
And balance God's condition to decay ;
As yon light fleecy cloudlet floating along,
Like golden down from some high angel's wing,
Breaks but relieves and beautifies the blue.
I wonder if ever I could love another.
How I should start to see upon the sward
A shadow not thine own armlinked with mine ;
See, here is a garland I have bound for thee.

FESTUS. Nay, crown thyself; it will suit thee better, love.
 Place wreaths of everlasting flowers on tombs,
 And deck with fading beauties forms that fade.
 Put it away. I will no crown save this:
 And could the line of dust which here I trace
 Upon my brow but warrant dust beneath—
 And nothing more—or could this bubble frame,
 Informed with soul, lashed from the stream of life
 By its own impetus, but burst at once,
 And vanish part on high and part below,
 I would be happy, nor would envy death.
 Could I like Heaven's bolt, earthing quench myself,
 This moment would I burn me out a grave.
 Might I but be as many years in dying
 As I have lived—that might be some relief.

CLARA. What canst thou mean?

FESTUS. Mean? Is there not a future?
 The past, the present, and the coming—curse each!
 The future, curse it!

CLARA. Shall we not ever live
 And love as now?

FESTUS. Ay, live I fear we must.

CLARA. And love: because we then are happiest.
 We shall lack nothing having love: and we,
 We must be happy everywhere—we two!
 For spiritual life is great and clear,
 And self-continuous as the changeless sea,
 Rolling the same in every age as now;
 Whether o'er mountain-tops, where only snow
 Dwells, and the sunbeam hurries coldly by;
 Or o'er the vales, as now, of some old world,
 Older than ancient man's. As is the sea's,
 So is the life of spirit, and the kind.
 And then with natures raised, refined, and freed
 From these poor forms, our days shall pass in peace
 And love; no thought of human littleness
 Shall cross our high calm souls, shining and pure

As the gold gates of Heaven. Like some deep lake
 Upon a mountain summit they shall rest,
 High above cloud and storm of life like this,
 All peace and power, and passionless purity ;
 Or if a thought of other troubled times
 Ruffle it for a moment, it shall pass
 Like a chance raindrop on its heavenward face.
 I love to meditate on bliss to come.
 Not that I am unhappy here ; but that
 The hope of higher bliss may rectify
 The lower feeling which we now enjoy.
 This life, this world is not enough for us ;
 They are nothing to the measure of our mind.
 For place we must have space ; for time we must have
 Eternity ; and for a spirit, godhood.

FESTUS. Mind means not happiness ; power is not good.

CLARA. True bliss is to be found in holy life ;
 In charity to man—in love to God :
 Why should such duties cease, such powers decay ?
 Are they not worthy of a deathless state—
 A boundless scope—a high uplifted life ?
 Man, like the air-born eagle, who remains
 On earth only to feed, and sleep, and die ;
 But whose delight is on his lonely wing,
 Wide sweeping as a mind, to force the skies
 High as the lightfall ere, begirt with clouds,
 It dash this nether world—immortal man
 Rushes aloft, right upwards, into Heaven.
 O faith of Christ, sole honour of the world !

FESTUS. What know men of religion, save its forms ?

CLARA. True faith nor biddeth nor abideth form ?
 The bended knee, the eye uplift is all
 Which man need render ; all which God can bear.
 What to the faith are forms ? A passing speck,
 A crow upon the sky. God's worship is
 That only He inspires ; and His bright words,
 Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart,

Return to him in prayer, as dew to Heaven.
 Our proper good we rarely seek or make ;
 Mindless of our immortal powers and their
 Immortal end, as is the pearl of its worth,
 The rose its scent, the wave its purity.

FESTUS. Come, we will quit these saddening themes.

Wilt sing

To me ? for I am gloomy ; and I love
 Thy singing, sacred as the sound of hymns
 On some bright Sabbath morning, on the moor,
 Where all is still save praise ; and where hard by
 The ripe grain shakes its bright beard in the sun,
 The wild bee hums more solemnly ; the deep sky,
 The fresh green grass, the sun, and sunny brook,
 All look as if they knew the day, the hour ;
 And felt with man the need and joy of thanks.

CLARA. I cannot sing the lightsome lays of love.
 Many thou know'st who can ; but none that can
 Love thee as I do—for I love thy soul ;
 And I would save it, Festus ! Listen then :

Is Heaven a place where pearly streams
 Glide over silver sand ?
 Like childhood's rosy dazzling dreams
 Of some far faery land ?
 Is Heaven a clime where diamond dews
 Glitter on fadeless flowers ?
 And mirth and music ring aloud
 From amaranthine bowers ?

Ah no ; not such, not such is Heaven !
 Surpassing far all these ;
 Such cannot be the guerdon given
 Man's wearied soul to please.
 For saint and sinner here below
 Such vain to be have proved :
 And the pure spirit will despise
 Whate'er the sense hath loved.



There we shall dwell with Sire and Son,
 And with the mother-maid,
 And with the Holy Spirit, one :
 In glory like arrayed :
 And not to one created thing
 Shall our embrace be given ;
 But all our joy shall be in God ;
 For only God is Heaven.

FESTUS. I know that thou dost love me. I in vain
 Strive to love aught of earth or Heaven but thee.
 Thou art my first, last, only love ; nor shall
 Another even attempt my heart. Like stars,
 A thousand sweet, and bright, and wondrous fair,
 A thousand deathless miracles of beauty,
 They shall ever pass at all but eyeless distance,
 And never mix with thy love ; but be lost
 All meanly in its moonlike lustrousness.

CLARA. How still the air is ! the tree tops stir not :
 But stand and peer on Heaven's bright face, as though
 It slept and they were loving it : they would not
 Have the skies see them move for summers ; would they ?
 See that sweet cloud ! It is watching us, I am certain.
 What have we here to make thee stay one second ?
 Away ; thy sisters wait thee in the west,
 The blushing bridemaids of the sun and sea.
 I would I were like thee, thou little cloud,
 Ever to live in Heaven : or seeking earth
 To let my spirit down in drops of love :
 To sleep with night upon her dewy lap ;
 And the next dawn, back with the sun to Heaven ;
 And so on through eternity, sweet cloud !
 I cannot but think that some senseless things
 Are happy. Often and often have I watched
 A gossamer line sighing itself along
 The air, as it seemed ; and so thin, thin and bright,
 Looking as woven in a loom of light,

That I have envied it, I have, and followed ;—
 Oft watched the sea-bird's down blown o'er the wave,
 Now touching it, now spirited aloft,
 Now out of sight, now seen,—till in some bright fringe
 Of streamy foam, as in a cage, at last
 A playful death it dies, and mourned its death.

FESTUS. Surely thou camest straightwise from the stars,
 And instantly from Heaven ; those blue bright eyes,
 The seats thy soul brought from its native skies ;
 And well thou deemest of celestial things,
 And high-born duties dedicate to earth.
 To dignify the day with deeds of good,
 And constellate the eve with holy thoughts ;
 This is to live, and let our lives narrate,
 In a new version, solemn and sublime,
 The grand old legend of Humanity.
 But thinkest thou the future is a state
 More positive than this ; or that it can be
 Aught but another present, full of cares,
 And toils, perhaps, and duties ; that the soul
 Will ever be more nigh to God than now,
 Save as may seem from mind's debility :
 Just as the sun, from weakness of the eye,
 And the illusions made by matter's forms,
 Seems hot and wearied resting on the hill ?
 It would be well, I think, to live as though
 No more were to be looked for ; to be good
 Because it is best, here : and leave hope and fear
 For lives below ourselves. If earth persuades not
 That I owe prayer, and praise, and love to God,
 While all I have He gives, will Heaven ? will Hell ?
 No ; neither, never !

CLARA. I think not all with thee.
 Have I not heard thee hint of spirit-friends ?
 Where are they now ?

FESTUS. Ah ! close at hand, mayhap.
 I have a might immortal ; and can ken

With angels. Neither sky, nor night, nor earth
 Hinders me. Through the forms of things I see
 Their essences; and thus, even now, behold—
 But where I cannot shew to thee—far round,
 Nature herself—the whole effect of God.
 Mind, matter, motion, heat, time, love, and life,
 And death, and immortality—those chief
 And first-born giants all are there—all parts,
 All limbs of her their mother: she is all.

CLARA. And what does she?

FESTUS. Produce: it is her life.
 The three I named last, life, death, deathlessness,
 Glide in elliptic path round all things made—
 For none save God can fill the perfect whole:
 And are but to eternity as is
 The horizon to the world. At certain points
 Each seems the other; now, the three are one;
 Now, all invisible; and now, as first,
 Moving in measured round.

CLARA. How look these beings?

FESTUS. Ah! Life looks gaily and gloomily in turns;
 With a brow chequered like a sward, by leaves,
 Between which the light glints; and she, careless, wears
 A wreath of flowers—part faded and part fresh.
 And Death is beautiful, and sad, and still:
 She seems too happy; happier far than life—
 In but one feeling, apathy: and on
 Her chill white brow frosts bright a braid of snow.

CLARA. And Immortality?

FESTUS. She looks alone;
 As though she would not know her sisterhood.
 And on her brow a diadem of fire,
 Matched by the conflagration of her eye,
 Outflaming even that eye which in my sleep
 Beams close upon me till it bursts from sheer
 O'erstrainedness of sight, burns.

CLARA. What do they?

FESTUS. Each strives to win me to herself.

CLARA. How?

FESTUS. Death

Opens her sweet white arms and whispers, peace!
Come say thy sorrows in this bosom! This
Will never close against thee; and my heart,
Though cold, cannot be colder much than man's.
Come! All this soon must end; and soon the world
Shall perish leaf by leaf, and land by land;
Flower by flower—flood by flood—and hill
By hill away. Oh! come, come! Let us die.

CLARA. Say that thou wilt not die!

FESTUS. Nay, I love death.

But Immortality, with finger spired,
Points to a distant, giant world—and says
There, there is my home. Live along with me!

CLARA. Canst see that world?

FESTUS. Just—a huge shadowy shape;
It looks a disembodied orb—the ghost
Of some great sphere which God hath stricken dead:
Or like a world which God hath thought—not made.

CLARA. Follow her, Festus! Does she speak again?

FESTUS. She never speaks but once: and now, in scorn,
Points to this dim, dwarfed, misbegotten sphere.

CLARA. Why let her pass?

FESTUS. That is the great world-question.

Life would not part with me; and from her brow
Tearing her wreath of passion-flowers, she flung
It round my neck and dared me struggle then.
I never could destroy a flower: and none
But fairest hands like thine can grace with me
The plucking of a rose. And Life, sweet Life!
Vowed she would crop the world for me and lay it
Herself before my feet even as a flower.
And when I felt that flower contained thyself—
One drop within its nectary kept for me,
I lost all count of those strange sisters three;

And where they be I know not. But I see
One who is more to me.

CLARA. I know not how
Thou hast this power and knowledge. I but hope
It comes from good hands ; if it be not thine
Own force of mind. It is much less what we do
Than what we think, which fits us for the future.
I wish we had a little world to ourselves ;
With none but we two in it.

FESTUS. And if God
Gave us a star, what could we do with it
But that we could without it? Wish it not!

CLARA. I'll not wish then for stars ; but I could love
Some peaceful spot where we might dwell unknown,
Where home-born joys might nestle round our hearts
As swallows round our roofs,—and blend their sweets
Like dewy tangled flowerets in one bed.

FESTUS. The sweetest joy, the wildest woe, is love ;
The taint of earth, the odour of the skies,
Is in it. Would that I were aught but man !
The death of brutes, the immortality
Of fiend or angel, better seems than all
The doubtful prospects of our painted dust.
And all Morality can teach is—Bear !
And all Religion can inspire is—Hope !—

CLARA. It is enough. Fruition of the fruit
Of the great Tree of Life, is not for earth.
Stars are its fruit, its lightest leaf is life.
The heart hath many sorrows beside love.
Yea many as the veins which visit it.
The love of aught on earth is not its chief,
Nor ought to be. Inclusive of them all
There is the one main sorrow, life ;—for what
Can spirit, severed from the great one, God,
Feel but a grievous longing to rejoin
Its infinite—its author—and its end ?
And yet is life a thing to be beloved,

And honoured holily, and bravely borne.
 A man's life may be all ease, and his death,
 By some dark chance, unthought of agony :—
 Or life may be all suffering, and decease
 A flower-like sleep ;—or both be full of woe,
 Or each comparatively painless. Blame
 Not God for inequalities like these.
 They may be justified. How canst thou know ?
 They may be only seeming. Canst thou judge ?
 They may be done away with utterly
 By loving, fearing, knowing God the Truth.
 In all distress of spirit, grief of heart,
 Bodily agony, or mental woe,
 Rebuffs and vain assumptions of the world,
 Or the poor spite of weak and wicked souls,
 Think thou on God. Think what He underwent
 And did for us as man. Weigh thou thy cross
 With Christ's, and judge which were the heavier.
 Joy even in thine anguish ;—such was His,
 But measurelessly more. Thy suffering
 Assimilateth thee to Him. Rejoice !
 Think upon what thou shalt be. Think on God.
 Then ask thyself, what is the world, and all
 Its mountainous inequalities ? Ah, what !
 Are not all equal as dust-atomes ?—

FESTUS. My soul's orb darkens as a sudden star,
 Which having for a time exhausted earth
 And half the Heavens of wonder, mortally
 Passes for ever, not eclipsed, consumed ;—
 All but a cloudy vapour darkening there,
 The very spot in space it once illumed.
 Once to myself I seemed a mount of light ;
 But now, a pit of night.—No more of this !
 For like a shipwrecked stranger in a lighthouse,
 I have looked down upon the utter side
 Of such thoughts from the leeming room of reason,
 And beheld all beyond black roaring madness.

Here have I lain all day in this green nook,
 Shaded by larch and hornbeam, ash and yew ;
 A living well and runnel at my feet,
 And wild flowers dancing to some delicate air ;
 An urn-topped column and its ivy wreath
 Skirting my sight as thus I lie and look
 Upon the blue, unchanging, sacred skies :
 And thou, too, gentle Clara, by my side,
 With lightsome brow, and beaming eye, and bright
 Long glorious locks, which drop upon thy cheek
 Like goldhued cloudflakes on the rosy morn.
 Oh! when the heart is full of sweets to o'erflowing,
 And ringing to the music of its love,
 Who but an angel or a hypocrite
 Could speak or think of happier states ?

CLARA.

Farewell !

Remember what thou said'st about the stars.

FESTUS. Stay. What would'st say yet ? There is some-
 thing sad

Darkens thy mind's disk. Speak it.

CLARA.

Nay, not now.

The dews are falling, and the night draws nigh.
 Some other time.

FESTUS.

Why, now love.

CLARA.

Well then, this.

These vast unearthly powers thou hast ;—let me
 Assure mine own heart they be innocent.
 If thou refuse this boon I shall prejudge
 Those powers as evil ; but if harmless they,
 Thou will permit me share or view the means.
 I ask this, therefore, not from vain desire
 Of prying into mysteries, nor as test
 Of words of thine,—for thee believe I truly—
 But as a proof of love and harmlessness,
 To view with these same marvelling eyes of mine
 The visible form of some obedient sprite
 Or invocable angel ;—wilt thou ?

For of death's nothingness is born life's might.
 With every earthlent ray of every star
 Holy and special influences are,
 To such as Truth-led in Time's darkest hour,
 Seek faithfully their sweet and brilliant power.

Plant and planet, star and gem,
 All are each together bound ;
 Consanguineous with them
 Man in time state aye is found.
 Rightly who his soul-path knows
 To spirit's universal way,
 Bathed in sun-dew shall repose,
 Brought by the Angel of the day.
 For as in the sea-bound river
 Flows the force of thousand rills,
 So its end the great soul ever
 In Eternity fulfils.

CLARA. Oh ! I have gazed on beauty known by none
 Till now. Dizzy with light my soul. Spirit !
 Thy starry name ?

SPIRIT. Pneumaster.

CLARA. Where dost dwell ?

SPIRIT. I in my star abide, yet oft in Heaven.
 Not where the anteformal seraphs beam,
 Nor cherubim, with winged countenance, but
 Where roll the bright Ophanim ;—and in clouds
 Of glory, wheeling through the infinite skies—
 A Heaven-encircling hurricane of light—
 Form with their wings a holy living throne
 Of the All-hallowing Spirit, chaunting aye
 God's mercy thrice victorious o'er the world—
 The mysteries of wisdom—and the bliss
 Of that inspiring light which Deity
 Sows in the soul of Nature, stars, and men,
 Blest heirs of either world, above, beloved—
 Below, accepted ;—thither I attain.
 For as one God so but one nature is

The image yet the opposite of God ;
 Although in infinite variousness as He,
 Infinite and eternal unity ;—
 With these, and with all holy essences,
 And spirit souls elect, I mix and serve,
 All with each order interpenetrant ;
 For humbled by the fall of Lucifer
 No pride is now in Heaven ; humility
 Highest of virtues shewn by God the Man.
 I also therefore at thy first behest,
 Immortal came to do a mortal's will :
 Whose sleep, all starred with dreams, tells oft of me,
 And instant on mine own bright ray return.

CLARA. Holy and lovely sprite, be thou with God !

SPIRIT. And fare thou well, too.

FESTUS. Go ! I do commend thee

To all good angels, maiden. They are gone,
 The Heavenly and the earthly ; I alone,
 Like a cold column in the sunshine stand,
 Projecting darkness. Only love makes live.
 Oh ! why was woman made so fair ? or man
 So weak as to see that more than one had beauty ?
 It is impossible to love but one.
 And yet I dare not love thee as I could ;
 For all that the heart most longs for and deserves
 Passes the soonest and most utterly.
 The moral of the world's great fable, life.
 All we enjoy seems given to deceive,
 Or may be, undeceive us ; who cares which ?
 And when the sum is done, and we have proved it,
 Why work it over and over still again ?
 I am not what I would be. Hear me, God !
 And speak to me in thine invisible likeness,
 The wind, as once of yore. Let me be pure !
 Oh ! I wish I was a pure child again,
 As ere the clear could trouble me : when life
 Was sweet and calm as is a sister's kiss ;

And not the wild and whirlwind touch of passion,
 Which though it hardly light upon the lip,
 With breathless swiftmess sucks the soul out of sight,
 So that we lose it, and all thought of it.
 What is this life wherein Thou hast founded me,
 But a bright wheel which burns itself away,
 Benighting even night with its grim limbs,
 When it hath done and fainted into darkness?
 Flesh is but fiction, and it flies away;
 The gaunt and ghastly thing we bear about us,
 And which we hate and fear to look upon,
 Is Truth, in Death's dark likeness limned—no more.

LUCIFER. Life is the one great truth, the fiction death.
 Art never satisfied, but must thou still
 Revel in bootless questings?

FESTUS. Lo! I speak
 To Heaven, and Hell makes bold to answer me.
 If I confess me to the stars, the earth
 Rumbles her caverned threatenings at my feet;
 Or midnight clouds, low muttering in long lines;
 Uncomprehended thunders stun mine ear.
 Call'st thou this power?

LUCIFER. Yon pretty little star
 Shines on a vasty falsehood. Much thou hast
 Of power o'er finite agencies, but none,
 I tell thee, o'er the Infinite. Confess
 Therefore thine own presumption, and receive
 Its measures in obedience. What would'st thou?

FESTUS. I sicken of this mean and shadowy nature
 And shallow life.

LUCIFER. Well; death is deep enough.

FESTUS. I have been told, and taught, and trained to pray.
 I pray, and have no answer. One as well
 Might wrestle with the wind. I feel, but lack
 All power, as a cloud, which fears to rise,
 Faints on the golden threshold of the skies;
 And men suspect it as a spy of night.

LUCIFER. There's reason now and then in similes.
 Souls are like clouds, born of the infinite stock
 Of ever formless essence, and their race
 In bounteous beauty run, or ruinous storm ;
 Objects of love and gladness, or of ill,
 And wrong, and wrath, as nature predicates ;
 Which having blessed or blasted in their life,
 Die and rejoin the universe, to rise,
 Like emanant dew on earth, in future forms
 Of retributive nature ; she herself
 Being, and doing, and enduring all.

FESTUS. This life is as a question, to the which
 There comes no answer save an echo.

LUCIFER.

Hark !

FESTUS. Where thou art all is dumb. I would repent.—
 What shall be done to expiate offence ?

LUCIFER. To sacrifice a butterfly to the wind
 Is all that can be done just now I fear.
 Thou canst not be both wise and innocent ;
 As well expect thy life-flood-tide to rise
 Back from the baseless depths of human death.
 Evil and good are primarily immixed,
 Like the black lines that thwart a ray of light ;
 Or chequered chart of old, sun-dedicate.
 Cheer up ! If virtue loses, wisdom wins.

FESTUS. Good to extract from evil were not hard ;
 But to transmute all evil into good,
 There is the cross of science and the crown.

LUCIFER. Set clouds on fire,—go sow the sea with sand,—
 Then reap your crop of foam, and harvest it.

FESTUS. Yet are they separable ; Heaven and earth
 Not more opposed in kind.

LUCIFER.

Bat ! both are one.

FESTUS. The time shall come when every evil thing
 From being and remembrance both shall die ;
 The world one solid temple of pure good.

LUCIFER. Never while thou art conscious of thyself ;

Never till from that shining sheaf of days
Which hangs behind Him, the Destroyer plucks
Earth's death-day, and His wrath burns white for aye.

FESTUS. Let all the air be lightning, the dark blue
Of ever stretching space substantial fire,
Still God is good, still tends o'er those He loves.

LUCIFER. Why therefore comes no answer to thy prayer?

FESTUS. It may be, silence is the voice of God.

LUCIFER. Assent or dissent;—whether of the twain?

SCENE.—*Anywhere.*

FESTUS *and* LUCIFER.

FESTUS. God hath refused me: wilt thou do it for me?
Or shall I end with both? remake myself?

LUCIFER. Now, that is the one thing which I cannot do.
Am I not open with thee? why choose that?

FESTUS. Because I will it. Thou art bound to obey.

LUCIFER. The world bears marks of my obedience.

FESTUS. Off! I am torn to pieces. Let me try
And gather up myself into a man,
As once I was. I have done with thee! Dost hear?

LUCIFER. Thou canst not mean this.

FESTUS. Once for all—I do.

LUCIFER. It is men who are deceivers—not the Devil.
The first and worst of all frauds is to cheat
Oneself. All sin is easy after that.

FESTUS. I feel that we must part: part now or never;
And I had rather of the two it were now.

LUCIFER. This is my last walk through my favourite world:
And I had hoped to have enjoyed it with thee.
For thee I quitted hell; for thee I warped
And shrivelled up my soul into a man:
For thee I shed my shining wings; for thee
Put on this mask of flesh, this mockery

Of motion, and this seeming shape like thine.
 And by my woe, I swear that were I now,
 For thy false heart, to give my spirit spring,
 I would scatter soul and body both to hell,
 And let one burn the other.

FESTUS. If thou darest !
 Lift but the finger of a thought of ill
 Against me, and—thou durst not. Mark, we part.

LUCIFER. Well ; as thou wilt. Remember that thy heart
 Will shed its pleasures as thine eye its tears ;
 And both leave loathsome furrows.

FESTUS. Thinkest thou
 That I will have no pleasures without thee,
 Who marrest all thou makest, and even more ?

LUCIFER. Thou canst not : save indeed some poor trite thing
 Called moderation, every one can have ;
 And modesty, God knows, is suffering.

FESTUS. Now will I prove thee liar for that word ;
 And that the very vastest out of hell.
 With perfect condemnation I abjure
 My soul ; my nature doth abhor itself ;
 I have a soul to spare !

[*Goes.*

LUCIFER. A hundred I.
 I have him yet : for he is mine to tempt.
 Gold hath the hue of hell flames : but for him
 I will lay some brilliant and delicious lure,
 Which shall be worth perdition to a seraph.
 Most men glide quietly and deeply down :
 Some seek the bottom like a cataract.
 Now he shall find it, seek it how he will.
 None ever went without once taking breath.
 It is passion plunges men into mine arms ;
 But it matters not ; hell burns before them all.
 It is by hell-light they do their chiefest deeds ;
 And by hell-light they shine unto each other ;
 And hell through life's thick fog glares red and round ;
 And but for hell they would grope in utter dark.

SCENE—*The Surface.*LUCIFER *and* FESTUS.

LUCIFER. Wilt ride ?

FESTUS. I'll have an hour's ride.

LUCIFER. Be mine the steeds! be me the guide!—
 Come hither, come hither,
 My brave black steed!
 And thou, too, his fellow,
 Hither with speed!
 Though not so fleet
 As the steeds of Death,
 Your feet are as sure,
 Ye have longer breath.
 Ye have drawn the world
 Without wind or bait,
 Six thousand years,
 And it waxeth late;
 So take me this once,
 And again to my home,
 And rest ye and feast ye.
 They come, they come.

FESTUS. Tossing their manes like
 Pitchy surge; and lashing
 Their tails into a
 Tempest; their eyes flashing,
 Like shooting thunderbolts.

LUCIFER. Come, know your masters, colts!
 Up, and away!

FESTUS. Hurrah! hurrah!
 The noblest pace the world e'er saw.
 I swear by Heaven we'll beat the sun,
 In the longest heat that ever was run;
 If we keep it up as we have begun.

LUCIFER. I told thee my steeds

Were a gallant pair.

FESTUS. And they were not thine,
They might be divine.

LUCIFER. Thine is named Ruin ;
And Darkness mine.

FESTUS. Like all of thy deeds,
Now that's unfair.

LUCIFER. A civiller and gentler beast
Thou hast never crossed at least.

Now, look around !

FESTUS. Why, this is France.
Nature is here like a living romance.

Look at its vines, and streams, and skies,
Its glancing feet and dancing eyes !

LUCIFER. 'Tis a strange nation, light yet strong ;
Fierce of heart and blithe of tongue ;
Prone to change ; so fond of blood
She wounds herself to quaff her own.

FESTUS. Oh ! it's a brave and lovely land ;
And well deserving every good
Which others wish themselves alone,
Could she but herself command.

LUCIFER. On ! on ! no more delay !
Or we'll not ride round
The world all day.

FESTUS. Good horse get off the ground !

LUCIFER. Sit firm ! and if our horses please,
We will take at once the Pyrenees.
'Twas bravely leapt !

FESTUS. Ay, this is Spain :
Europe's last land
'Twill e'er remain ;
Last in the progress of the earth ;
The last in liberty ;
The last in wealth and worth ;
The last in bigotry.

LUCIFER. Turn thy steed, and slacken rein ;

Quick! we must be back again;
 O'er the vale hid in the mountain,
 O'er the merry forest fountain;
 Ruin and Darkness! we must fly
 O'er crag and rift,
 Swift—swift—swift
 As the glance of an eye.

FESTUS. That is Italy—the grave
 And resurrection of the slave.

LUCIFER. And there lies Greece, whose soul
 Men say hath fled:

FESTUS. Perhaps some God may come,
 And raise the dead.

LUCIFER. Norward now we'll hold our course.
 Thine I think is the bolder horse;
 But bear him up with a harder hand!
 Rough riding this o'er Swisserland.

FESTUS. So all have found it who have tried;
 High as their Alps the people's pride,
 Never to have bowed before
 The tyrant or the conqueror.

LUCIFER. Away, away! before thee lie
 The fields and floods of Germany.

FESTUS. Well I love thee, Father-land!
 Sire of Europe, as thou art!

Be free! and crouch no more, but stand!

Thy noblest son will take thy part.

Oh! sooner let the mountains bend

Beneath the clouds, when tempests lower,

Than nations stoop their sky compeering heads

In homage to some petty despot's power!

The worm which suffers mincing into parts,

May sprout forth heads and tails, but grows no hearts.

LUCIFER. There lies Austria! Famous land
 For fiddlesticks and sword-in-hand.

FESTUS. And Poland, whom truly unhappy we call;
 Unworthy to rise—unwilling to fall.

Forge into swords thy feudal chain !
 Smite e'en the souls of foes in twain !
 The fetters have been bound in vain
 Round England's arms : and we are free
 As the souls of our sires in Heaven which be.
 That earth should have so few
 Men, Fathers, like to you !

LUCIFER. What matter who be free or slaves ?
 For all there is one tyranny, the grave's ;
 Or freedom, may be. On ! on ! haste !

FESTUS. What land is yonder wide, white waste ?

LUCIFER. Ha ! 'tis Russia's gentle realm :
 Whose sceptre is the sword—whose crown, the helm.

FESTUS. I swear by every atom which exists,
 I better love this reckless ride
 O'er hill and forest, lake and river wide ;
 O'er sunlit plain and through the mountain mists,
 Than aught which thou hast given beside.

LUCIFER. See what a long long track
 Of dust and fire behind,
 For miles and miles aback !
 And shrill and strong,
 As we shoot along,
 Whistles and whirrs,
 Like a forest of firs
 Falling, the cold north wind.

FESTUS. Look ! my way I can only read
 By the sparks from the hoof of my giant steed.

LUCIFER. Where art thou now ?

FESTUS. In Tartar land ;
 I know by the deserts of salt and sand.
 Nor aim nor end hath a wandering life ;
 Rest reaps but rest, and strife but strife.
 With the nations round
 They ne'er have mixed ;
 For good or for ill
 They stand all still ;

Their bodies but rove,
 Their minds are fixed.
 And yonder lies old China's wall,
 Where gods of gold do men enthrall ;
 Gods whose gold's their only worth.

LUCIFER. Well, is not gold the god of earth ?
 Now southward, hey ! for Hindostan !
 The sun beats down both beast and man.
 Insect and herb for life do gasp ;
 The river reeks, and faints the asp.

FESTUS. But blithe are we,
 And our steeds, I trow ;
 And the name of mine
 Yet bears the snow
 Which fell on us
 By Caucasus.
 By the four beasts ! but this is warm.

LUCIFER. Away ! away !
 Nor stint nor stay ;
 We'll reach the sea before yon storm.

FESTUS. Wilt take the sea ?

LUCIFER. Ay, that will we !
 And swim as we ride,
 Our steeds astride ;
 Come leap, leap off with me !

FESTUS. What ? shall we leap
 Sheer off this steep,
 A mile the sea above ?

LUCIFER. Leap as to save
 From worse than a grave
 The maid thou most dost love !

FESTUS. There is a rapture in the headlong leap,
 The wedgelike cleaving of the closing deep !
 A feeling full of hardihood and power
 With which we court the waters that devour.
 Oh ! 'tis a feeling great, sublime, supreme,
 Like the extatic influence of a dream,

To speed one's way thus o'er the sliding plain ;
And make a kindred being with the main.

LUCIFER. By Chaos! this is gallant sport ;
A league at every breath ;
Methinks if I ever have to die,
I'll ride this rate to death.

FESTUS. Away, away upon the whitening tide,
Like lover hasting to embrace his bride,
We hurry faster than the foam we ride.
Dashing aside the waves which round us cling,
With strength like that which lifts an eagle's wing
Where the stars dazzle and the angels sing.

LUCIFER. We scatter the spray,
And break through the billows,
As the wind makes way
Through the leaves of willows.

FESTUS. In vain they urge their armies to the fight :
Their surge-crests crumble 'neath our stroke of might.
We meet and fear not ; mount—now rise, now fall—
And dare, with fullnerved arm, the rage of all.
Through anger-swollen wave, or sparkling spray,
Nothing it recks ; we hold our perilous way
Right onward ! till we feel the whirling brain
Ring with the maddening music of the main ;
Till the fixed eyeball strives and strains to ken,
Yet loathes to see the shore and haunts of men ;
And the blood, half starting through each ridgy vein,
In the unwieldy hand sets black with pain.
Then let the tempest cloud on cloud come spread,
And tear the stormy terrors of his head ;
Let the wild sea-bird wheel around my brow,
And shriek—and swoop—and flap her wing as now ;
It gladdens. On, ye boisterous billows, roll,
And keep my body ; ye have ta'en my soul.
Thou element ! the type which God hath given,
For eyes and hearts too earthy, of His Heaven ;
Were Heaven a mockery, I would never mourn

While o'er thy bosom I might still be borne ;
 While yet to me the power and joy were given
 To fling my breast on thine, and mingle earth with Heaven.

LUCIFER. See yonder ! now we quit the main ;
 For here's the Cape, here's land again,—
 And scour we must o'er Afric's plain.

FESTUS. Away, away ! on either hand
 Nor town nor tower,
 Nor shade nor shower—
 Nothing but sun and sand.

LUCIFER. See, there they are ! I knew, right soon,
 We would light on the mountains of the moon.
 Over them ! over, nought forbids.

FESTUS. Yonder the Nile and the Pyramids ?
 Hurrah ! by my soul !
 At every bound
 I see, I feel
 The earth rush round.

I see the mountains slide away—
 That side night, and this side day.

LUCIFER. Shall we go to America ?

FESTUS. Why, have we time ?

LUCIFER. Oh, plenty ;
 Be there, too, ere we reckon twenty.
 Another run, another bound !
 And we shall leave this lion ground.

FESTUS. The sea again ! the swift bright sea !

LUCIFER. Hold hard, and follow me.
 Well, now we have travelled upon the waves,
 Wilt travel a time beneath ?
 And visit the sea-born in their caves ;
 And look on the rainbow-tinted wreath
 Of weeds, beset with pearls, wherewith
 The mermaid binds her long green hair,
 Or rouse the sea-snake from his lair ?

FESTUS. Ay, ay ! down let us dive.

LUCIFER. Look up ! we lack not stars ;

And every star thou seest's alive :
 A little globe of life—light—love,
 Whose every atom is a living being ;
 Each the other's bosom seeing,
 Each enlightening the other.

FESTUS. Oh ! how unlike the world above,
 Where each doth mainly, vainly strive
 To dim or to outshine his brother !

LUCIFER. Come on ! come on !

FESTUS. Are those bright spars,
 Or eyes of things which ne'er forgive,
 That seem to play on us, and glare
 With rage that we so far should dare
 To search the hidden deeps,
 Where tide, the moonslave, sleeps ?
 Where the wind breathes not, and the wave
 Walks softly, as above a grave ;—
 Where coral worms, in countless nations,
 Build rocks up from the sea's foundations ;—
 Where the islands strike their roots
 Far from the old mainland ;
 And spring like desert-fruits,
 Shook off by God's strong hand,
 Up from their bed of sand.
 Look, listen ! there is music in the cave,
 Where Ocean sleeps, and brightness in the wave
 The sea-bird makes its pillow, and the star,
 Last born of Heaven, its azure mirror ;—far
 And wide, the pale, fine fire of ocean flows,
 Softly sublime, like lightnings in repose—
 Till roused anon, afar its flaming spray it throws.

LUCIFER. There ! now we stand
 On the world's-end-land !
 Over the hills
 Away we go !
 Through fire, and snow,
 And rivers, whereto

All others are rills.

FESTUS. Through the lands of silver,
The lands of gold ;
Through lands untrodden,
And lands untold.

LUCIFER. By strait and bay
We must away ;
Through swamp and plain,
And hurricane ;

FESTUS. And that dark cloud of slaves
Which yet may rise ;—
Though nought shall blot the bannered stars
From Freedom's skies.
America ! half-brother of the world !
With something good and bad of every land ;
Greater than thee have lost their seat—
Greater scarce none can stand.
Thy flag now flouts the skies,
The highest under Heaven ;
Save the red cross, whereto are given
All victories.

LUCIFER. Our horses snort, and snuff the sea,
And pant for where we ought to be.

FESTUS. Well, here we are ; and as we flew in,
I said, let Darkness follow Ruin !

LUCIFER. 'Twas right. Spur on ! Come, Darkness, come ;
Think of thy well-strown stall !

FESTUS. For me, I care not what's to come,
Nor for the fate by which I fall ;
But I would that I were Ocean's son,
The solitary brave,
Like yon sea-snake, to climb upon
The crest of the bounding wave.
Oh ! happy, if at last I lie,
Within some pearled and coral cave ;
While over head the booming surge
And moaning billow shall chant my dirge ;

And the storm-blast, as it sweepeth by,
 Shall, answering, howl to the mermaid's sigh,
 And the nightwind's mournful minstrelsy,
 Their requiem over my grave.

LUCIFER. Through morn and midnight, sunset and high
 noon,

One hour hath ta'en us ;—o'er all land and sea,
 O'er opening earthquake and iceberg, have we
 Swept in swift safety. 'Twill be over soon.
 Behold the common, narrow sea,
 Which, like a strong man's arm,
 Keeps back two foes whose lips are white,
 Whose hearts with rage are warm.

FESTUS. England! my country, great and free!
 Heart of the world, I leap to thee.
 How shall my country fight
 When her foes rise against her,
 But with thine arm, O Sea!
 The arm which thou lent'st her?
 Where shall my country be buried
 When she shall die?
 Earth is too scant for her grave:
 Where shall she lie?
 She hath brethren more than a hundred,
 And they all want room;
 They may die and may lie where they live—
 They shall not mix with her doom.
 Where but within thine arms,
 O sea, O sea?
 Wherein she hath lived and gloried,
 Let her rest be!
 We will rise and say to the sea,
 Flow over her!
 We will cry to the death of the deep,
 Cover her!
 The world hath drawn his sword,
 And his red shield drips before him:—

But, my country, rise!
 Thou canst never die
 While a foe hath life to fly;
 Rise land, and gore him!

LUCIFER. Now get on land, and hie along
 O'er forest, copse, and glade;
 We have but a league or two more to go
 Before our journey's made;
 With speed that flings the sun into the shade.

FESTUS. See the gold sunshine patching,
 And streaming and streaking across
 The gray-green oaks; and catching,
 By its soft brown beard, the moss.

LUCIFER. Ah! here we get an open plain:
 Here we'll get down.
 Away, good steeds! be off again!

FESTUS. We must be near to Town.
 I am bound to thee for ever
 By the pleasure of this day;
 Henceforth we will never sever,
 Come what come may.

SCENE—*A Village Feast. Evening.*

FESTUS, LUCIFER, *and* OTHERS.

FESTUS. It is getting dark. One has to walk quite close,
 To see the pretty faces that we meet.

LUCIFER. A disagreeable necessity,
 Truly.

FESTUS. We'll rest upon this bridge. I am tired.
 Yon tall slim tree! does it not seem as made
 For its place there, a kind of natural maypole?—
 Beyond, the lighted stalls stored with the good
 Things of our childhood's world, and behind them,
 The shouting showman and the clashing cymbal;

The open doored cottages and blazing hearth,—
 The little ones running up with naked feet,
 And cake in either hand, to their mother's lap,—
 Old and young laughing, schoolboys with their playthings,
 Clowns cracking jokes, and lasses with sly eyes,
 And the smile settling in their sunflecked cheeks,
 Like noon upon the mellow apricot;—
 Make up a scene I can for once give in to.
 It must please all, the social and the selfish.
 Are they not happy?

LUCIFER. Why, it matters not.
 They seem so: that's enough.

FESTUS. But not the same.

LUCIFER. Yet truth and falsehood meet in seeming, like
 The falling leaf and shadow on the pool's face.
 And these are joys, like beauty, but skin deep.

FESTUS. Remove all such, and what's the joy of earth?
 It is they create the appetite of life—
 Give zest and relish to the lot of millions.
 And take the taste for them away—what's left?
 A dry ungainly skeleton of soul.

LUCIFER. Power is aye above the soul, and joy
 Below it. Pleasure men prefer to power.

(Children at Play.)

FESTUS. Play away, good ones! I could romp with you.
 To look upon the fair face of a child
 Feels like a resurrection of the heart.
 Children are vast in blessings; Kings and Queens
 According to the dynasties of Love.
 The might and the delight of nations lies
 In them, and for them earth is what it is.

LUCIFER. Another row of dragon's teeth! a row
 Of grinders, look ye.

AN OLD MAN. Pity the poor blind man!

FESTUS. Here is substantial pity.

OLD MAN. Heaven reward you!

FESTUS. Blind as the blue skies after sunset. Blind!

And I am tired of looking on what is.
 One might as well see beauty never more,
 As look upon it with an empty eye.
 I would this world were over. I am tired.
 Nought happens but what happens to one's self;
 And all hath happened I have wished, and more.
 Our pleasures all pass from us, one by one,
 With that relief which sighing gives the heart,
 Though each sigh leaves it lower. It is sad
 To think how few our pleasures really are;
 And for the which we risk eternal good.
 There's nothing that can satisfy one's self,
 Except one's self. Well, it is very sad.
 And by the time we come of age we have felt,
 In one degree or other, all that age
 Can offer. We have reaped our field ere noon.
 The rest is reproduction; sowing—reaping—
 Losing again. Toil and gain tire alike.
 We cannot live too slowly to be good
 And happy, nor too much by line and square.
 But youth is burning to forestall its nature,
 And will not wait for Time to ferry it
 Over the stream, but flings itself into
 The flood, and perishes. And yet, why not?
 There is no charm in time as time, nor good.
 The long days are no happier than the short ones.
 'Tis sometime now since I was here. We leave
 Our home in youth—no matter to what end;—
 Study—or strife—or pleasure, or what not;
 And coming back in few short years, we find
 All as we left it, outside; the old elms,
 The house, grass, gates, and latchet's selfsame click;
 But lift that latchet,—all is changed as doom:
 The servants have forgotten our step, and more
 Than half of those who knew us know us not.
 Adversity, prosperity, the grave,
 Play a round game with friends. On some the world

Hath shot its evil eye, and they are passed
 From honour and remembrance, and a stare
 Is all the mention of their names receives ;
 And people know no more of them than of
 The shapes of clouds at midnight, a year back.

LUCIFER. Let us move on to where the dancing is ;
 We soon shall see how happy they all are.
 Here is a loving couple quarrelling.
 And there, another. It is quite distressing.
 See yonder. Two men fighting !

FESTUS. What avail
 These vile exceptions to the rule of joy ?

LUCIFER. Behold the happiness of which thou spakest !
 The highest hills are miles below the sky ;
 And so far is the lightest heart below
 True happiness.

FESTUS. This is a snakelike world,
 And always hath its tail within its mouth,
 As if it ate itself, and moralled time.
 The world is like yon children's merry-go-round ;
 What men admire are carriages and hobbies,
 Which the exalted manikins enjoy.
 There is a noisy ragged crowd below
 Of urchins drives it round, who only get
 The excitement for their pains—best gain perhaps :
 For it is not they who labour that grow dizzy
 Nor sick—that's for the idle proud above,
 Who soon dismount, more weary of enjoying
 Than those below of working ; and but fair.
 It is wretchedness or recklessness alone
 Keeps us alive. Were we happy we should die.
 Yet what is death ? I like to think on death :
 It is but the appearance of an apparition.
 One ought to tremble ; but oughts stand for nothing.
 I hate the thought of wrinkling up to rest ;
 The toothlike aching ruin of the body,
 With the heart all out, and nothing left but edge.

Give me the long high bounding feel of life,
 Which cries, let me but leap unto my grave,
 And I'll not mind the when nor where. We never
 Care less for life than when enjoying it.
 Oh! I should love to die. What is to die?
 I cannot hold the meaning more than can
 An oak's arms clasp the blast that blows on it.
 There is an air-like something which must be,
 And yet not to be seen, nor to be touched.
 I am made up to die; for having been
 Every thing, there is nothing left but nothing
 To be again.

LUCIFER. Hark! here's a ballad-singer.

BALLAD-SINGER. All of my own composing!

FESTUS. Yes, yes—we know.

SINGER. My gipsy maid! my gipsy maid!
 I bless and curse the day
 I lost the light of life, and caught
 The grief which maketh gray.
 Would that the light which blinded me
 Had saved me on my way!

My night-haired love! so sweet she was,
 So fair and blithe was she;
 Her smile was brighter than the moon's,
 Her eyes the stars might see.

I met her by her lane-spread tent,
 Beside a moss-green stone,
 And bade her make, not mock, my fate;
 My fortune was her own.
 Thou art but yet a boy she said,
 And I a woman grown.

I am a man in love, I cried;
 My heart was early manned:

She smiled, and only drooped her eyes,
 And then let go my hand.
 We stood a minute : neither spake
 What each must understand.

I told her, so she would be mine,
 And follow where I went,
 She straight should have a bridal bower
 Instead of gipsy tent.

Or would she have me wend with her,
 The world between should fall ;
 For her I would fling up faith and friends,
 And name, and fame, and all.

Her smile so bright froze while I spake,
 And ice was in her eye ;
 So near, it seemed ere touch her heart
 I might have kissed the sky.

I said that if she loved to rule,
 Or if she longed to reign,
 I would make her Queen of every race
 Which tearlike trode the world's sad face,
 Or bleed at every vein.

She laid her finger on her lip,
 And pointed to the sky ;
 There is no God to come, she said :
 Dost thou not fear to die ?

And what is God, I said, to thee ?
 Thy people worship not.
 The good, the happy, and the free,
 She said, they need no God.

I looked until I lost mine eyes ;
 I felt as though I were

In a dark cave, with one weak light—
 The light of life—with her ;
 And that was wasting fast away ;
 I watched, but would not stir.

Again she took my hand in hers,
 And read it o'er and o'er ;
 Ah ! eyes so young, so sweet, I said,
 Make as they read love's lore.

She held my hand—I trembled whilst—
 For sorely soon I felt
 She made the love-cross she foretold,
 And all the woe she dealt.

Unhappy I should be, she said,
 And young to death be given :
 I told her I believed in her,
 Not in the stars of Heaven.

Hush ! we breathe Heaven, she said, and bowed ;
 And the stars speak through me.
 Let Heaven, I cried, take care of Heaven !
 I only care for thee.

She shrank : I looked, and begged a kiss ;
 I knew she had one for me ;
 She would deny me none, she said,
 But give me none would she.

My gipsy maid ! my gipsy maid !
 'Tis three long years like this,
 Since there I gave and got from thee
 That meeting, parting kiss.

I saw the tears start in her eye,
 And trickle down her cheek ;

Like falling stars across the sky,
Escaping from their Maker's eye:
I saw, but spared to speak.

Go, and forget! she said, and slid
Below her lowly tent;
I will not, cannot;—hear me, girl!
She heard not, and I went.

At eve, by sunset, I was there,
The tent was there no more;
The fire which warmed her flickered still—
The fire she sat before.

I stood by it, till through the dark
I saw not where it lay;
And then like that my heart went out
In ashy grief and gray.

My gipsy maid! my gipsy maid!
Oh! let me bless this day;
This day it was I met thee first,
And yet it shall be and is cursed,
For thou hast gone away.

LUCIFER. Another, please—not quite so gloomy, friend.

GIRL. I wonder if the tale it tells be true.

SINGER. I dare say—but you want a merrier.

Every man's life has its apocrypha;
Mine has, at least. I have said more than need be.
It happened, too, when I was very young.
We never meet such gipsies when we are old;
And yet we more complain of youth than age.
Now, make a ring, good people. Let me breathe!

[*Sings.*

Oh! the wee green neuk, the sly green neuk,
The wee sly neuk for me!

Whare the wheat is wavin' bright and brown,
 And the wind is fresh and free.
 Whare I weave wild weeds, and out o' reeds
 Kerve whistles as I lay ;
 And a douce low voice is murmurin' by
 Through the lee-lang simmer day.
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

And where a' things luik as though they lo'ed
 To languish in the sun ;
 And that if they feed the fire they dree,
 They wadna ae pang were gone.
 Whare the lift aboon is still as death,
 And bright as life can be ;
 While the douce low voice says, na, na, na !
 But ye mauna luik sae at me.
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

Whare the lang rank bent is saft and cule,
 And freshenin' till the feet ;
 And the spot is sly, and the spinnie high,
 Whare my luvie and I mak seat :
 And I teaze her till she rins, and then
 I catch her roun' the tree ;
 While the poppies shak' their heids and blush :
 Let 'em blush till they drap for me !
 Oh ! the wee green neuk, &c.

FESTUS. And all who know such feelings and such scenes
 Will, I am sure, reward you. Here—take this.

OTHERS. And this, and this—too !

SINGER. Thank ye all, good friends !

FESTUS. There's much that has no merit but its truth,
 And no excuse but nature. Nature does
 Never wrong : 'tis society which sins.
 Look at the bee upon the wing among flowers ;
 How brave, how bright his life. Then mark him hived,

Cramped, cringing in his self-built social cell.
 Thus is it in the world-hive: most where men
 Lie deep in cities as in drifts—death drifts,
 Nosing each other like a flock of sheep;
 Not knowing and not caring whence nor whither
 They come or go, so that they fool together.

LUCIFER. It is quite fair to halve these lives, and say
 This side is nature's, that society's,
 When both are side-views only of one thing.

FARMER. I am glad to see you come among us, sir.

PARSON. Why, I have but little comfort in these pastimes;
 And any heart, turned Godwards, feels more joy
 In one short hour of prayer, than e'er was raised
 By all the feasts on earth since their foundation.
 But no one will believe us; as if we
 Had never known the vain things of the world,
 Nor lain and slept in sin's seducing shade,
 Listless, until God woke us; made us feel
 We should be up and stirring in the sun;
 For everything had to be done ere night.
 What is all this joy and jollity about?
 Grant there may be no sin. What good is it?

FARMER. I can't defend these feasts, sir, and can't blame.

PARSON. Good evening, friends! Why, Festus! I rejoice
 We meet again. I have a young friend here,
 A student—who hath staid with us of late.
 You would be glad I know to know each other;
 Therefore be known so.

FESTUS. You are a student, sir.

STUDENT. I profess little. But it is a title
 A man may claim perhaps with modesty.

FESTUS. True. All mankind are students. How to live
 And how to die forms the great lesson still.
 I know what study is: it is to toil
 Hard, through the hours of the sad midnight watch,
 At tasks which seem a systematic curse,
 And course of bootless penance. Night by night,

To trace one's thought as if on iron leaves ;
 And sorrowful as though it were the mode
 And date of death we wrote on our own tombs :
 Wring a slight sleep out of the couch, and see
 The self-same moon which lit us to our rest,
 Her place scarce changed perceptibly in Heaven,
 Now light us to renewal of our toils.—
 This, to the young mind, wild and all in leaf,
 Which knowledge grafting, paineth. Fruit soon comes,
 And more than all our troubles pays us powers ;
 So that we joy to have endured so much :
 That not for nothing have we slaved and slain
 Ourselves almost. And more ; it is to strive
 To bring the mind up to one's own esteem :
 Who but the generous fail ? It is to think,
 While thought is standing thick upon the brain
 As dew upon the brow—for thought is brain-sweat—
 And gathering quick and dark, like storms in summer,
 Until convulsed, condensed, in lightning sport,
 It plays upon the heavens of the mind,—
 Opens the hemisphered abysses here,
 And we become revealers to ourselves.

STUDENT. When night hath set her silver lamp on high,
 Then is the time for study ; when Heaven's light
 Pours itself on the page, like prophesy
 On time, unglowering all its mighty meanings ;
 It is then we feel the sweet strength of the stars,
 And magic of the moon.

LUCIFER. It's a bad habit.

STUDENT. And wisdom dwells in secret, and on high
 As do the stars. The sun's diurnal glare
 Is for the daily herd ; but for the wise,
 The cold pure radiance of the night-born light,
 Wherewith is inspiration of the truth.
 There was a time when I would never go
 To rest before the sun rose ; and for that,
 Through a like length of time as that now gone,

The world shall speak of me six thousand years hence.

LUCIFER. How know you that the world won't end
to-morrow ?

PARSON. I now, an early riser, love to hail
The dreamy struggles of the stars with light,
And the recovering breath of earth, sleep-drowned,
Awakening to the wisdom of the sun,
And life of light within the tent of Heaven ;—
To kiss the feet of Morning as she walks
In dewy light along the hills, while they,
All odorous as an angel's fresh-culled crown,
Unveil to her their bounteous loveliness.

STUDENT. I am devote to study. Worthy books
Are not companions—they are solitudes ;
We lose ourselves in them and all our cares.
The further back we search the human mind,—
Mean in the mass, but in the instance great—
Which starting first with Deities, and stars,
And broods of beings earth-born, Heaven-begot,
And all the bright side of the broad world, now
Doats upon dreams and dim atomic truths,
Is all for comfort and no more for glory—
The nobler and more marvellous it shews.
Trifles like these make up the present time ;
The Iliad and the Pyramids the past.

FESTUS. The future will have glory not the less.
I can conceive a time when the world shall be
Much better visibly, and when, as far
As social life and its relations tend,
Men, morals, manners shall be lifted up
To a pure height we know not of nor dream ;—
When all men's rights and duties shall be clear,
And charitably exercised and borne ;
When education, conscience, and good deeds
Shall have just equal sway, and civil claims ;—
Great crimes shall be cast out, as were of old
Devils possessing madmen :—Truth shall reign,

Nature shall be rethroned, and man sublimed.

STUDENT. Oh! then may Heaven come down again to earth;
And dwell with her, as once, like to a friend.

LUCIFER. As like each other as a sword and scythe.
Oh! then shall lions mew and lambkins roar.

FESTUS. And having studied—what next?

STUDENT. Much I long
To view the capital city of the world.
The mountains, the great cities, and the sea,
Are each an era in the life of youth.

FESTUS. There to get worldly ways, and thoughts, and
schemes;

To learn to detect, distrust, despise mankind—
To ken a false factitious glare amid much
That shines with seeming saintlike purity—
To gloss misdeeds—to trifle with great truths—
To pit the brain against the heart, and plead
Wit before wisdom,—these are the world's ways:
It learns us to lose that in crowds which we
Must after seek alone—our innocence;
And when the crowd is gone.

STUDENT. Not only that:
There all great things are round one. Interests,
Mighty and mountainous of estimate,
Are daily heaped or scattered 'neath the eye.
Great deeds, great thoughts, great schemes, and crimes,
and all

Which is in purpose, or in practice, great
Of human nature—there are common things.
Men make themselves be deathless as in spite;
As if they waged some lineal feud with time;
As though their fathers were immortal, too,
And immortality an every-day
Accomplishment.

FESTUS. Fie! fie! 'tis more for this:
Amid gayer people, and more wanton ways,
To give a loose to all the lists of youth—

To train your passion flowers high ahead,
 And bind them on your brow as others do.
 The mornlit revel and the shameless mate—
 The tabled hues of darkness and of blood—
 The published bosom and the crowning smile—
 The cup excessive ; and if aught there be
 More vain than these or wanton—that to have—
 Have all but always in intent, effect,
 Or fact. Nay, nay, deny it not : I know.
 Youth hath a strange and strong desire to try
 All feelings on the heart : it is very wrong,
 And dangerous, and deadly : strive against it !

STUDENT. It might be some old sage was warning us.

FESTUS. Youth might be wise. We suffer less from pains
 Than pleasures.

STUDENT. I should like to see the world,
 And gain that knowledge which is—

FESTUS. Barrener
 Than ice ; possessing and producing nought
 But means and forms of death or vanity.
 The world is just as hollow as an eggshell.
 It is a surface, not a solid mind :
 And all this boasted knowledge of the world
 To me seems but to mean acquaintance with
 Low things, or evil, or indifferent.

FARMER. Much more is said of knowledge than it's worth.
 A man may gain all knowledge here, and yet
 Be, after death, as much in the dark as I.

LUCIFER. What makes you know of living after death ?

FARMER. Why, nothing that I know ; and there it is !—
 But something I am told has told me so.
 No angel ever came to me to prove it ;
 And all my friends have died, and left no ghosts.

FESTUS. All that is good a man may learn from himself ;
 And much, too, that is bad.

PARSON. Nay, let me speak !
 Aught that is good the soul receives of God .

When He hath made it His ; and until then
 Man cannot know, nor do, nor be, aught good.
 Oh ! there is nought on earth worth being known
 But God and our own souls—the God we have
 Within our hearts ; for it is not the hope,
 Nor faith, nor fear, nor notions others have
 Of God can serve us, but the sense and soul
 We have of Him within us ; and, for men,
 God loves us men each individually,
 And deals with us in order, soul by soul.

LUCIFER. But this is not the place for sermons.

PARSON.

True.

We heard once, Festus, you were travelling :—
 Pray in what parts ?

FESTUS. Among the outer orbs.

PARSON. Nay, surely not so far except in thought,
 Perchance, or calculation.

FESTUS. A month back

I was in giant land.

PARSON. Ah ! fee-faw-fum ?—

They did not eat you there ?

FESTUS. Oh ! no. They much

Preferred their usual fare.

PARSON. What might it be ?

Not Englishmen and hasty pudding, eh ?

FESTUS. They are no more cannibals than you or I ;
 But are of various tastes, and patronize,
 I know, rich diet.

PARSON. It's excusable.

And they are great consumers I dare say.

FESTUS. A wheat-stack of our friend's here would but
 make

One loaf of bread for them. Oak trees they use
 As pickles, and tall pines as toothpicks ; whales,
 In their own blubber fried, serve as mere fish
 To bait their appetites. Boiled elephants,
 Rhinoceroses, and roasted crocodiles—

Every thing dished up whole—with lions stewed,
 Shark sauce, and eagle pie, and young giraffes,
 Make up a potluck dinner,—if there's plenty.
 Then as for game, the ptero-dactyles
 And ichthyosauri are great dainties there,
 Coming in season only once an age.
 They reckon there by ages, not by years.

STUDENT. And as to beverage ?

FESTUS. Oh ; if thirsty, they
 Will lay them down and drink a river dry,
 Nor once draw breath.

PARSON. Ah ! camel, gnat, and all.

FESTUS. Others are more abstemious, and consume
 Egg-broth and simples chiefly. There was one
 Who when I saw him first sat by a fire ;
 An egg, an hour glass, and a water bowl
 Being before him. All he said was this :—

When the sand is run
 The egg is done.

This he first boiled, then roasted, and then ate.

STUDENT. What sort of one ? Perhaps an ostrich egg ?

FESTUS. Much larger. Here is nothing of the kind.
 The yolk was like the sun seen in a fog ;
 The white was thin and clouded, and the shell
 Heavy and hard as is our earth-pie crust.

LUCIFER. What kind of bird it was that laid it—guess !—

PARSON. Continue. You have travelled in the dark ;
 But wisdom sometimes inns with ignorance.
 What of their persons, habits, language, creed ?

FESTUS. They live seven thousand years of years like ours,
 And then die suddenly ; when death takes place
 They burn the bodies always in a lake,
 The spray whereof is ashes, and its depths
 Unfathomable fire, and never mourn.
 In form and stature they are mountain-sized ;
 Could walk through woods like ours as through long grass ;
 Use little verbal language, but express

All thought by action and oracular use
 Of eye or hand. Their chief religion seems
 Self punishment by sin and rites of fire.
 'Twould do the godless good to visit once
 One of this awful race whom once I saw ;
 And who—were time and place more fitting—

STUDENT.

Nay,

We are apart from others. Nothing save
 Yon heavenly ark which floats among the stars,
 Now resting on an Ararat of clouds,
 Hath leave to overlook us.

PARSON.

Pray proceed.

FESTUS. Once I had travelled through a weary world,
 Than all in Heaven more barren and forlorn,
 Dark as the wild heart of a thunder-cloud,
 Strewn with the wrecks and ashes of all orbs
 Firestranded, rolling in quick agony ;
 Peopled with burning ghosts dislimbed and charred ;
 And in the midst a giant, by a fire
 Kindled of burning passions, and full fed
 With sins long seasoned, at whose feet there stood
 A crystal cistern brimmed with human tears,
 Which sprinkled but inflamed the fire with withal ;—
 The giant all while watching with stern mien,
 And ruthless interest the whole. Dread sir !
 Said I, as I drew near, what angers thee ?
 He answered not, but pointed ; and I saw
 Full in the midst that infernal fire,
 Blazing aghast in solar solitude,
 A panting shadow, which, with skeleton eyes,
 And woe-gouged countenance, whereon was hung
 A white eclipse like darkness pale with pain,
 Watched for the disappearance of the Heavens
 With a despairing hope ; entranced it lay
 In all its horrid perspicuity,
 And glassy ghastliness immortalized.
 Anon it turned round restlessly, and cried

Woe, woe is me! Eternal Spirit God!
 Thy wrath is heaviest when endurable.
 Put forth Thy strength and sweep the universe,
 With me, into the night of nothingness,
 That sin and soul may perish. Woe is me!
 Still shine the blessed Heavens, and still, like fire
 Congealed, my woe perpetuates itself.
 Whereat the giant laughed, rejoicing in
 His ministry of woe, and blew his hell
 Still fiercer—till it bellowed, and the orb
 Beneath my foot sole seared, and I took leave;
 For there was somewhat in the giant's air,
 And his huge balefire, and the naked plain—
 Bald as the crown of Time—which caused me dread.

PARSON. Dreams you have dreamed till you believe in
 them;

But such as these are awesome. Not the less
 View them vouchsafed as warnings. Oft the mind,
 Freed by angelic sleep from bodily bonds,
 Knows scenes and themes like these you have named, which
 tend

To edifying much. Such travel is
 Like mine, the travail simply of the brain.

FESTUS. It is pure reality.

PARSON. Well, say no more.

We may pursue the sense of things too far.
 The golden side of Heaven's great shield is faith,
 The silver, reason. I see this, you that;
 The junction is invisible to both.

STUDENT. One thing is sometimes said, another meant.

LUCIFER. What are your politics?

FARMER. I have none.

LUCIFER. Good.

FARMER. I have my thoughts. I am no party man.
 I care for measures more than men, but think
 Some little may depend upon the men;
 Something in fires depends upon the grate.

FIRST BOY. What are your colours ?

SECOND.

Blue as Heaven.

THIRD.

And mine

Are yellow as the sun.

FIRST.

Mine, green as grass.

SECOND. Green's forsaken, and yellow's forsworn,
And blue's the colour that shall be worn.

STUDENT. As to religion, politics, law, and war,
But little need be said. All are required,
And all are well enough. Of liberty,
And slavery, and tyranny we hear
Much ; but the human mind affects extremes.
The heart is in the middle of the system ;
And all affections gather round the truth,
The moderated joys and woes of life.
I love my God, my country, kind and kin,
Nor would I see a dog wronged of his bone.
My country ! if a wretch should e'er arise,
Out of thy countless sons, who would curtail
Thy freedom, dim thy glory,—while he lives
May all earth's peoples curse him—for of all
Hast thou secured the blessing ;—and if one
Exist who would not arm for liberty,
Be he too cursed living, and when dead,
Let him be buried downwards, with his face
Looking to hell, and o'er his coward grave
The hare skulk in her form.

LUCIFER.

Nay, gently, friend.

Curse nothing, not the Devil. He's beside you—
For aught you know.

STUDENT.

I neither know nor care.

(They pass some card-players.)

FESTUS. Kings, queens, knaves, tens, would trick the
world away,

And it were not now and then for some brave ace.

STUDENT. You see you wretched starved old man ; his
brow

Grooved out with wrinkles like the brown dry sand
The tide of life is leaving ?

LUCIFER. Yes, I see him.

STUDENT. Last week he thought he was about to die :
So he bade gold be strewn beneath his pillow,
Gold on a chest that he might lie and see,
And gold put in a basin on his bed,
That he might dabble with his fingers in.
He's going now to grope for pence or pins.
He never gave a pin's worth in his life.
What would you do to him ?

LUCIFER. I would have him wrought
Into a living wire, which, beaten out,
Might make a golden network for the world ;
Then melt him inch by inch, and hell by hell,
Where is the law of wrath.

STUDENT. Oh, charity !
It is a thought the Devil might be proud of—
Once and away. Misers and spendthrifts may
Torment each other in the world to come.

LUCIFER. And thus do men apportion their own lot ;
A grain of comfort and a sack of sin.

FESTUS. Men look on death as lightning, always far
Off, or in Heaven. They know not it is in
Themselves, a strong and inward tendency,
The soul of every atom, every hair :
That nature's infinite electric life,
Escaping from each isolated frame,
Up out of earth, or down from Heaven, becomes
To each its proper death, and adds itself
Thus to the great reunion of the whole.
There is a man in mourning ! What does he here ?

STUDENT. He has just buried the only friend he had,
And now comes hither to enjoy himself.

FESTUS. Why will we dedicate the dead to God,
And not ourselves, the living ? Oft we speak,
With tears of joy and trust, of some dear friend

As surely up in Heaven ; while that same soul,
 For aught we know, may be shuddering even in hell
 To hear his name named ; or there may be no
 Soul in the case—and the fat icy worm,
 Give him a tongue, can tell us all about him.

STUDENT. Here is music. Stay. That simple melody
 Comes on the heart like infant innocence—
 Pure feeling pure ; while yet the new-bodied soul
 Is swinging to the motion of the Heavens,
 And scarce hath caught, as yet, earth's backening course.

FESTUS. The heart is formed as earth was—its first age
 Formless and void, and fit but for itself ;
 Then feelings half alive, just organized,
 Come next,—then creeping sports and purposes,—
 Then animal desires, delights, and loves—
 For love is the first and granite-like effect
 Of things—the longest and the highest : next
 The wild and winged desires, youth's saurian schemes,
 Which creep and fly by turns ; which kill and eat,
 And do disgorge each other : comes at length
 The mould of perfect matchless manhood—then
 Woman divides the heart, and multiplies it.
 The insipidity of innocence
 Palls : it is guilty, happy, and undone.
 A death is laid upon it, and it goes—
 Quits its green Eden for the sandy world,
 Where it works out its nature, as it may,
 In sweat, smiles, blood, tears, cursings, and what not.
 And giant sins possess it ; and it worships
 Works of the hand, head, heart—its own or others—
 A creature worship, which excludeth God's :
 The less thrusts out the greater. Warning comes,
 But the heart fears not—feels not ; till at last
 Down comes the flood from Heaven ; and that heart,
 Broken inwards, earthlike, to its central hell :
 Or like the bright and burning eye we see
 Inly, when pressed hard backwards on the brain,

Ends and begins again—destroyed, is saved.
 Every man is the first man to himself,
 And Eves are just as plentiful as apples ;
 Nor do we fall, nor are we saved by proxy.
 The Eden we live in is our own heart ;
 And the first thing we do, of our free choice,
 Is sure and necessary to be sin.
 Each to himself is also the last man,
 And with him bears and earns the world's vast doom.

LUCIFER. The only right men have is to be damned.
 What is the good of music, or the beauty ?
 Music tells no truths.

FESTUS. True ; but it suggests
 And illustrates the highest of all truths,
 The harmony of all things—even earth,
 With its great Author. Oh ! there is nought so sweet
 As lying and listening music from the hands,
 And singing from the lips, of one we love—
 Lips that all others should be tuned to. Then
 The world would all be love and song ; Heaven's harps
 And orbs join in ; the whole be harmony—
 Distinct, yet blended—blending all in one
 Long and delicious tremble like a chord.
 But to Thee, God ! all Being is a harp,
 Whereon Thou makest mightiest melody.
 Hast ever been in love ?

STUDENT. I never was.

FESTUS. Spite of morality or mystery,
 It is love which mostly destines our life.
 What makes the world in after life I know not,
 For our horizon alters as we age :
 Power only can make up for the lack of love—
 Power of some sort. The mind at one time grows
 So fast, it fails ; and then its stretch is more
 Than its strength ; but, as it opes, love fills it up,
 Like to the stamen in the flower of life,
 Till for the time we well-nigh grow all love ;

And soon we feel the want of one kind heart
 To love what's well, and to forgive what's ill,
 In us,—that heart we play for at all risks.

STUDENT. How can the heart, which lies embodied deep,
 In blood and bone, set like a ruby eye
 Into the breast, be made a toy for beauty,
 And, vane-like, blown about by every wanton sigh?
 How can the soul, the rich star-travelled stranger,
 Who here sojourneth only for a purchase,
 Risk all the riches of his years of toil,
 And his God-vouched inheritance of Heaven,
 For one light momentary taste of love?

FESTUS. It is so; and when once you know the sport—
 The crowded pack of passions in full cry—
 The sweet deceits, the tempting obstacles—
 The smile, the sigh, the tear, and the embrace—
 All the delights of love at last in one,
 With kisses close as stars in the milky way,
 In at the death you cry, though 'twere your own!

STUDENT. Upon my soul, most sound morality!
 Nothing is thought of virtue, then, nor judgment?

FESTUS. Oh! everything is thought of—but not then.
 And—judgment—no! it is nowhere in the field.

STUDENT. Slow-paced and late arriving, still it comes.
 I cannot understand this love; I hear
 Of its idolatry, not its respect.

FESTUS. Respect is what we owe; love what we give.
 And men would mostly rather give than pay.
 Morality's the right rule for the world.
 Nor could society cohere without
 Virtue: and there are those whose spirits walk
 Abreast of angels and the future, here.
 Respect and love thou such.

LUCIFER. Of course you wish
 Women to love you rather than love them.
 Well, mind! it is folly to tell women truth;
 They would rather live on lies so they be sweet.

Never be long in one mind to one love.
 You change your practice with your subject. All
 Differ. But yet, who knows one woman well
 By heart, knows all. It is my experience ;
 And I advise on good authority.

FESTUS. Time laughs at love. It is a hateful sight,
 That bald old grey-beard jeering the boy, Love.
 Passion is from affection ; and there is nought
 So maddening and so lowering as to have
 The worse in passion. Think, when one by one,
 Pride, love, and jealousy, and fifty more
 Great feelings column up to force a heart,
 And all are beaten back—all fail—all fall :
 The tower intact ; but risk it : we must learn.
 To know the world, be wise and be a fool.
 The heart will have its swing—the world its way :
 Who seeks to stop them, only throws himself down.
 We must take as we find : go as they go,
 Or stand aside. Let the world have the wall.
 How do you think, pray, to get through the world ?

STUDENT. I mean not to get through the world at all,
 But over it.

FESTUS. Aspiring ! You will find
 The world is all up-hill when we would do ;
 All down hill when we suffer. Nay, it will part
 Like the Red Sea, so that the poor may pass.
 We make our compliments to wretchedness,
 And hope the poor want nothing, and are well.
 But I mean, what profession will you choose ?
 Surely you will do something for a name.

STUDENT. Names are of much more consequence than
 things.

FESTUS. Well ; here's our honest, all-exhorting friend,
 The parson—here the doctor. I am sure
 The devil might act as moderator there,
 And do mankind some service.

LUCIFER.

In his way.

STUDENT. But I care neither for men's souls nor bodies.

FESTUS. What say you to the law? Are you ambitious?

STUDENT. Nor do I mind for other people's business.

I have no heart for their predicaments :

I am for myself. I measure everything

By, what is it to me? from which I find

I have but little in common with the mass,

Except my meals and so forth ; dress and sleep.

I have that within me I can live upon :

Spider-like, spin my place out anywhere.

FESTUS. To none of all the arts and sciences,—

Astronomy nor entomology,

Nor gunnery, for instance, then, you feel

Attracted heartily and mentally?

STUDENT. Why no ; there are so many rise and fall,

One knows not which to choose. As for the stars,

I never look on them without dismay.

Earth has outrun them in our modern mind,

By worlds of odds. Enough for us, it seems,

And our cold calculators, to jot down

Their revolutions, distances, and squares ;—

And the bright laws which stars and spirits rule,

Are all laid out and buried grave on grave.

The fourfold worlds and elemental spheres,

Which in concentric circles, like the ring

That the magician stands in, from on high

Give spiritual calling to our earth,

And lord it over her, yet in such wise

That still by them we may conjoin our souls

Unto the starry spirits of all worlds ;

Beyond the changeful mansions of the moon,

Beyond the burning heart of Heaven, where dwell

The governors of nature and the blest,

All knowing spirits and celestial,

And divine demons ; are all gone—extinct.

There is no danger now of knowing aught

Which ought not to be known. No more of that!—

And you, ye planetary sons of light !
 From him who hovereth, mothlike, round the sun
 To six-mooned Ouranus, light's loftiest round.
 Your aspects, dignities, ascendances,
 Your partile quartiles, and your platic trines,
 And all your Heavenly houses and effects,
 Shall meet no more devout expounders here.
 You too, ye juried signs, earth's sunny path
 Upon her wheeling orbit, all farewell !
 Your exaltations and triplicities,
 Fiery, airy, and the rest ; your falls,
 And detriments, and governments, and gifts,
 Are all abolished. Henceforth ye shall shine
 In vain to man. Diurnal, cardinal,
 Nocturnal, equinoctial, hot or dry,
 Earthy, or moist, or feminine, or fixed,
 Luxurious, violent, bicorporate,
 Masculine, barren, and commanding, cold,
 Fruitful, or watery, or what not, now
 It matters nothing. The joy of Jupiter,
 The exaltation of the Dragon's head,
 The sun's triplicity and glorious
 Day house on high, the moon's dim detriment,
 And all the starry inclusions of all signs—
 Shall rise, and rule, and pass, and no one know
 That there are spirit-rulers of all worlds,
 Which fraternize with earth, and, though unknown,
 Hold in the shining voices of the stars
 Communion high, ever and everywhere.—
 The mystic charm of numbers, and the sole
 Oneness which is in all, of nature's great
 Triadic principle, in all things seen ;
 In man thus, as composed of thrice three forms
 Intrinsic ; first, corporeally, blood,
 Body, and bones ; next, intellectually,
 Imagination, judgment, memory ;
 And thirdly, spiritually ; mind and soul,

And spirit, which unites with God the whole
 Being, and comes from and returns to Him,—
 Allures no more man's mind debased. Thus, too,
 Of alchemy; the golden starry stone,
 Invisible, the principle of life,
 The quintessence of all the elements,
 Is still unbought;—still flows the stream of pearl
 Beneath the magic mountain; still the scent
 As of a thousand amaranthine wreaths, which lures
 All life unto its sweetness, floats around
 Mistlike, the shining bath where Luna laves,
 Or Sol, bright brother of that moonéd maid,
 Triumphs in light; the spiritual sun,
 The Heavenly Earth smaragdine, and the fire-
 Spirit of life, the live land, still exist,
 Immortally, internally, unseen.—
 Still breathes the Paradisal air around
 The universal whole; the watery fire,
 Destructive, yet impalpable to sense;
 The initial and conclusion of the world,
 Yea, the beginning and the end of death;
 The secret which is shared 'tween God and man,
 And which is nature only, wholly, still
 In Heavenly gloom incomprehensible
 Wait the Deific will; yea, still the light
 Whereto all elements contribute, burns
 About us and within us, world and soul.
 The primal sperm and matter of the world,
 Whose centre is the limit of all things,—
 The snowy gold, the star and spirit seed
 Which is to render rich and deathless all;
 The self-begot, self-wedded, and self-born,
 Which the wind carries in its womb, all have
 And few receive; the spirit of the earth,
 The water of immortal life still lives:—
 The universal solvent of disease
 Still bounds through nature's veins; and still in fine,

The secrets only to be told by fire
 Starry or beamless, central and extreme,
 Burn to be born. And other natures may
 Use them, and do. In Demogorgon's hall
 Still sits the universal mystery
 Throned in itself and ministered unto
 By its own members :—Man, alas ! alone
 The recreant spirit of the universe,
 Loves surface-knowledge ; calls the crimes of crowds
 Virtue ; adores the useful vices ; licks
 The gory dust from off the feet of war,
 And swears it food for gods, though fit for fiends
 Only ;—reversing just the Devil's state
 When first he entered on this orb of man's—
 A fallen angel's form, a reptile's soul.

LUCIFER. Oh ! this is libellous to man and fiend
 And brute together.

STUDENT. All are art and part
 Of the same mystic treason. But enough ;—
 The most material, immaterial
 Departments of pure wisdom are despised.
 For well we know that, properly prepared,
 Souls self-adapted knowledge to receive
 Are by the truth desired, illumined ; man's
 Spirit, extolled, dilated, clarified,
 By holy meditation and divine
 Lore, fits him to convene with purer powers
 Which do unseen surround us aye and gladden
 In human good and exaltation ; thus
 The face of Heaven is not more clear to one,
 Than to another outwardly ; but one
 By strong intention of his soul perceives,
 Attracts, unites himself to essences
 And elemental spirits of wider range
 And more beneficent nature, by whose aid
 Occasion, circumstance, futurity,
 Impress on him their image, and impart

Their secrets to his soul ; thus chance and lot
 Are sacred things ; thus dreams are verities.
 The soul which like the mountain lakelet lifts
 Its gaze to Heaven alone, will learn ere long
 To read the cloudy forms of future days
 Which glass them in its vision, or perceive,
 Clear through the crystal egg of time, the play
 Of spirits and forecomingness of things.
 The mysteries of numbers and of names
 Are nothing known of now ; yet wot we well
 That natural perfection multiplied
 By spiritual, gives the names of God
 As known to men and angels, and that Fate
 Rules really and nominally all.
 But oh ! alas for all earth's loftier lore,
 And spiritual sympathy of worlds !—
 There shall be no more magic nor cabala,
 Nor Rosicrucian nor Alchymic lore,
 Nor fairy fantasies ; no more hobgoblins,
 Nor ghosts, nor imps, nor demons. Conjurors,
 Enchanters, witches, wizards, shall all die
 Hopeless and heirless ; their divining arts
 Supernal or infernal—dead with them.
 And so 'twill doubtless be with other things
 In time ; therefore I will commit my brain
 To none of them.

FESTUS. Perchance 'twere wiser not.
 Man's heart hath not half uttered itself yet,
 And much remains to do as well as say.
 The heart is sometime ere it finds its focus ;
 And when it does, with the whole light of nature
 Strained through it to a hair's breadth, it but burns
 The things beneath it, which it lights to death.
 Well, farewell, Mr. Student. May you never
 Regret those hours which make the mind, if they
 Unmake the body ; for the sooner we
 Are fit to be all mind, the better. Blest

Is he whose heart is the home of the great dead,
 And their great thoughts. Who can mistake great thoughts?
 They seize upon the mind—arrest and search,
 And shake it—bow the tall soul as by wind—
 Rush over it like rivers over reeds,
 Which quaver in the current—turn us cold,
 And pale, and voiceless; leaving in the brain
 A rocking and a ringing,—glorious,
 But momentary, madness might it last,
 And close the soul with Heaven as with a seal!
 In lieu of all these things whose loss thou mournest,
 If earnestly or not I know not, use
 The great, and good, and true which ever live,
 And are all common to pure eyes and true.
 Upon the summit of each mountain-thought
 Worship thou God—with Heaven uplifted head
 And arms horizon stretched—for Deity is seen
 From every elevation of the soul.
 Study the Light; attempt the high; seek out
 The soul's bright path; and since the soul is fire
 Of heat intelligential, turn it aye
 To the all-Fatherly source of light and life;
 Piety purifies the soul to see
 Perpetual apparitions of all grace
 And power, which to the sight of those who dwell
 In ignorant sin are never known. Obey
 Thy genius, for a minister it is
 Unto the throne of Fate. Draw to thy soul,
 And centralize the rays which are around
 Of the Divinity. Keep thy spirit pure
 From worldly taint by the repellent strength
 Of virtue. Think on noble thoughts and deeds,
 Ever. Count o'er the rosary of truth;
 And practise precepts which are proven wise.
 It matters not then what thou fearest. Walk
 Boldly and wisely in that light thou hast;—
 There is a hand above will help thee on.

I am an omnist, and believe in all
 Religions,—fragments of one golden world
 Yet to be relit in its place in Heaven—
 For all are relatively true and false,
 As evidence and earnest of the heart
 To those who practise, or have faith in them.
 The absolutely true religion is
 In Heaven only, yea in Deity.
 But foremost of all studies, let me not
 Forget to bid thee learn Christ's faith by heart.
 Study its truths, and practise its behests :
 They are the purest, sweetest, peacefullest,
 Of all immortal reasons or records :
 They will be with thee when all else have gone.
 Mind, body, passion, all wear out—not faith,
 Nor truth. Keep thy heart cool, or rule its heat
 To fixed ends : waste it not upon itself.
 Not all the agony of all the damned,
 Fused in one pang, vies with that earthquake throb
 Which wakens it from waste to let us see
 The world rolled by for aye ; and that we must
 Wait an eternity for our next chance,
 Whether it be in Heaven or elsewhere.

STUDENT.

Sir,

I will remember this most grave advice,
 And think of you with all respect.

FESTUS.

Well, mind !

The worst men often give the best advice.
 Our deeds are sometimes better than our thoughts.
 Commend me, friend, to every one you meet :
 I am an universal favourite.
 Old men admire me deeply for my beauty,
 Young women for my genius and strict virtue,
 And young men for my modesty and wisdom.
 All turn to me, whenever I speak, full-faced,
 As planets to the sun, or owls to a rushlight.
 Farewell !

STUDENT. I hope to meet again.

FESTUS.

And I.—

Yonder's a woman singing. Let us hear her.

SINGER. In the grey church tower
 Were the clear bells ringing,
 When a maiden sat in her lonely bower
 Sadly and lowly singing,
 And thus she sang, that maiden fair,
 Of the soft blue eyes and the long light hair :

This hand hath oft been held by one
 Who now is far away ;
 And here I sit and sigh alone
 Through all the weary day.
 Oh, when will he I love return ?
 Oh, when shall I forget to mourn ?

Along the dark and dizzy path
 Ambition madly runs,
 'Tis there they say his course he hath,
 And therefore love he shuns.
 Oh, fame and honour bind his brow,
 For so he would be with me now !

In the grey church tower
 Were the clear bells ringing,
 When a bounding step in that lonely bower
 Broke on the maiden singing ;
 She turned, she saw ; oh, happy fair !
 For her love who loved her so well was there.

LUCIFER. And we might trust these youths and maidens
 fair,

The world was made for nothing but love, love !

Now I think it was made but to be burned.

FESTUS. And if I love not now, while woman is

All bosom to the young, when shall I love?
 Who ever paused on passion's fiery wheel?
 Or trembling by the side of her he loved,
 Whose lightest touch brings all but madness, ever
 Stopped coldly short to reckon up his pulse?
 The car comes—and we lie—and let it come;
 It crushes—kills—what then! It is joy to die.
 Enough shall not fool me. I fling the foil
 Away. Let me but look on aught which casts
 The shadow of a pleasure, and here I bare
 A breast which would embrace a bride of fire.
 Pleasure—we part not! No. It were easier
 To wring God's lightnings from the grasp of God.
 I must be mad: but so is all the world.
 Folly! It matters not. I am all things to myself.
 If my heart thundered, would the world rock? Well—
 Then let the mad world fight its shadow down;
 There soon will be nor sun, nor world, nor shadow.
 And thou, my blood, my bright red running soul—
 Rejoice thou, like a river in thy rapids!
 Rejoice—thou wilt never pale with age, nor thin;
 But in thy full dark beauty, vein by vein,
 Fold by fold, serpent-like, encircling me
 Like a stag, sunstruck, top thy bounds and die.
 Throb, bubble, sparkle, laugh and leap along!
 Make merry while the holidays shall last.
 Heart! I could tear thee out, thou fool! thou fool!
 And strip thee into shreds upon the wind:
 What have I done that thou should'st serve me thus?

LUCIFER. Let us away. We have had enough of this.

FESTUS. The night is glooming on us. It is the hour
 When lovers will speak lowly, for the sake
 Of being nigh each other; and when love
 Shoots up the eye like morning on the east,
 Making amends for the long northern night
 They passed ere either knew the other loved.
 It is the hour of hearts, when all hearts feel

As they could love to mad death, finding aught
 To give back fire ; for love, like nature, is
 War—sweet war! Arms! To arms! so they be thine,
 Woman! Old people may say what they please—
 The heart of age is like an emptied wine-cup ;
 Its life lies in a heel-tap—how can they judge ?
 'Twere a waste of time to ask how they wasted theirs.
 But while the blood is bright, breath sweet, skin smooth,
 And limbs all made to minister delight—
 Ere yet we have shed our locks like trees their leaves,
 And we stand staring bare into the air—
 He is a fool who is not for love and beauty.
 I speak unto the young, for I am of them,
 And always shall be. What are years to me ?
 Traitors! that vice-like fang the hand ye lick :
 Ye fall like small birds beaten by a storm
 Against a dead wall, dead. I pity ye.
 Oh! that such mean things should raise hope or fear ;
 Those Titans of the heart, that fight at Heaven
 And sleep by fits on fire ; whose slightest stir's
 An earthquake. I am bound and blest to youth.
 Oh! give me to the young—the fair—the free—
 The brave, who would breast a rushing burning world
 Which came between them and their hearts' delight.
 None but the brave and beautiful can love.
 Oh, for the young heart like a fountain playing !
 Flinging its bright fresh feelings up to the skies
 It loves and strives to reach—strives, loves in vain :
 It is of earth, and never meant for Heaven.
 Let us love both, and die. The sphinx-like heart,
 Consistent in its inconsistency,
 Loathes life the moment that life's riddle is read :
 The knot of our existence is untied,
 And we lie loose and useless. Life is had ;
 And then we sigh, and say, can this be all ?
 It is not what we thought—it is very well—
 But we want something more—there is but death.

And when we have said,—and seen, and done, and had,
 Enjoyed, and suffered, all we have wished and feared—
 From fame to ruin, and from love to loathing—
 There can come but one more change—try it—death.
 Oh! it is great to feel we care for nothing—
 That hope, nor love, nor fear, nor aught of earth
 Can check the royal lavishment of life ;
 But like a streamer strown upon the wind,
 We fling our souls to fate and to the future.
 And to die young is youth's divinest gift,—
 To pass from one world fresh into another,
 Ere change hath lost the charm of soft regret,
 And feel the immortal impulse from within
 Which makes the coming, life—cry alway, on !
 And follow it while strong—is Heaven's last mercy.
 There is a fire-fly in the southern clime
 Which shineth only when upon the wing ;
 So it is with the mind : when once we rest,
 We darken. On ! said God unto the soul
 As to the earth, for ever. On it goes,
 A rejoicing native of the infinite—
 As is a bird of air—an orb of heaven.

SCENE—*The Centre.*

LUCIFER *and* FESTUS.

LUCIFER. Behold us in the fire-crypts of the world !
 Through seas and buried mountains, tomblike tracts,
 Fit to receive the skeleton of Death
 When he is dead—through earthquakes, and the bones
 Of earthquake-swallowed cities, have we wormed
 Down to the ever burning forge of fire,
 Whereon in awful and omnipotent ease
 Nature, the delegate of God, brings forth
 Her everlasting elements, and breathes

He made earth, fashioned it and hardened it
 Into the great, bright, useful thing it is ;
 Its seas, life-crowded, and soul-hallowed lands
 He girded with the girdle of the sun,
 That sets its bosom glowing like Love's own
 Breathless embrace, close-clinging as for life ;—
 Veined it with gold, and dusted it with gems,
 Lined it with fire, and round its heart-fire bowed
 Rock-ribs unbreakable ; until at last
 Earth took her shining station as a star,
 In Heaven's dark hall, high up the crowd of worlds.
 All this and thus did God ; and yet it ends.
 The ball He rolled and rounded melts away
 E'en now to its constituent atomies.

FESTUS. It is enough. Though here were posited
 All secrets of existence, natural
 Or supernatural, dwell not here would I,
 Though 'twere to drain profoundest fountains. No !
 I love it not, the science nor the scene.
 I long to know again the fresh green earth,
 The breathing breeze, the sea and sacred stars.
 These recollections crowd upon my soul,
 As constellations on the evening skies,
 And will not be forgotten. Let us leave.

LUCIFER. Aught that reminds the exile of his home
 Is surely pleasant. I, friend, am content.

FESTUS. I cannot be content with less than Heaven.
 O Heaven, I love thee ever ! sole and whole,
 Living and comprehensive of all life ;
 Thee, agey world, thee, universal Heaven,
 And heavenly universe ; thee, sacred seat
 Of intellective Time, the throned stars
 And old oracular night ;—by night or day,
 To me thou canst not but be beautiful,
 Boundless, all-central, universal sphere !
 Whether the sun all-light thee, or the moon,
 Embayed in clouds, mid starry islands round,

With mighty beauty inundate the air ;—
 Or when one star, like a great drop of light,
 From her full flowing urn hangs tremulous,—
 Yea, like a tear from her, the eye of night,
 Let fall o'er nature's volume as she reads ;—
 Or, when in radiant thousands, each star reigns
 In imparticipable royalty,
 Leaderless, uncontrasted with the light
 Wherein their light is lost, the sons of fire,
 Arch element of the Heavens ;—when storm and cloud
 Debar the mortal vision of the eye
 From wandering o'er thy threshold,—more and more
 I love thee, thinking on the splendid calm
 Which bounds the deadly fever of these days—
 The higher, holier, spiritual Heavèn.
 And when this world, within whose heartstrings now
 I feel myself encoiled, shall be resolved,
 Thee I shall be permitted still, perchance,
 To love and live in endlessly.

LUCIFER.

All here

Thou seest hath holden fellowship with gods ;
 With eldest Time and primal matter, space,
 And stars, and air, and all-inherent fire,
 The watery deep and chaos, night, the all,
 And the interior immortality,
 And first-begotten Love. These rocks retain
 Their caverned footsteps printed in pure fire.
 Those were the times, the ancient youth of earth,
 The elemental years, when earth and Heaven
 Made one in holy bridals,—royal gods
 Their bright immortal issue : when men's minds
 Were vast as continents, and not as now
 Minute and indistinguishable plots,
 With here and there acres of untilled brains ; when lived
 The great original, broad-eyed, sunken race,
 Whose wisdom, like these sea-sustaining rocks,
 Hath formed the base of the world's fluctuous lore ;—

When too, by mountainous travail, human might
 Sought to possess the everlasting Heavens,
 And incommunicable, by the right
 Of self-acquirement and high kindred with
 Celestial virtues;—when the mortal powers—
 Forecounsel, wisdom, and experience,
 Teachers of all arts, founders of all good,
 With Godhood strove, and gloriously failed—
 In failure half successful; as these scenes,
 Fire-fountains, and volcano-utterances,
 Earth-heavings, island-vomitings, evince.

FESTUS. The world hath made such comet-like advance
 Lately on science, we may almost hope,
 Before we die of sheer decay, to learn
 Something about our infancy. But me
 This troubles not. Were all earth's mountain chains
 To utter fire at once, what a grand show
 Of pyrotechny for our neighbour moon!
 Let us ascend; but not through the charred throat
 Of an extinct volcano.

LUCIFER. This way—down.
 So shalt thou thread the world at once.

FESTUS. Haste, haste!
 Life is too brittle, time too brief to waste.

SCENE—*A ruined Temple.*

FESTUS *and* LUCIFER.

FESTUS. Here will I worship solely.

LUCIFER. 'Tis a fane
 Once sacred to the Sun.

FESTUS. It matters not
 What false god here hath falsely been adored.
 Or what life-hating rites these walls have viewed:
 The truly holy soul, which hath received

The unattainable, can hallow hell.
 Each orb is to itself the heart of Heaven ;
 And each belief wherein man roots his hope,
 And lives, and dies, the favourite of God.
 Earth's tale is told in Heaven, Heaven's told in earth.
 Since either 'gan one only faith hath been,
 The faith in God of all. A thousand types
 A thousand tribes have chosen. But the hour
 Already, hawklike, preens its wing for flight,
 When all shall be remassed in one great creed,
 All being shall be rebegotten, all
 Worship rededicate, all signs afresh
 Thrice hallowed ; the degenerate lapse of time
 Having twice fused the symbol with the truth ;
 All dark things brightened, all contrariants blent ;—
 And truth and love, perradiating life,
 Be the new poles of nature ; earth at last
 Joining the great procession of the skies.
 True faith in faithful hearts hath ever been ;
 But craft with sanguine darkness all hath fouled.
 Now to the only true and Triune God
 These walls shall echo praise, if never yet.
 Bring me a morsel of the fire without ;
 For I will make a sacred offering
 To God, as though the High Priest of the world.
 He lacks not consecration at best hands
 Whom Thou hast hallowed, Lord ! by choice ; and these,
 The elements I offer, Thou hast made
 Holy, by making them.

LUCIFER.

Lo ! here is fire.

I will await thee in the air.

FESTUS.

Withdraw !—

O Thou ! the sole and spiritual sun,
 Fountain and fane of Heaven's immortal fire,
 Whom all the lives of all the elements,
 Lamb, fish, and dove,—the all-producing earth,
 The purifying wave, perfective fire ;

Whom all the faiths and creeds, and rites of old
 As now and ever, to the end of Time,
 In precognition of eternal truth
 Foreshadowed and foretyped, hear Thou, Heaven-throned !
 While one by Thy divine salvation graced,
 A servant of Thy boundless law of love,
 This temple redevotes to purer end
 Than they who built or who abandoned knew.
 The world is one great prophecy of Thee
 And Thou Thine own fulfilment. Heaven and earth
 Exhaust themselves in symbols of their God ;
 Whose breath from servile matter formed at first
 The fading frostwork of created things.
 All nature typeth Thee and Thine ;—the moon,
 Virgin of Heaven, who nightly bringeth forth
 The light which is Thine own in Heaven to earth ;
 Thou herald star which bathest earth in dew
 And leadst the sun into the sea to his
 Eternal baptism, ere yet with light
 He floods the world and cleaves the breathing skies
 With all pervading and inspiring fire ;—
 And thou sweet earth, which sittest weeping there
 In the sun's shadow, like the penitent one
 Before His cross, the darkness of whose death
 Eclipsed all day ; thou too and all the stars,
 The flock of light, born of the seed of light,
 Shall sometime range in bliss the spirit-pasturing skies ;
 Catch the vivific secret of the sun,
 And quaff serene the waters of the sun.
 Thou who dost always, night by night, descend
 Into the halls of Hades and the abyss
 Of that invisible death which all men dread,
 But doomed to die yet 'neath thy morrowing glance.
 Wing of the world which bears it on through Heaven,
 Light ! let us love thee, we to thee return
 Through our sun's bosom, at whose orient ray
 The gods all vanished like the ghosts of night ;

Thee, Light unlimited, whose ancient sheen
 Was spiritual man, angelic mind,
 The emanant creation, matter, form,
 And oval orbit of the universe.
 All stars are steps in the great scale of Heaven
 Up to God's throne, from Time's last orb which eyes
 The inner and the utter infinite
 Round to that highest, deepest, midmost site,
 Where Heaven's star-music ends, for ever quelled
 In the supremest silence of the sun.
 For through all spherul forms, the central circling soul
 In bright, expansive progress, fit to match
 The march of angels in the van of Time,
 By-passing all night's constellated chart,
 Where God hath set His burning seal, the sun,—
 Reseeks thee, lone and universal light,
 Clear glory and the all-involving Heavens.
 Glory of air, and Lord of light. O sun!
 Great wonder-worker, seer of all the skies ;
 The gates of whose house are the east and the west ;
 Whom God begat on light which first He loved
 Encircling in Himself, but who in shades
 Of primal night wast nursed ; whom all the hours
 Of Time attend, whose travel round the world
 Makes one eternal triumph ; unto whom
 All earth is sacred ;—Yes ! O sun, to thee
 The death dispeller, life elicitor,
 Shepherd of worlds, and harmonist of Heaven—
 The music of whose golden lyre is light—
 One vast and living garden of the Lord,
 Watered by light streams, where the vine divine
 And bright flock numbered in spiritual
 Perfectness, flourish alike in multitude of days
 Immortal as thy years, O night-slayer !
 The elements thy car draw ; and all signs
 And natural miracles from thee proceed,
 The ever coming light ; bright mystery,

Sense binding, mind attracting, passion taming,
 Light born, light generating, light all life!—
 Thine eloquent fire lights aye their starry heads
 Who in celestial conclave rule with thee,
 And pour upon the crown of darkness light.
 The seasons are thy gospels, and thy twelve
 In spherul order and a starry chain
 Through gods, kings, signs, toils, tribes, gems, miracles,
 Heroes and peers, unite the universe
 In love to thee, thy being's boundless law,
 Creator's symbol, and creation's seal.
 To thee the azure serpent golden scaled
 And noiseless creeping time, that sloughs its years
 And lays its world-eggs in thy brightness is
 Hallowed, and them inspir'd thou with life.
 World-navelled oracle, whose very light
 Blindeth the strongest eye, whose beam of life,
 Death darting, thou reclaimest through the aye
 Revolving and evolving universe,
 Who to thyself, earth's twin chief boons of life
 Dost sanctify for sustenance and joy—
 Symbols of soul and body—that all might
 Know both in Him thou symbollest, in God.
 All signs, all seasons records are of Thee
 And thy divinest dignities and deeds.
 Thou Lamb of God who didst initiate
 Eternity, prophetic with that sign
 Of universal sinlessness and love;
 And typed next by the sacrificial ox,
 Earth-ensembling. Twin Being, God with man,
 Whose double nature indicates in Heaven
 The natural and the spiritual. Who
 Leading the soul to spirit dost progress
 Backwards to Deity through penitence;—
 And lionlike—the lion of the law,
 The lamb of love—dost lord it over all life
 And rage against all sin, the sin of Being,

Dreadful to all save virgin ; seed and branch
 Of the immortal maid beloved of God,
 Bride of the spirit, and her radiant child,
 And hallowed in all worship ;—who dost hold
 The balance of the Just One o'er the world,
 Well weighing work and faith ; with scorpion sting
 Treating the carnal conscience self-condemned ;—
 Who bend'st the Heavens before Thee like a bow,
 And earth, Thine orbéd arrow, shootst through air ;—
 Who through Thine infinite mercy madest Thyself
 The scape goat of this dark world-wilderness,
 Bearing the sins of soul in every sphere ;—
 And from celestial fountains pourest down
 Floods of regenerating grace, wherein
 Like some great life that dwelleth in the deep
 Of love, thou art and livest, man-god, Christ !—
 Thou art the hero of the universe,
 The Theohuman Being erst all time
 And all incarnate emanations ; Thou
 Who at Thy birth didst slay sin's serpent-brood,
 And through the foul-stalled stable of this world
 The sourceless circular river of Thy love
 Didst turn : redeem the soul of man, Thy friend,
 From death and hell, destroy the dragon fiend
 And his seven deadly heads, devouring life,
 Regain thy golden apples, Paradise !
 And to complete the mystic cycle, rise
 Well proven and approved of God to Heaven.
 Time tells his tale by shadows, and by clouds
 The wind records its progress ; by dark doubts
 The spirit, swiftening on its Heavenward course.
 The shadow beareth witness to the light.
 Thine, Lord ! are all the elements and worlds ;—
 The sun is Thy bright servant, and the moon
 Thy servant's servant ;—the round rushing earth,
 The lifeful air, the thousand wingéd winds,
 The Heaven-kinned fire, the continental clouds,

The sea broad breasted, and the tranced lake,
 The rich arterial rivers, and the hills
 That wave their woody tresses in the breeze,
 In grateful undulation, all are Thine ;—
 Thine are the snow-robed mountains circling earth,
 As the white spirits God the Saviour's throne ;—
 Thine the bright secrets, central in all orbs,
 And rudimental mysteries of life.
 The sun-starred night, the ever-maiden morn,
 The all prevailing day, consummate eve,
 Confess them Thine through the perpetual world ;—
 All art hath wrought from earth, or science lured
 From truth, like flame out of the fire cloud, are
 Thine ;—Thine the glory, all belongs to Thee,
 Finite, indefinite and infinite,
 As mountains to a world, as worlds to Heaven.
 The high domed city and the toilful town
 And early hamlet,—all that live or die,
 That flourish or decay, that change, or stand
 Before Thy face, unchanged, exist for Thee,
 Or are not at Thy bidding ; Thine, all souls ;
 Atom and world, the universe is Thine !—
 Thou canst as easily turn Thy kindest eye
 From comprehending the bright Infinite,
 To this crushed temple, where the wild flower decks
 Its earthquake-rifted walls, and the birds build
 In leafage of its columned capitals,
 And to this crumbling heart I offer here,
 As trust Thine own eternity. Behold !
 Accept, I pray Thee, Lord ! this sacrifice ;
 These elemental offerings simple, pure,
 Which in the name of man I make to Thee,
 Formless, save prostrate soul and kneeling heart—
 In token of Thy perfect monarchy
 And all comprising mercy. These are they !
 A flowery turf, a branch, a burning coal,
 A cup of water and an empty bowl ;

This air-filled bowl is typic of the world
 Thou fillest with Thy spirit, and the soul,
 Receptive of Thy life-conferring truth!—
 This the symbolic element wherefrom
 We are to be reborn, wherein made pure ;
 Those whom Thou chooseth are to be redeemed
 Out of the mighty multitudes of men ;
 Yet all as of one nature be redeemed.
 This coal, torn flaming from the earth, proclaims
 Thy sin-consuming mercy, as of earth ;
 And may our souls ever aspire to Thee,
 As these pale flames unto the stars ; this turf
 Is as the earthy nature and abode
 We would subject to Thee ; and lieth here,
 The representative of every star
 And world-extended matter. Lord ! this branch,
 Which waveth high o'er all, oh, let it sign
 Thine own Eternal Son's humanity,
 Which was on earth yet ever lives in Heaven,
 Redemptive of all Being. Golden Branch !
 Which, in the eld time, seer's and sybil's words,
 Full of dark central thought and mystic truth,
 Foretold should overspread the spirit world,
 And with its fruit heal every wound of Death,—
 Tree of eternal life, Thee all adore.
 Accept this prayer, O Saviour ! that if men
 Can nothing do but sin, Thou may'st forgive
 The creature crime, and bring back all to Thee.
 Thou art the one who made the universe ;
 Yet didst Thou walk on earth ; Thou brakest bread
 And drankest wine with men, betokening so
 Thine own complete, Divine Humanity.
 May all obey Thy words and do Thy will !
 Thy Cross be multiplied, till every heart
 Become a Calvary, whereon is wrought
 The mystery of our nature suffering death,
 And the diviner secret of the soul,

SCENE—*A Metropolis ;—Public Place.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

FESTUS. My thoughts go cloudlike round the world,
nor rest.

I am on fire to realize the fate
Which darkly in the future's depths I have seen ;
Or else am with the mightiest folly mocked
Which ever imp'd a soul to madness. Speak !
When shall this world acknowledge me ?

LUCIFER. Not now ;

Never, till self-compelled. The time will come.
Have patience. 'Tis the blessing of the angels.

FESTUS. Patience ! say slow self-murder.

LUCIFER. Wait for what

Is on the wing already, or else have
The aimless satisfactionless result
As of a lunge into the empty air.
Knowledge, and love, and power are the three thrones
Each over each, whereon thy soul shall sit,
In order due, as promised. Patience, man.
As yet we are but minors, both of us.

FESTUS. Of pleasure one has hardly had a glimpse.

LUCIFER. Each pleasure hastes thee to thy end, and man's ;
Each new sought joy, each freshly proven power,
But draws the ends of all things, like a hood,
Around thy fated head the closer. Come ;
Bethink thee of thy pact.

FESTUS. I do. With me

The sun of life shall mount the sky no more ;—
'Tis one eternal setting.

LUCIFER, As thou wilt.

Thine abstinence can only lengthen pain,
Indulgence shorten pleasure.

FESTUS. Which to choose

Were wiser ?

LUCIFER. There is reason in them both.
But mortal man will never be all wise.

FESTUS. Nay, come then, pretty patience. Sand by sand
The world is worn away, and continents
And oceans take each other's places here.
The mountain summit and the sea's last depth
Is but a question after all of time.
Most greatest things are gradual. Star on star
The Heavens fulfil their issue; line by line
Old ocean saps earth's vaulted base, and whelms
In transubstantiation infinite,
'Neath his abysmal bowl the mountain tops;
Beam after beam truth warms the spirit here,
Dipped in substantial lightning of the sun,
And now with an eternal saving saved.
Life to enjoy I feel one must conform
Both to the laws and by-laws of the world.
What can be done here ?

LUCIFER. Oh ! a thousand things,
As well as elsewhere.

FESTUS. True ; it is a place
Where passion, occupation, or reflection,
May find fit food or field ; but suits not me.
My burden is the spirit, and my life
Is henceforth solely spiritual.

LUCIFER. Well ;—
At the occurrent season, too, it shall
Be satisfied. It might be even now,
From things about us. But look, here comes a man
Thou knowest well.

FESTUS. I do. Stop, friend ! of late
I have not seen thee. Whither goest thou now ?

FRIEND. I am upon my business, and in haste.

FESTUS. Business ! I thought thou wast a simple schemer.

FRIEND. Mayhap I am.

FESTUS. There is a visionary

Business as well as visionary faith.

FRIEND. I have been, all life, living in a mine,
Lancing the world for gold. I have not yet
Fingered the right vein. Oh! I often wish
The time would come again, which science prates of,
When earth's bright veins ran ruddy, virgin gold.

FESTUS. When the world's gold melts, all the poorer
metals,

All things less pure, less precious, all beside,
Will vanish; nought be left but gems and gold.
If all were rich, gold would be penniless.

LUCIFER. I have a secret I would fain impart
To one who would make right use of it. Now, mark!
Chemists say there are fifty elements,
And more;—wouldst know a ready recipe
For riches?—

FRIEND. That indeed I would, good sir.

LUCIFER. Get then these fifty earths, or elements,
Or what not. Mix them up together. Put
All to the question. Tease them well with fire,
Vapour, and trituration—every way;
Add the right quantity of lunar rays;
Boil them, and let them cool, and watch what comes.

FRIEND. Thrice greatest Hermes! but it must be; yes!
I'll go and get them; good day,—instantly. [*Goes.*]

LUCIFER. He'll be astonished, probably.

FESTUS. He will,
In any issue of the experiment.
Perhaps the nostrum may explode and blow him
Body and soul to atoms and to—

LUCIFER. Nonsense!

FESTUS. There needs no satire on men's rage for gold;
Their nature is the best one, and excuse.
And now, what next?

LUCIFER. Why, let us take our ease
Beside this feathery fountain. It is cool
And pleasant, and the people passing by,

While injuries can be inflicted, or
 Insults be offered; yea, while rights are worth
 Maintaining, freedom keeping, or life having,
 So long the sword shall shine; so long shall war
 Continue, and the need for war remain.

LUCIFER. And yet all war shall cease.

FESTUS. It must and shall.

Some news seems stirring; what I know not yet.

LUCIFER. Nor I. I heard that one of Saturn's moons
 Had flown upon his face and blinded him.

'Twas also said, in circles I frequent

At times, his outer ring was falling off.

If I should find, I'll keep it. It might fit

A little finger such as mine, I think.

Poor Saturn! much I doubt he is breaking up.

But for these news, I know not what they be.

Some one perhaps has lit on a new vein

Of stars in Heaven: or cracked one with his teeth,

To look inside it, or made out at last

The circulation of the light; or what

Think'st thou?

FESTUS. I know not. Ask!

LUCIFER. Sir, what's the news?

PASSER-BY. The news are good news, being none at all.

LUCIFER. Your goodness, sir, I deem of like extent.

We heard the Great Bear was confined of twins.

STRANGER. 'Tis not unlikely; stars do propagate.

FESTUS. And so much for civility and news.

This city is one of the world's social poles,

Round which events revolve: here, dial-like,

Time makes no movement but is registered.

LUCIFER. Yon gaudy equipage! hast ever seen

A drowning dragon-fly floating down a brook,

Topping the sunny ripples as they rise,

Till in some ambushed eddy it is sucked down

By something underneath? Thus with the rich;—

Their gilding makes their death conspicuous.

FESTUS. Some men are nobly rich, some nobly poor,
Some the reverse. Rank makes no difference.

LUCIFER. The poor may die in swarms unheeded. They
But swell the mass of columned ciphers. Oh,
Ye poor, ye wretched, ye bowed down by woe!
Thank God for something, though it were but this,
He fire, ye ashes!

FESTUS. Thou art surely mad.

LUCIFER. I meant to moralize. I cannot see
A crowd, and not think on the fate of man—
Clinging to error as a dormant bat
To a dead bough. Well, 'tis his own affair.

FESTUS. All homilies on the sorts and lot of men
Are vain and wearisome. I want to know
No more of human nature. As it is,
I honour it and hate it. Let that do.

LUCIFER. Here is a statue to some mighty man
Who beat his name on the drum of the world's ear
Till it was stupefied, and, I suppose,
Not knowing what it was about, reared up
This marble mockery of mortality,
Which shall outlive the memory of the man
And all like him who water earth with blood,
And sow with bones, or any good he did,
As eagles outlive gnats. But never mind!
Why carp at insect sins, or crumb-like crimes?
The world, the great imposture, still succeeds;
Still, in Titanic immortality,
Writhes 'neath the burning mountain of its sins.

FESTUS. There's an old adage about sin and some one.
The world is not exactly what I thought it,
But pretty nearly so; and after all,
'Tis not so bad as good men make it out,
Nor such a hopeless wretch.

LUCIFER. For all the world
Not I would slander it. Dear world, thou art
Of all things under Heaven by me most loved,

The most consistent, the least fallible.

Believe me ever thine affectionate

LUCIFER. P. S. Sweet, remember me!

FESTUS. Wilt go to the cathedral?

LUCIFER. No, indeed;

I have just confessed.

FESTUS. Well, to the concert, then?

LUCIFER. Some fifteen hundred thousand million years
Have passed since last I heard a chorus.

FESTUS. Good!

LUCIFER. In sooth, I cannot calculate the time.
There are no æras in Eternity,
No ages. Time is as the body and
Eternity the spirit of existence.

FESTUS. That would I learn and prove.

LUCIFER. The finite soul
Can never learn the Infinite, nor be
Informed by it, unaided.

FESTUS. Be it so.

What shall we do?

LUCIFER. I put myself in your hands.

FESTUS. Wilt go on 'Change?

LUCIFER. I rarely speculate.

Steady receipts are mostly to my taste.

Besides, I spurn the system. Take my arm.

FESTUS. But something must be done to pass the time.

LUCIFER. True; let us pass, then, all time.

FESTUS. I shall be
Most happy; only shew me how.

LUCIFER. Why, thus.

I have the power to make thy spirit free
Of its poor frame of flesh, yet not by death,—
And reunite them afterwards! Wilt thou
Entrust thyself to me?

FESTUS. In God I trust,
And in His word of safety. Have thy will.
Where shall it be effected?

LUCIFER. Here and now.
 Recline thou calmly on yon marble slab,
 As though asleep. The world will miss thee not;
 Its complement is perfect. I will mind
 That no impertinent meddler troubles there
 Thy trancéd frame. The brain shall cease its life-
 Engrossing business, and the living blood,
 The wine of life, which maketh drunk the soul,
 Sleep in the sacred vessels of the heart.
 Three steps the sun hath taken from his throne,
 Already downwards, and ere he hath gone,
 Who calmeth tempests with his mighty light,
 We will return; and till then the bright rain
 Of yonder fountain fails not.

FESTUS. Thus be it!
 Come! we are wasting moments here that now
 Belong, of right, to immortality,
 And to another world.

LUCIFER. Prepare!—

FESTUS. And thou?

LUCIFER. I vanish altogether.

FESTUS. Excellent!

LUCIFER. Body and spirit part!—

SCENE—*Air.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

FESTUS. Where, where am I?

LUCIFER. We are in space and time, just as we were
 Some half a second since; where would'st thou be?

FESTUS. I would be in Eternity and Heaven;
 The spirit, and the blessed spirit, of
 Existence.

LUCIFER. And thou shalt be, and shalt pass
 All secondary nature; all the rules

And the results of time : upon thy spirit
 These things shall act no more ; their hands shall be
 Withered upon thee, as the ray of life
 Returns to that it came from : they shall cease
 In thee, like lightning in the deadening sea.
 But not now ; we have worlds to go through, first.
 When spirit hath deposited its earth,
 And brightly, freely flows, self-purified
 In its own action, acted on by God,
 It holds the starry transcript of the skies
 Booklike within its bosom, evermore.
 But thine even now, exhausted, not exhaled,
 Bears the design of earthly discontent,
 Not sacred satisfaction. Unto him
 Whose soul is saved, all things are clear as stars,
 And, to the chosen, safety :—to none else.
 Nor cold insurgent heart, nor menial mind
 Can compass this : it is the way of God :
 The starry path of Heaven which none can tread
 But spirits high as Heaven, which He hath raised ;
 Who were of Him before all worlds, and are
 Beloved and saved for ever while they live.
 Thou of the world art yet, with motives, means,
 And ends as others.

FESTUS. I will no more of it.

LUCIFER. Oh, dream it not ! Thou knowest not the
 depth
 Of nature's dark abyss, thyself, nor God.
 Light over strong and darkness over long
 Blind equally the eye. Thou mayst yet rise
 And fall as often as the sea.

FESTUS. How comes it,
 Being a spirit, that I see not all
 As spirits should ?

LUCIFER. Thou lackest life and death.
 The life of Heaven and the death of earth.
 Then wouldst thou see, in harmony with God,

Creation's strife.

FESTUS. Death alters not the spirit.

LUCIFER. Death must be undergone ere understood.
One world is as another. Rest we here.

SCENE—*Another and a better World.*

FESTUS and LUCIFER.

FESTUS. What a sweet world! Which is this, Lucifer?

LUCIFER. This is the star of evening and of beauty.

FESTUS. Otherwise Venus. I will stay here.

LUCIFER. Nay:

It is but a visit.

FESTUS. Let us look about us.

It is Heaven—it must be; aught so beautiful

Must, I am sure, having feeling. Cannot worlds live?

Least things have life. Why not the greatest, too?

An atom is a world, a world an atom

Seen relatively: death an act of life.

LUCIFER. This is a world where every loveliest thing

Lasts longest; where decay lifts never head

Above the grossest forms, and matter here

Is all transparent substance; the flower fades not,

But every eve gives forth a fragrant light,

Till by degrees the spirit of each flower

Essentially consuming the fair frame

Refines itself to air; rejoining thus

The archetypal stores where nature dwells

In pre-existent immortality.

The beautiful die never, here: Death lies

A dreaming—he has nought to do—the babe

Plays with his darts. Nought dies but what should die.

Here are no earthquakes, storms, nor plagues; no hell

At heart; no floating flood on high. The soil

Is ever fresh and fragrant as a rose—

The skies, like one wide rainbow, stand on gold—
 The clouds are light as roseleaves—and the dew,
 'Tis of the tears which stars weep, sweet with joy—
 The air is softer than a loved one's sigh—
 The ground is glowing with all priceless ore,
 And glistening with gems like a bride's bosom—
 The trees have silver stems and emerald leaves—
 The fountains bubble nectar—and the hills
 Are half alive with light. Yet it is not Heaven.

FESTUS. Oh, how this world should pity man's! I love
 To walk earth's woods when the storm bends his bow,
 And volleys all his arrows off at once ;
 And when the dead brown branch comes crashing close
 To my feet, to tread it down, because I feel
 Decay my foe : and not to triumph's worse
 Than not to win. It is wrong to think on earth ;
 But terror hath a beauty even as mildness ;
 And I have felt more pleasure far on earth,
 When, like a lion or a day of battle,
 The storm rose, roared, shook out his shaggy mane,
 And leapt abroad on the world, and lay down red,
 Licking himself to sleep as it got light ;
 And in the cataract-like tread of a crowd,
 And its irresistible rush, flooding the green
 As though it came to doom, than e'er I can
 Feel in this faery orb of shade and shine.
 I love earth !

LUCIFER. Thou art mad to dote on earth
 When with this sphere of beauty.

FESTUS. It is the blush
 Of being ; surely, too, a maiden world,
 Unmarred by thee. Touch it not, Lucifer !

LUCIFER. It is too bright to tarnish.

FESTUS. Didst thou fail ?

LUCIFER. I cannot fail. With me success is nature.
 I am the cause, means, consequence of ill.
 Thou canst not yet enjoy a sensuous world—

Refined though ne'er so little o'er thine own,
 And yet wouldst enter Heaven. Valhalla's halls,
 And sculls o'erbrimmed with mead,—Cities of gold,
 Cities of silver, temples roofed with light,
 God-home and glory-land ;—Elysian plains,
 Where peace and pleasure, endless, cloudless joy,
 And ever ripening bliss, enrapture all ;—
 The Boodhist's blessed state Nirvana set
 Half between that which is and which is not ;—
 The high celestial mountains of the air,
 Bright with the spiritual hues of Heaven,
 So pure that snow would stain and dew defile,
 Where Music and her sister Beauty dwell,
 And where the waters flow of immortality ;—
 The Azteck's burning Heaven, where living clouds
 Indwelt by warrior souls, sweep ceaseless round
 The sun, and rise or fall as they desire
 An earth-life or a Heaven-life had in turn,
 Whose sword-play makes the lightning, and whose voice
 In battle thunder, as on high they war ;—
 The pearly palaces and odorous groves,
 The infinite brightness and the heavenly forms,
 The starry transmigrations of all souls
 And ever bounding joy or restful bliss,
 Which they who dwell beside the amber main
 Believe await them in the world past death ;—
 Eden, where life was toilless, and gave man
 All things to live with, nothing to live for ;—
 The Moslem's bowers of love, and streams of wine,
 And palaces of purest adamant,
 Where dark-eyed houris, with their young white arms,
 The ever virgin, woo and welcome ye,—
 The Chaldee's orbs of gold, where dwells the primal light,
 Were all too pure for thee ; yet shalt thou be
 Surely in Heaven, ere Death unlock the heart.
 I said that I would shew thee marvels here ;
 For here dwell many angels—many souls

Who have run pure through earth, or been made pure
 By their salvation since. It is a mart
 Where all the holy spirits of the world
 Perform sweet interchange, and purchase truth
 With truth, and love with love. Hither came He,
 The Son—the Saviour of the universe ;
 Not in the stable-state He went to earth—
 A servant unto slaves ; but as a God,
 Carrying His kingdom with Him, and His Heaven.

FESTUS. Lo, here are spirits ! and all seem to love
 Each other.

LUCIFER. He hath only half a heart
 Who loves not all.

FESTUS. Speak for me to some angel.
 See, here is one, a very soul of beauty :
 It is the muse. I know her by the lyre
 Hung on her arm, and eye like fount of fire.

MUSE. Mortal, approach. I am the holy Muse,
 Whom all the great and bright of spirit choose—
 'Tis I who breathe my soul into the lips
 Of those great lights whom death nor time eclipse :
 'Tis I who wing the loving heart with song,
 And set its sighs to music on the tongue :
 It is I who watch, and, with sweet dreams, reward
 The starry slumbers of the youthful bard ;
 For I love every thing that is sweet and bright.
 And but this morn, with the first wink of light,
 A sunbeam left the sun, and, as it sped,
 I followed, watched, and listened what it said :
 Wherefore, with all this brightness am I given
 From sun to earth ? Am I not fit for Heaven ?
 From God I came once ; and, though worlds have passed,
 Ages, and dooms, yet I am light to the last.
 Whatever God hath once bent to His will
 Is sacred ; so the world's to be loved still.
 What of this swift, this bright, but downward being,
 Too burning to be borne—too brief for seeing ?

What is mine aim—mine end? I would not die
 In dust, or water, or an idiot's eye:
 I would not cease in blood, nor end in fire,
 Nor light the loveless to their low desire:
 No; let me perish on the poet's page,
 Where he kisses from his beauty's brow all age;
 Spelling it fair for aye, and wrinkle scorning,
 As when first that brow brake on him like a morning.
 But yet I cannot quit this line I tread,
 Though it lead and leave me to the eyeless dead:
 It is mine errand: 'tis for this I come.
 And live, and die, and go down to my doom.
 This is my fate—right and bright to speed on.
 God is His own God: fate and fall are one.
 Straight from the sun I go, like life from God,
 Which hits, now on a Heaven, now on a clod.
 But, spite of all, the world's air warps our way,
 And crops the roses off the cheek of day;
 As some false friend, who holds our fall in trust,
 Oils our decline, and hands us to the dust.
 Where are the sunbeams gone of the young green earth?
 Search dust and night: our death makes clear our birth.
 It said—and saw earth; and one moment more
 Fell bright beside a vine-shadowed cottage door:
 In it came—glanced upon a glowing page,
 Where, youth forestalling and foreshortening age—
 Weak with the work of thought, a boyish bard,
 Sate suing night and stars for his reward;
 The emerald crownlets which to bards belong,
 And bloom perennial in their silver song.
 The sunbeam swerved and grew, a breathing, dim,
 For the first time, as it lit and looked on him:
 His forehead faded—pale his lip and dry—
 Hollow his cheek—and fever fed his eye.
 Clouds lay about his brain, as on a hill,
 Quick with the thunder thought, and lightning will.
 His clenched hand shook from its more than midnight clasp,

Till his pen fluttered like a winged asp ;
 Save that no deadly poison blacked its lips :
 'Twas his to life-enlighten, not eclipse ;
 Nor would he shade one atom of another,
 To have a sun his slave, a god his brother.
 The young moon laid her down as one who dies,
 Knowing that death can be no sacrifice,
 For that the sun, her god, through nature's night
 Shall make her bosom to grow great with light.
 Still he sat, though his lamp sunk ; and he strained
 His eyes to work the nightness which remained.
 Vain pain ! he could not make the light he wanted,
 And soon thought's wizard ring gets disenchanted.
 When earth was dayed—was morrowed—the first ray
 Perched on his pen, and diamonded its way ;—
 The sunray that I watched ; which, proud to mark
 The line it loved as deathless, there died dark—
 Died in the only path it would have trod,
 Were there as many ways as worlds to God,—
 There, in the eye of God again to burn,
 As all man's glory unto God's must turn.
 And so may sunbeams ever guide his pen,
 And God his heart, who lights the morn of men ;
 For this life is but Being's first faint ray ;
 And sun on sun, and Heaven on Heaven, make up God's day.
 And were there suns in day as stars in night,
 They would shew but like one ray from out His fullsphered
 light :

As but one momentary gleam would fly ;
 Or, as years, the arrows of eternity.

FESTUS. Poets are all who love—who feel great truths—
 And tell them ; and the truth of truths is love.
 There was a time—oh, I remember well !
 When, like a sea-shell with its seaborn strain,
 My soul aye rang with music of the lyre ;
 And my heart shed its lore as leaves their dew—
 A honey dew, and throve on what it shed.

All things I loved ; but song I loved in chief.
 Imagination is the air of mind ;
 Judgment its earth, and memory its main ;
 Passion its fire. I was at home in Heaven :
 Swiftlike I lived above : once touching earth,
 The meanest thing might master me : long wings
 But baffled. Still and still I harped on song.
 Oh ! to create within the mind is bliss ;
 And, shaping forth the lofty thought, or lovely,
 We seek not, need not Heaven : and when the thought—
 Cloudy and shapeless, first forms on the mind,
 Slow darkening into some gigantic make,
 How the heart shakes with pride and fear, as Heaven
 Quakes under its own thunder ; or as might,
 Of old, the mortal mother of a god,
 When first she saw him lessening up the skies.
 And I began the toil divine of verse,
 Which, like a burning bush, doth guest a god.
 But this was only wing-flapping—not flight ;
 The pawing of the courser ere he win ;
 Till, by degrees, from wrestling with my soul,
 I gathered strength to keep the fleet thoughts fast,
 And made them bless me. Yes, there was a time
 When tomes of ancient song held eye and heart—
 Were the sole lore I recked of : the great bards
 Of Greece, of Rome, and mine own master land,
 And they who in the holy book are deathless,—
 Men who have vulgarized sublimity,
 And bought up truth for the nations ; parted it,
 As soldiers lotted once the garb of God,—
 Men who have forged gods—uttered—made them pass :
 In whose words, to be read with many a heaving
 Of the heart, is a power, like wind in rain—
 Sons of the sons of God, who, in olden days,
 Did leave their passionless Heaven for earth and woman,
 Brought an immortal to a mortal breast,
 And, like a rainbow clasping the sweet earth,

And melting in the covenant of love,
 Left here a bright precipitate of soul,
 Which lives for ever through the lines of men,
 Flashing, by fits, like fire from an enemy's front—
 Whose thoughts, like bars of sunshine in shut rooms,
 Mid gloom, all glory, win the world to light—
 Who make their very follies like their souls ;
 And like the young moon with a ragged edge,
 Still, in their imperfection, beautiful—
 Whose weaknesses are lovely as their strengths,
 Like the white nebulous matter between stars,
 Which, if not light, at least is likest light,—
 Men whom we build our love round like an arch
 Of triumph, as they pass us on their way
 To glory and to immortality ;
 Men whose great thoughts possess us like a passion
 Through every limb and the whole heart ; whose words
 Haunt us as eagles haunt the mountain air ;
 Thoughts which command all coming times and minds,
 As from a tower a warden,—fix themselves
 Deep in the heart as meteor stones in earth,
 Dropped from some higher sphere ; the words of gods,
 And fragments of the undeemed tongues of Heaven ;
 Men who walk up to fame as to a friend
 Or their own house, which from the wrongful heir
 They have wrested, from the world's hard hand and gripe,—
 Men who, like Death, all bone, but all unarmed,
 Have ta'en the giant world by the throat, and thrown him ;
 And made him swear to maintain their name and fame
 At peril of his life—who shed great thoughts
 As easily as an oak looseneth its golden leaves
 In a kindly largess to the soil it grew on—
 Whose rich dark ivy thoughts, sunned o'er with love,
 Flourish around the deathless stems of their names—
 Whose names are ever on the world's broad tongue,
 Like sound upon the falling of a force—
 Whose words, if winged, are with angels' wings—

Who play upon the heart as on a harp,
 And make our eyes bright as we speak of them—
 Whose hearts have a look southwards, and are open
 To the whole noon of nature,—these I have waked
 And wept o'er, night by night; oft pondering thus:
 Homer is gone: and where is Jove? and where
 The rival cities seven? His song outlives
 Time, tower, and god—all that then was save Heaven.

MUSE. Yea, but the poor perfections of thine earth
 Shall be as little as nothing to thee here.

FESTUS. God must be happy, who aye makes; and since
 Mind's first of things, who makes from mind is blest
 O'er men. Thus sayeth the bard to his work:—I am
 Thy god, and bid thee live as my God me:
 I live or die with thee, soul of my soul!
 Thou camest and went'st, sunlike, from morn to eve;
 And smiledst fire upon my heaving heart,
 Like the sun in the sea, till it arose
 And dashed about its house all might and mirth,
 Like ocean's tongue in Staffa's stormy cave.
 Thou art a weakly reed to lean upon;
 But like that reed the false one filched from Heaven,
 Full of immortal fire—immortal as
 The breath of God's lips—every breath a soul.

MUSE. Mortal! the muse is with thee: leave her not.

FESTUS. Once my ambition to another end
 Stirred, stretched itself, but slept again. I rose
 And dashed on earth the harp, mine other heart,
 Which, ringing, brake; its discord ruinous
 Harmony still; and coldly I rejoiced
 No other joy I had, wormlike, to feed
 Upon my ripe resolve. It might not be:
 The more I strove against, the more I loved it.

LUCIFER. Come, let us walk along. So say farewell.

FESTUS. I will not.

MUSE. No: my greeting is for ever.

LUCIFER. Well, well, come on!

FESTUS. Oh! shew me that sweet soul
Thou brought'st to me the first night that we met.
She must be here, where all are good and fair:
And thou didst promise me.

LUCIFER. Is that not she
Walking alone, up-looking to thine earth?
For, lo! it shineth through the mid-day air.

FESTUS. It is, it is!

LUCIFER. Well, I will come again. [*Goes.*]

FESTUS. Knowest thou me, mine own immortal love?
How shall I call thee? Say, what mayst thou be!

ANGELA. I am a spirit, Festus; and I love
Thy spirit, and shall love, when once like mine,
More than we ever did or can even now.
Pure spirits are of Heaven all heavenly.
Yet marvel not to meet me in this guise,
All radiant like a diamond as it is.

We wander in what way we will through all
Or any of these worlds, and whereso'er
We are, there Heaven is, here, and there too, God.

FESTUS. Thou dost remember me?

ANGELA. Ay, every thought
And look of love which thou hast lent to me,
Comes daily through my memory as stars
Wear through the dark.

FESTUS. And thou art happy, love?

ANGELA. Yes: I am happy when I can do good.

FESTUS. To be good is to do good. Who dwell here?
Are they all deathless—happy?

ANGELA. All are not:
Some err, though rarely—slightly. Spirits sin
Only in thought; and they are of a race
Higher than thine—have fewer wants and less
Temptations—many more joys—greater powers.
They need no civil sway: each rules himself—
Obeys himself: all live, too, as they choose,
And they choose nought but good. They who have come

From earth, or other orb, use the same powers,
 Passions, and purposes, they had ere death ;
 Although enlarged and freed, to nobler ends,
 With better means. Here the hard warrior whets
 The sword of truth, and steels his soul against sin.
 The fierce and lawless wills which trooped it over
 His breast—the speared desires that overran
 The fairest fields of virtue, sleep and lie
 Like a slain host 'neath snow ; he dyes his hands
 Deep in the blood of evil passions. Mind !
 There is no passion evil in itself ;
 In Heaven we shall enjoy all to right ends.
 There sit the perfect women, perfect men ;—
 Minds which control themselves, hearts which indulge
 Designs of wondrous goodness, but so far
 Only as soul extolled to bliss and power
 Most high sees fit for each, divinely. Here,
 The statesman makes new laws for growing worlds,
 Through their forefated ages. Here, the sage
 Masters all mysteries, more and more, from day
 To day, watching the thoughts of men and angels
 Through moral microscopes ; or hails afar,
 By some vast intellectual instrument,
 The mighty spirits, good or bad, which range
 The space of mind ; some spreading death and woe
 On far off worlds—some great with good and life.
 And here the poet, like that wall of fire
 In ancient song, surrounds the universe ;
 Lighting himself, where'er he soars or dives,
 With his own bright brain—this is the poet's heaven.
 Here he may realize each form or scene
 He e'er on earth imagined ; or bid dreams
 Stand fast, and faery palaces appear.
 Here he has Heaven to hear him ; to the which
 He sings, with mainlike voice and song, the love
 Which lent him his whole strength, as is the wont
 Of all great spirits and good throughout the world.

And human love yet more than nothing seems.
Oh! speak not of the future. Speak to me
Thou of the past.

FESTUS. Immortal! from thine eye
Wipe out the tear of time. The gates of hell
Are barred upon the past. Their hold is like
The grasp of gravitation. Shall the past
Ever evade the death-clutch of the world?
No, they shall, like two cars, wheel locked in wheel,
Roll down together to destruction's depths.
Oh, rede me of the future what thou canst,
Divine one! Heaven is in the possible.

ANGELA. Oh, once ere now I cast my spirit sight
Into the orient future, to preview
The features of thy lifelot; but, alas!
I saw what I were fain to have remained
Unweeting of for ever. Now once more
Thou would'st revive my woe.

FESTUS. Nay, if it grieve thee,
I will not wake the future. Let it sleep
Till its time come.

ANGELA. Yet, with that woe I saw
A web of joy was woven for thyself,
For me, for many, by the love of God;
Who, granting His own spirit to the form
Of Divinized humanity, unbuilds
The superseded soul, and making all
Spirits anew in Him, doth make all one.
This is the infinite calm which circumscribes
All local lifestorms; this the law of peace
Which doth constrain all strife; the rule of bliss
Which disannuls all woe. Haste, blessed hour!
To the divine fulfilment of the end
Of total Being.

FESTUS. Thus serenely, speak on;
And with the sequence of my life forearm
The soul that is within me. Angel, speak!—

ANGELA. Once at my prayer 'twas given me, as I said,
 The future to foresee ; and I beheld
 A vision of thyself begirt with forms—
 Nay, more than one—of beauty ; sad was this,
 And that was blithe of blee ; and that—enough !
 I cannot all denote them ; but I know
 Malign I felt at first to see the heart
 I loved by them usurped. But when I thought
 From these calm heights, of all earth's cares and woes,
 And life's brief paradise, the hour of love,
 And knew it aye a failure, as of old,
 Though a divine experiment, I wept,
 And prayed, and found forgiveness for my fault.
 And none of them were happier than was I.
 Before each one, successive, as before
 The fates, I marked thy spirit bow ; and saw
 That all but formed one family of love.
 My soul then gladdened, and I knew that joy
 The seal of my salvation. I beheld
 All things rejoice beneath the light of love,
 Which seemed to burn within me, and beam through,
 Lost in the boundless loneliness of God.
 I saw earth's war-scarred countenance sweetly glide
 Into the angel lineaments of peace ;
 And gentlest sorrow dream herself to joy.
 Tears shed on earth were reaped in Heaven in smiles,
 And what was sown in sighs was raised in songs.
 Rapt in this vision with extatic bliss,
 Myself secure from all external chance,
 As though the one pure atomie of light
 Impounded in the centre of the sun—
 Ere yet the end of all, methought I saw
 Each beauty gathered by the careful hand
 Of the great gatherer who forgetteth none.
 I felt my being brightened and made fit
 For heavenly regions, gladdening in their glee,
 And grieving in their grief ; as, with thine own,

One blessed fate I viewed involving all,
 One everlasting end. All earthly love
 Consummated with thine consumed I saw ;
 And love divine, supreme, embracing all.
 For as the countless globelets of the dew
 Image each one the sun, so, in the dawn
 Of Heaven's great day, the seed of God shall shine
 Each with his golden likeness in his breast.
 Thus far my vision. May the all-kind God,
 Who crowns creation with o'erflowing love,
 Bless it to thee ! And would'st thou further know,
 Or of the past, or the calm coming time,
 Seek yonder sphere serene ; for changeless there,
 In lofty and in lonely light sedate,
 The sibyl angel sits, star studying ;
 Two only things before her—Heaven and earth.
 Her ask, and she will answer to the full.
 Foreboded thence, and fortified in soul,
 Retrieve thou the terrene. Endure, enjoy ;
 For He who all conditions of life's law
 Fulfilled, by death our deathlessness assures.
 All deaths are echoes but of His, in whom
 The life and death which crossed each other made
 The talisman of immortality.

FESTUS. So shall it be : thy will and my deed, one.
 I do not fear to die ; for, though I change
 The mode of being, I shall ever be.
 World after world will fall at my right hand ;
 The glorious future be the past despised :
 All now that seemeth bright will soon seem dim,
 And darker grow, like earth, as we approach it ;
 While I shall stand upon yon Heaven which now
 Hangs over me. If aught can make me seek
 Other to be than that lost soul I fear me,
 It is that thou lovest me. Heaven were not Heaven
 Without thee.

LUCIFER. I am here now. Art thou ready ?

Let us go.

ANGELA. Well—farewell. It makes me grieve
To bid a loved one back to yon false world—
To give up even a mortal unto death.
Thou wilt forget me soon, or seek to do.

FESTUS. When I forget that the stars shine in air—
When I forget that beauty is in stars—
When I forget that love with beauty is—
Will I forget thee : till then, all things else.
Thy love to me was perfect from the first,
Even as the rainbow in its native skies :
It did not grow ; let meaner things mature.

ANGELA. The rainbow dies in Heaven and not on earth ;
But love can never die : from world to world,
Up the high wheel of Heaven, it lives for aye.
Remember that I wait thee, hoping here.
Life is the brief disunion of that nature
Which hath been one and same in Heaven ere now,
And shall be yet again, renewed by death.
Come to me when thou diest !

FESTUS. I will, I will.

ANGELA. Then, in each other's arms, we will waft
through space,
Spirit in spirit, one ; or we will dwell
Among these immortal groves : or watch new worlds,
As, like the great thoughts of a Maker-mind,
They are rounded out of chaos : and we will
Be oft on earth with those we love, and help them ;
For God hath made it lawful for good souls
To make souls good ; and saints to help the saintly.
That thou right soon mayst fold unto thy heart
The blissful consciousness of separate
Oneness with God, in Him in whom alone
The saved are deathless, shall become, for thee,
My earliest, earnest, and most constant prayer.
Oh ! what is dear to creatures of the earth ?
Life, love, light, liberty ? But dearer far

Than all—and oh! an universe more divine—
 The gift, which God endows His chosen with,
 Of His own uncreated glory,—His
 Before all worlds, all ages, and reserved
 Till after all for those He loves and saves.
 As when the eye first views some Andean chain
 Of shadowy rolling mountains, based on air,
 Height upon height, aspiring to the last,
 Even to Heaven, in sunny snow sheen, up
 Stretching like angels' pinions—nor can tell
 Which be the loftiest nor the loveliest ;
 As when an army, wakening with the sun,
 Starts to its feet all hope, spear after spear
 And line on line reundulating light,
 While night's dull watchfires reek themselves away—
 So feels the spirit when it first receives
 The bright and mountainous mysteries of God,
 Containing Heaven, moving themselves towards us,
 In their free greatness, as by ships at sea
 Come icebergs, pure and pointed as a star,
 Afar off glittering, of invisible
 Depth, and dissolving in the light above.

FESTUS. My prayer shall be that thy prayer be fulfilled.
 I must to earth again. Farewell sweet soul !

ANGELA. Farewell! I love thee, and will oft be with thee.

LUCIFER. I like earth more than this : I rather love
 A splendid failing than a petty good ;
 Even as the thunderbolt, whose course is downwards,
 Is nobler far than any fire which soars.

FESTUS. I am determined to be good again—
 Again? When was I otherwise than ill?
 Does not sin pour from my soul like dew from earth,
 And, vapouring up before the face of God,
 Congregate there, in clouds, between Heaven and me?
 What wonder that I lack delight of life?
 For it is thus—when amid the world's delights,
 How warm soe'er we feel a moment among them—

We find ourselves, when the hot blast hath blown,
Prostrate, and weak, and wretched, even as I am.
I wish that I could leap from off this star,
And dash my soul to atoms like a glass.

LUCIFER. I have done nothing for thee yet. Thou shalt
See Heaven, and Hell, and all the sights of space,
Whene'er thou choosest.

FESTUS. Not then now.

LUCIFER. Up! rise!

FESTUS. No; I'll be good; and will see none of them.

LUCIFER. Remember there's the moon.

FESTUS. My memory

Is most tenacious of the things of light,
And the commands of love.

LUCIFER. Oh, happy thought.

FESTUS. Earth draws us like a loadstone. We are coming.

SCENE—*The Moon.*

FESTUS, LUCIFER, and LUNIEL.

FESTUS. Thus far along these silent wastes of light
Have we, unseeing and unseen, held on.
Time's sands seem turned to seed-pearl as they glide,
In luminous slumber, through his shadowy glass,
To glorified repose; while snowy Peace
Hushes the infant soul, here born again,
To wonder and delight. And yet these rocks,
Whose flames once flourished in the face of Heaven,
Like burning banners o'er a fiend-host, there
Arrested in ignition, fire made stone,
Speak out of other state than quiet once.
Not Chaos when in travail of the earth,
And groaning with the birth-pang, nor the sun's
Deserts of fire, sea deep with drifting flame,
Nor all contortions of the solemn clouds,

Can match the immarbled madness of this orb :—
 As though some vast wild passionate soul, ablaze
 Through all its nature with volcanic sin,
 By God's one word translated into light,
 And the pure beauty of celestial peace,
 With adamantine silence seized, had 'come
 That instant changeless, deathless, and divine.
 Still meet we not what in this sphere we seek.
 Methinks my mission here may fail.

LUCIFER.

And if

I knew not to an ace our whereabouts,
 I too might deem this were the very world
 Of all poetic possibilities. Look !
 It is bounded west by light, and east by night,
 And north and south by nothing and the wind.

FESTUS. Lo, now the angel, as foretold. She makes
 Hither. O beauty holy and divine,
 Life-eyed, soul-crowned, illuminate with truth.
 Mark how unearthly fair and pure ; the air
 Of sad felicity ; the mingled mien
 Of innocence and knowledge absolute.

LUCIFER. During the dateless ages of the Heavens
 Ere Time had whet his infant scythe, or left
 His cradling clouds, or yon pale watery star
 Heaven's giant tear, first cast its shade o'er space,
 That angel knew I well : but now no more.

LUNIEL. Earth-child, behold the angel of this orb.
 What tidings dost thou bring ? or art thou now
 The earnest of the race that is to come,
 Foretold by friendly spirits of the skies,
 Peopling with soul these silvery solitudes,
 Whose advent I have ages waited for ?

FESTUS. O holy and divine one, I am man ;
 And not the hero of the destined race
 Thou hopest ; not here inducted but allowed.
 Sun, planet, satellite, all typéd spheres
 Of ever various being, it is mine

That His great works may know themselves and Him,
 Ere all the ages end. From God I own
 Power to foretell what only He foreknows ;
 And ye are both predestined beings. Such
 His pleasurable will, that they who serve
 Rule with Him—who obey not, serve Him still.

LUCIFER. It is even so ; thou sayest truth.

FESTUS. Thy words,
 More precious to mine ear than seaborn pearls,
 Pierce me with light. Speak on, pray.

LUNIEL. Mortal, know
 Our spirits are the keys to all we see ;
 And whoso, first permitted and inspired
 Of Heaven, but pondereth well the page of life
 Before him, shall unlock at last the store
 Hid in it and all others. To predict
 The coming it is needfullest to con
 The past and present ; as to things of time,
 Time is divisional ; eternity,
 All unitive. Perfection is to come.
 I thus the mutual destinies have learned
 Of thine orb and mine own.

FESTUS. Inform me, then,
 O holy and divine one ! who now tread,
 On this sole purpose bent, these shores of light,
 Silently shining, by thy spirit graced,
 The god-state of the future.

LUNIEL. Be it so.
 Attend ye ; for ye witnesses are both
 To wisdom of her world-comprising plan.
 One is the end and origin of all.
 God, from the first was solely in Himself
 Eternal, infinite, inconceivable,
 Only, God wholly, solely, all and one.
 Nothing was in existence God except ;
 Nor time nor world, life, flesh, sense, soul, nor sin ;
 Nay, there was no negation ; God sole all.

But willing to create, His hands He spread
 From east to west, and constituted space ;
 From north to south He planned the boundless map,
 And consecrated it. The universe
 Is but a state of being, and a life
 And time condition of the will Divine ;
 A veil whose web is light embossed with stars,
 Through which the Eternal Essence kindly deigns
 To manifest itself ; and all He makes,
 As buds and tender branches bourgeoning,
 From Being's sacred stem, making to bless.
 Deep in the universal centre of all things
 Infixed the Infinite, for gods God made,
 Therefore, the Heavens, and dark ætherial space,
 For the immortal angels, love sustained,
 Which occupy with Him eternity,
 And sin not, err not, doubt not. Next He made,
 By might omnific and Deific love,
 Matter, for beings of a nature mixed,
 Whose forms should be material, blest with life,
 Vegetive, fleshly ; these instinctive, those
 Unconscious ; and for these and Him to come,
 With starry globes unnumberable, suns,
 Planets, and moons, and meteors, circumvolved
 Each round the other, round their central sun,
 In countless clouds and firmamental wholes,
 Whose orbits scarce demean infinitude,
 Did He the void impeople ; He the suns
 Of self-genetic, space-creating light,
 As types and tokens of His Heavenly love
 And beatific power, with spirits vast
 And world ordained intelligences, fined
 From all creation, through its thousand grades.
 For man the mighty earth, and all the orbs
 Revolving round the middle thrones of fire,
 Compacted of the elements, wherein
 Dwell separately all less perfect souls ;—

For him the moon, reflective, ministrant.
 Of all He chose one system as a law,
 The great ensample of his starry scheme,
 One sun, one earth, one moon, one race, one tribe.
 He rules by choice the universal whole.
 All that are angels, therefore, held, or gods,
 And worshipped by the ignorant soul, are man ;
 Man, self-inclusive of all lower forms,
 All higher natures less than the Most High.
 For man is of two kinds, the spiritual
 And fleshly ; yet we both have but one name ;
 Since Angelhood is Manhood glorified ;
 Raised up distinctly to Divinity ;
 And homed and heavened within the embrace of God.
 The final sum that science crowns her with
 This ; between God and Nature, man alone,
 However various his conditions be,
 Through space's universal round, and all
 The countless orbs of viewless skies, exists ;
 Nature's essential summit he and God's
 Deific incarnation : this weigh well ;
 For spirit is refracted in the flesh,
 And shews as crooked what is straightness' self.
 Call all that is not God nor nature, man,
 Nor fiend nor angel but his kith and kin.
 God, therefore, and the world, and man, are all.
 Man is himself the midst, the third great form
 Wherein the former two Divine extremes
 Unite in vital essence. Partly viewed,
 His double nature is to each allied ;
 Conjoinedly, they embrace themselves in him ;
 And he of both is the compact effect,
 Of God and of the lonely universe ;
 The mean immortal he of brutal life,
 And the divine eternity of Heaven,
 The vital medium of all things. In man
 Do God and Nature reconcile themselves ;

God's image and the world's too is he both.
 In nature moral, intellectual,
 And spiritual of the Former ; in
 This elemental and transitional frame,
 His mighty mother Nature's favourite son.
 The quintessential element of soul,
 Which was a love-gift from His sire to her,
 He doth alone inherit of her fruit ;
 And Nature is in him most perfected,
 The culminating glory of her line.
 As man partakes the quality of all life
 Below him, and all matter e'en inert,
 So, in his nature sanctified, all things
 Back to their final origin return,
 In cyclical totality of life.
 For which cause God, that all might be redeemed,
 Assumed man's nature, and fulfilled it so
 That, though it plunged Him in the abyss of death,
 Death He passed through for us, and in His train
 The infinite effluence of His conquering light,
 'Tis that we enter Heaven. For our dear sakes
 The blessing first was made a curse, the curse
 Transformed at last a blessing ; mortal life,
 By death Divine, is rendered life eterne ;
 And God with justest love still saves from death,
 To Heaven's divinest destinies, the Son
 Of His eternal bridals.

FESTUS.

Whence are we !

LUNIEL. Child of the royal blood of man redeemed,
 The starry strain of spirit, thence we are.
 This, therefore, be thy future and thy fate.
 As water putrified and purified,
 Seven times by turns, will never more corrupt,
 So thou and thine whole race, all change endured,
 Through doubt, sin, knowledge, faith, love, power, and bliss,
 Shall practise every note of Being's scale,
 Till the whole orb coharmonize with Heaven,

And pure imperial Peace rule all below ;—
 Till, star by star, these bright and sacred seats,
 Whose ancestry of sempiternal suns
 Comes of the vast and universal void,
 And in whose lineage of light yon earth
 Seems but a new possession, scarcely worth
 Accepting or rejecting, shall at last
 Into primordial nothingness relapse ;
 And man, the universal son of God,
 Who occupied in Time those starry spheres,
 Regenerate and redeemed shall live for aye,
 Made one with Deity ; all evil gone,
 Dispersed as by a thunderclap of light.

LUCIFER. Spirit serene ! Hath evil no effect ?

LUNIEL. Timeous it hath, being the shadow of good
 Imperfect, creatural, which changed in Christ
 For God's eternal virtue and divine,
 Substance and shadow perish. Even thus
 With man all good hath evil, but with God
 Evil itself is good.

FESTUS. And sin and hell ?

LUNIEL. Evil and sin are twin with Time and man.
 Sin from a selfish sensual source proceeds,
 Surceasing in an individual end ;
 Whereby we stand opposing Deity,
 And the great commonwealth of worldly life ;
 Sin voluntary evil ; evil is
 Nature's involuntary sin 'gainst God,
 Which from life issuing, sanctified by death,
 The Deity unto Deity restores.
 But good, wherein with God we concentrate,
 Though bound on Being's very utmost verge,
 Unites us with the Infinite, and rules
 Right through us, as a radius of the law
 Eternal of intelligence which bounds,
 Quickens, upholds, and rectifies all things.
 Sin is the birth of evil, hell of sin,

Destruction of corruption forms the end.
 Heat is not in the sun, nor wrath in God,
 Who, though our faith may waver, still is Love.
 It is the eye which twinkles, not the star ;
 His ire is in ourselves. When Him we spurn
 We suffer ; we both suffer and inflict.
 Revenge, wrath, judgment, all are names of Love,
 The crowned effect of being, and therein
 Result. Such retribution is our God's :
 Such glorious retribution as the sun
 Inflicts on fogs and shadows. Hell is part
 Of nature. Human retribution stands
 Divine in ordination ; but Divine
 Judgment on human souls by torturing fires,
 In everlasting blast, a blind reproach
 To the pure God, who blesseth all He makes.
 Justice is sacred between man and man,
 And mercy certain between man and God,
 Whose equity is holy in the Heavens.
 Thee Nature more or less denies, rejects ;
 But Thou above all opposition, all
 Lovest, and all affirmest, as of Thee !

FESTUS. Yea even here as everywhere, let man
 Worship his Recreator, and the world's
 Made perfect by preliminary fire.
 O Thou who in the inaccessible depths
 Dwellest of all-central Being, and of whom
 We can but see the star-dust of Thy feet
 Left on Heaven's roads ; from world nathless to world,
 From firmament to firmament, can we trace
 Each soul his individual link with Thee ;
 The pure invisible touch which makes us Thine ;
 The something more substantial than the sun,
 More general than the void, yet nested here ;
 As through the airy silence of the soul,
 Swifter than eagle rushing on the wind,
 Thou sweepest into possession when Thou wilt ;

So many are Thy mercies there is nought
 But this to pray for left ; continue that
 Thou givest. To cease pertaineth not to Thee.
 The elements may all confusedly fail,
 And burning systems stiffen or depart
 Into their graves of darkness and decay ;
 The sun at length, exhausted in the strife,
 With his ætherial victor sleep and die,
 And firmaments conglobed them, till at last
 The universe concentrate in one orb,
 Fit for Thy footstool only ;—change like this
 Ten thousand times may happen, till it fall
 To the observant spirits at Thy right hand
 Noteless by reoccurrence ; man the while,
 Restored unto the Essence whence he came,
 One with the great ones who have dwelt in him,
 Who cannot deal with less than Infinites,
 Nor utter what is not divine and true,
 Shall ripen in Thy bosom till he grow
 Through endless Heavens, triumphant and serene,
 Into the throned god thou bad'st him be.

LUNIEL. Depart ! Thou knowest all things knowing this.
 The world is God's broad comment on the Word,
 Whose margin is Creation, and sense Heaven.
 So Time's whole trilogy to thee is one :
 The angels are the chorus of the world,
 And man the mighty drama of the Lord.
 Now spirit is the expiration, soul
 The inspiration of the breath of God,
 The infinite centre, whose like infinite
 Circumference consists of angels, man,
 And elemental nature ;—He Himself
 Apart from, and above all Being still,
 In unconceivéd Essence. Be to Him
 Therefore all Being hallowed, and devote
 Throughout the paradisaical world to come.
 Be every hill an altar named to God,

Fire crowned with Heaven-consuming sacrifice,
 A throne of love, a stone of destiny;
 Oh, may earth, sea-like, but reflect the skies;
 Be every flower a censer of delight;
 And every wing an augury of Heaven.

LUCIFER. To me there is no future. I abhor
 The self-delusions men affect. With them
 The future is a god-king born in Heaven,
 Rich with hereditary royalties,
 And entail of interminable times.
 Morn's roseate breath, fresh blown o'er night's bright dew,
 Is foul before this urchin's as a sough;
 His hand is like the lily's fragrant snow;
 And he is robed in weeds of whitest sheen,
 Pet godling of the world! The present,—what?
 A ragged, beggared dotard, sick to death
 Of the gray years and round returning skies.
 Nor past nor future is; the present, all.

FESTUS. Earth was my future once, but now 'tis Heaven.

LUNIEL. Earth is the emerald tablet by God's throne,
 Whereon he writes His laws and open fates,
 That all the Heavens His starry rede may learn
 Unto the end. Thither ye therefore hie.

LUCIFER. Come then, since Heaven and earth have willed
 it thus
 Let us fare forth; our mutual destiny
 Coæval and concurrent with the world.

SCENE—*A large Party and Entertainment.*

FESTUS, HELEN, *and* OTHERS.

FESTUS. My Helen! let us rest awhile,
 For most I love thy calmer smile;
 We'll not be missed from this gay throng,
 They dance so eagerly and long;

And were one half to go away,
I'll bet the rest would scarce perceive it.

HELEN. With thee I either go or stay,
Prepared, the same, to like or leave it.
These two, perhaps, will take our places ;
They seem to stand with longing faces.

FESTUS. Then sit we, love, and sip with me,
And I will teach thyself to thee.
Thy nature is so pure and fine,
'Tis most like wine ;
Thy blood, which blushes through each vein,
Rosy champagne ;
And the fair skin which o'er it grows,
Bright as its snows.
Thy wit, which thou dost work so well,
Is like cool moselle ;
Like madeira, bright and warm,
Is thy smile's charm ;
Claret's glory hath thine eye,
Or mine must lie ;
But nought can like thy lips possess
Deliciousness ;
And now that thou'rt divinely merry,
I'll kiss and call thee sparkling sherry.

HELEN. I sometimes dream that thou wilt leave me
Without thy love, even me, lonely ;
And oft I think, though oft it grieve me,
That I am not thy one love only :
But I shall always love thee till
This heart, like earth in death, stand still.

FESTUS. I love thee, and will leave thee never,
Until my soul leave life for ever.
If earth can from her children run,
And leave the seasons—leave the sun,—
If yonder stars can leave the sky,
Bright truants from their home in Heaven—
Immortals who deserve to die,

Were death not too good to be given,—
 If Heaven can leave and live from God,
 And man tread off his cradle clod—
 If God can leave the world He sowed,
 Right in the heart of space to fade—
 Soul, earth, star, Heaven, man, world, and God
 May part—not I from thee, sweet maid.
 Ah, see again my favourite dance,
 See the wavelike line advance ;
 And now in circles break,
 Like raindrops on a lake :
 Now it opens, now it closes,
 Like a wreath dropping into roses.

HELEN. It is a lovely scene,
 Fair as aught on earth ;
 And we feel, when it hath been,
 At heart a dearth ;
 As from the breaking up of some bright dream—
 The failing of a fountain's spray-topt stream.

WILL. Ladies—your leave—we'll choose a Queen
 To rule this fair and festive scene.

CHARLES. And it were best to choose by lot,
 So none can hold herself forgot.

[They draw lots : it falls to Helen.]

FESTUS. I knew, my love, how this would be ;
 I knew that Fate must favour thee.

ALL. Lady fair ! we throne thee Queen ;
 Be thy sway as thou hast been—
 Light, and lovely, and serene.

FESTUS. Here—wear this wreath. No ruder crown
 Should deck that dazzling brow ;
 Or ask yon halo from the moon—
 'Twould well beseem thee now.
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
 I crown thee Queen of me ;
 And oh ! but I am a happy land,
 And a loyal land to thee.

I crown thee, love ; I crown thee love ;
 Thou art Queen in thine own right ;
 Feel ! my heart is as full as a town of joy :
 Look ! I've crowded mine eyes with light.
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
 Thou art Queen by right divine !
 And thy love shall set neither night nor day ;
 O'er this subject heart of mine.
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee love ;
 Thou art Queen by the right of the strong !
 And thou didst but win where thou mightst have slain,
 Or have bounden in thralldom long.
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
 Thou art my Queen for aye ;
 As the moon doth Queen the night, my love ;
 As the night doth crown the day ;
 I crown thee, love ; I crown thee, love ;
 Queen of the brave and free !
 For I'm brave to all beauty but thine, my love ;
 And free to all beauty by thee.

HELEN. Here, in this court of pleasure, blest to reign,
 If not the loveliest, where all are fair,
 We still, one hour, our royalty retain,
 To out-queen all in kindness and in care.
 Love, beauty, honour, bravery, and wit—
 Was ever Queen served by such noble slaves ?
 The peerage of the heart—for Heaven's court fit :
 We'll dream no more that earth hath ills or graves.
 With mirth, and melody, and love we reign :
 Begin we, then, our sweet and pleasurable sway ;
 And here, though light, so strong is beauty's chain,
 That none shall know how blindly they obey,
 We have but to lay on one light command—
 That all shall do the most what best they love ;
 And Pleasure hath her punishments at hand
 For all who will not pleasure's rule approve.
 But no ! there's none of us can disobey,

Since, by our one command, we free ye thus :
 And, as our powers must on your pleasures stay—
 Support—and you will reign along with us.

FESTUS. Ha ! Lucifer ! How now ?

LUCIFER. I come in sooth to keep my vow.

FESTUS. Thy vow ?

LUCIFER. To revel in earth's pleasures,
 And tire down mirth in her own measures.

FESTUS. Go thy ways : I shrink and tremble
 To think how deep thou canst dissemble ;
 For who would dream that in yon breast
 The heart of hell was burning ?
 Or deem that strange and listless guest
 Some priceless spirit earning ?
 I hear from every footstep rise
 A trampled spirit's smothered cries.

CHARLES. Fest, engage fair Marian's hand.

FESTUS. Pass me ; she is free no less
 Than I, who by my queen will stand—
 May it please her loveliness !

HELEN. Festus, we know the love, and see,
 Which was with Marian and thee.

FESTUS. I will not dance to-night again,
 Though bid by all the queens that reign.

HELEN. What, Festus ! treason and disloyalty
 Already to our gentle royalty ?

FESTUS. No—I was wrong—but to forgive
 Be thy sublime prerogative !

HELEN. Most amply, then, I pardon thee ;
 In proof whereof, come, dance with me. [*A dance.*]

LAURENCE. How sweetly Marian sweeps along ;
 Her step is music, and her voice is song.
 Silver sandalled foot ! how blest
 To bear the breathing Heaven above,
 Which on thee, Atlas-like, doth rest,
 And round thee move.

Ah ! that sweet little foot : I swear

I could kneel down and kiss it there.
 I should not mind if she were Pope ;
 I would change my faith.

CHARLES. Works, too, we hope.

LAURENCE. Ah ! smile on me again with that sweet smile,
 Which could from Heaven my soul to thee beguile ;
 As I mine eye would turn from awful skies
 To hail the child of sun and storm arise ;
 Or, from eve's holy azure, to the star
 Which beams and becks the spirit from afar ;
 For fair as yon star-wreath which high doth shine,
 And worthy but to deck a brow like thine ;
 Pure as the light from orbs which ne'er
 Hath blessed us yet in this far sphere ;
 As eyes of seraphs lift alone
 Through ages on the holy throne ;
 So bright, so fair, so free from guile,
 And freshening to my heart thy smile ;
 Ay, passing all things here, and all above,
 To me, thy look of beauty, truth, and love.

HARRY. Thy friend hath led his lady out.

FESTUS. He looks most wickedly devout.

FANNY. When introduced, he said he knew her,
 And had been long devoted to her.

EMMA. Indeed—but he is too gallant,
 And serves me far more than I want.
 He vows that he could worship me—
 Why—look ! he is now upon his knee !

LUCIFER. I quaff to thee this cup of wine,
 And would, though men had nought but brine—
 E'en the brine of their own tears,
 To cool those lying lips of theirs ;
 And were it all one molten pearl,
 I would drain it to thee, girl ;
 Ay, though each drop were worth of gold
 Too many pieces to be sold ;
 And though, for each I drank to thee,

Fate add an age of misery :
 For thou canst conjure up my spirit
 To aught immortals may inherit ;
 To good or evil, woe or weal—
 To all that fiends or angels feel ;
 And wert thou to perdition given,
 I'd join thee in the scorn of Heaven !

EMMA. Oh fy ! to only think of such a fate !

LUCIFER. Better than not to think on't till too late.
 They'd not believe me, Festus, if I told them,
 That hell, and all its hosts, this hour behold them.

FESTUS. Scarcely—that Devil here again !

But though my heart burst in the strain
 I will be happy might and main !
 So wreath my brow with flowers
 And pour me purple wine,
 And make the merry hours
 Dance, dance with glee like thine.
 While thus enraptured, I and thou,
 Love crowns the heart, as flowers the brow.
 The rosy garland twine
 Around the noble bowl,
 Like laughing loves that shine
 Upon the generous soul ;
 Be mine, dear maid, the loves, and thou
 Shalt ever bosom them as now.
 Then plunge the blushing wreath
 Deep in the ruddy wine ;
 As the love of thee till death
 Is deep in heart of mine.
 While both are blooming on my brow
 I cannot be more blest than now.

LUCIFER. Thou talkst of hearts in style to me quite fresh :
 The human heart's about a pound of flesh.

FESTUS. Forgive him, love, and aught he says.

HELEN. What is that trickling down thy face ?

FESTUS. Oh, love, that is only wine,

From the wreath which thou didst twine ;
 And, casting in the bowl, I bound,
 For coolness' sake, my temples round.

HELEN. I thought 'twas a thorn which was tearing thy
 brow ;
 And if it were only a rose-thorn was tearing,
 Why, whether of gold or of roses, as now,
 A crown, if it hurts us, is hardly worth wearing.

LUCY. From what fair maid hadst thou that flower ?
 It came not from my wreath nor me.

CHARLES. Love lives in thee as in a bower,
 And sure this must have dropped from thee—
 From thy lip, or from thy cheek :
 See, its sister blushes speak.
 Nay, never harm the harmless rose,
 Though given by a stranger maid ;
 'Tis sad enough to feel that flower
 Feels it must fade.

And trouble not the transient love,
 Though by another's side I sigh ;
 It is enough to feel the flame
 Flicker and die.

And thou to me art flame and flower,
 Of rosier body, brighter breath ;
 But softer, warmer than the truth—
 As sleep than death.

FESTUS. The dead of night : earth seems but seeming—
 The soul seems but a something dreaming.
 The bird is dreaming in its nest,
 Of song, and sky, and loved one's breast ;
 The lap-dog dreams, as round he lies,
 In moonshine of his mistress' eyes :
 The steed is dreaming, in his stall,
 Of one long breathless leap and fall :
 The hawk hath dreamt him thrice of wings
 Wide as the skies he may not cleave ;
 But waking, feels them clipt, and clings

Mad to the perch 'twere mad to leave :
 The child is dreaming of its toys—
 The murderer of calm home joys ;
 The weak are dreaming endless fears—
 The proud of how their pride appears :
 The poor enthusiast who dies,
 Of his life-dreams the sacrifice,
 Sees, as enthusiast only can,
 The truth that made him more than man ;
 And hears once more, in visioned trance,
 That voice commanding to advance,
 Where wealth is gained—love, wisdom won,
 Or deeds of danger dared and done.
 The mother dreameth of her child—
 The maid of him who hath beguiled—
 The youth of her he loves too well ;
 The good of God—the ill of hell,—
 Who live of death—of life who die—
 The dead of immortality.
 The earth is dreaming back her youth ;
 Hell never dreams, for woe is truth ;
 And Heaven is dreaming o'er her prime,
 Long ere the morning stars of time ;
 And dream of Heaven alone can I,
 My lovely one, when thou art nigh.

HELEN. Let some one sing. Love, mirth, and song,
 The graces of this life of ours,
 Go ever hand in hand along,
 And ask alike each other's powers.

LUCY *sings*. For every leaf the loveliest flower
 Which beauty sighs for from her bower—
 For every star a drop of dew—
 For every sun a sky of blue—
 For every heart a heart as true.

For every tear by pity shed
 Upon a fellow-sufferer's head,

Oh! be a crown of glory given;
Such crowns as saints to gain have striven—
Such crowns as seraphs wear in Heaven.

For all who toil at honest fame,
A proud, a pure, a deathless name;
For all who love, who loving bless,
Be life one long, kind, close caress—
Be life all love, all happiness.

LUCIFER. Tell me what's the chiefest pleasure
In this world's high heaped measure?

ALL. Power—beauty—love—wealth—wine!

LUCIFER. All different votes!

FANNY. Come, Frederic—thine?
What may thy joy-judgment be?

FREDERIC. I scarce know how to answer thee;
Each, apart, too soon will tire;
Altogether slake desire.

So ask not of me the one chief joy of earth,
For that I'm unable to say;
But here is a wreath which will lose its chief worth,
If ye pluck but one flower away.
Then these are the joys which should never dispart—
The joys which are dearest to me:

As the song, and the dance, and the laugh of the heart,
Thou, girl, and the goblet, be.

LUCIFER. Oh, excellent! the truth is clear—
The one opinion, too, I love to hear.

HELEN. Is this a queen's fate—to be left alone?
I wish another had the throne.

Festus! why art thou not here,
Beside thy liege and lady dear?

FESTUS. My thoughts are happier oft than I,
For they are ever, love, with thee;
And thine, I know, as frequent fly
O'er all that severs us, to me;
Like rays of stars that meet in space,

And mingle in a bright embrace.
 Never load thy locks with flowers,
 For thy cheek hath a richer flush ;
 And than wine, or the sunset hour,
 Or the ripe yew-berry's blush.
 Never braid thy brow with lights,
 Like the sun, on his golden way
 To the neck and the locks of night,
 From the forehead fair of day.
 Never star thy hand with stones,
 For, for every dead light there,
 Is a living glory gone,
 Than the brilliant far more fair.
 Nay, nay ; wear thy buds, braids, gems !
 Let the lovely never part ;
 Thou alone canst rival them,
 Or in nature, or in art.
 Be not sad ;—thou shalt not be :
 Why wilt mourn, love, when with me ?
 One tear that in thy eye could start
 Could wash all purpose from my heart
 But that of loving thee ;
 If I could ever think to wrong
 A love so riverlike, deep, pure, and long.

HELEN. I cast mine eyes around, and feel
 There is a blessing wanting ;
 Too soon our hearts the truth reveal,
 That joy is disenchanting.

FESTUS. I am a wizard, love ; and I
 A new enchantment will supply ;
 And the charm of thine own smile
 Shall thine own heart of grief beguile.
 Smile—I do command thee, rise
 From the bright depths of those eyes !
 By the bloom wherein thou dwellest,
 As in a rose-leaved nest ;
 By the pleasure which thou tellest,

And the bosom which thou swellest,
 I bid thee rise from rest ;
 By the rapture which thou causest,
 And the bliss while e'er thou pausest,
 Obey my high behest.

HELEN. Dread magician ! cease thy spell ;
 It hath wrought both quick and well.

FESTUS. Ah ! thou hast dissolved the charm ;
 Ah ! thou hast outstepped the ring ;
 Who shall answer for the harm
 Beauty on herself will bring ?
 Come, I will conjure up again that smile—
 The scarce departed spirit. There it is !
 Settling and hovering round thy lips the while,
 Like some bright angel o'er the gates of bliss.
 And I could sit and set that rose-bright smile,
 Until it seem to grow immortal there—
 A something abstract even of all beauty,
 As though 'twere in the eye or in the air.
 Ah ! never may a heavier shadow rest
 Than thine own ringlets' on that brow so fair ;
 Nor sob, nor sorrow, shake the perfect breast
 Which looks for love, as doth for death despair.
 And now the smile, the sigh, the blush, the tear—
 Lo ! all the elements of love are here.
 Oh, weep not—wither not the soul
 Made saturate with bliss ;
 I would not have one briny tear
 Embitter beauty's kiss.
 Nay, weep not, fear not ! woe nor wrath
 Can touch a soul like thine,
 More than the lightning's blinding path
 May strike the stars divine.
 Sing, then, while thy lover sips,
 And hear the truth that wine discloses ;
 Music lives within thy lips
 Like a nightingale in roses.

HELEN *sings*. Oh! love is like the rose,
 And a month it may not see,
 Ere it withers where it grows—
 Rosalie!
 I loved thee from afar;
 Oh! my heart was lift to thee
 Like a glass up to a star—
 Rosalie!

Thine eye was glassed in mine
 As the moon is in the sea,
 And its shine was on the brine—
 Rosalie!
 The rose hath lost its red,
 And the star is in the sea,
 And the briny tear is shed—
 Rosalie!

FESTUS. What the stars are to the night, my love,
 What its pearls are to the sea,—
 What the dew is to the day, my love,
 Thy beauty is to me.

HELEN. I am but here the under-queen of beauty,
 For yonder hangs the likeness of the goddess;
 And so to worship her is our first duty.
 The heavenly minds of old first taught the heavenly bodies
 Were to be worshipped; and the idolatry
 Holds to this hour; though, Beauty! but of thine.
 I am thy priestess, and will worship thee,
 With all this brave and lovely train of mine;
 Lo! we all kneel to thee before thy pictured shrine.
 Yes—there, thou goddess of the heart,
 Immortal beauty, there!
 Thou glory of Jove's free-love skies,
 E'en like thyself too fair,
 Too bright, too sweet for mortal eyes,
 For earthly hearts too strong;

Thy golden girdle liftst and drawest
 The heavens and earth along.
 Oh! thou art as the cloudless moon,
 Undimmed and unarrayed ;
 No robe hast thou, no crown save yon—
 Goddess ! thy long locks' soft and sunbright braid.
 And there's thy son, Love—beauty's child—
 World-known for strangest powers—
 Boy-god ! thy place is blest o'er all !
 Smil'st thou at thoughts of ours ?
 And there, by thy luxurious side,
 The queen of Heaven and Jove
 Stands ; and the deep delirious draught
 Drinks, from thy looks, of love,
 And lips, which oft have kissed away
 The thunders from his brow
 Who ruled, men say, the world of worlds,
 As God our God rules now.
 And thou art yet as great o'er this
 As erst o'er olden sky ;
 Of all Heaven's darkened deities
 The last live light on high.
 God after god hath left thee lone,
 Which lived on human breath ;
 When prayers were breathed to them no more,
 The false ones pined to death.
 But in the service of young hearts
 To loveliness and love ;
 Live thou shalt while yon wandering world
 Named unto thee shall move.
 No fabled dream art thou : all god,
 Our souls acknowledge thee ;
 For what would life from love be worth,
 Or love from beauty be ?
 Come, universal beauty, then,
 Thou apple of God's eye,
 To and through which all things were made—

Things deathless—things that die.
 Oh! lighten—live before us there—
 Leap in yon lovely form,
 And give a soul. She comes! It breathes—
 So bright—so sweet—so warm,
 Our sacrifice is over : let us rise ;
 For we have worshipped acceptably here ;
 And let our glowing hearts and glimmering eyes,
 O'erstrained with gazing on thy light too near,
 Prove that our worship, Goddess, was sincere.

FESTUS. I read that we are answered. The soft air
 Doubles its sweetness ; and the fainting flowers,
 Down hanging on the walls in wreaths so fair,
 Bud forth afresh, as in their birth-day bowers.
 Dew-laden, as oppressed with love and shame,
 The rose-bud drops upon the lily's breast ;
 Brighter the wine, the lamps have softer flame,
 Thy kiss flows freer than the grape first pressed.

WILL. A dance, a dance!

HELEN. Let us remain.

FESTUS. We will not tempt your sport again.

HELEN. Behold where Marian sits alone,
 The dance all sweeping round,
 Like to some goddess hewn in stone,
 With blooming garlands bound.

FESTUS. Tell me, Marian, what those eyes
 Can discover in the skies?—
 Those eyes that look, so bright, so sweet their hue,
 As they had gained from gazing on that view,
 The high and starry beauty of their blue.

MARIAN. For earth my soul hath lost all love,
 But Heaven still loves and watches o'er me ;
 Why should I not, then, look above,
 And pass, and pity all before me ?

FESTUS. Oh! if yon worlds that shine o'er this
 Have more of joy—of passion less—
 I would not change earth's chequered bliss

For thrice the joys those orbs possess ;
Which seem so strange their nature is
Faint with excess of happiness.

MARIAN. Thy heart with others hath its rest,
And it shall wake with me ;
And if within another breast
Thy heart hath made itself a nest,
Mine is no more for thee.
Heart-breaker, go ! I cannot choose
But love thee, and thy love refuse ;
And if my brow grow lined while young,
And youth fly cheated from my cheek,
'Tis that there lies below my tongue
A word I will not speak :
For I would rather die than deem
Thou art not the glory thou didst seem.
But if engirt by flood or fire,
Who would live that could expire ?
Who would not dream, and dreaming die,
If to wake were misery ?

FESTUS. Whose woes are like to my woes ? What is
madness ?

The mind exalted to a sense of ill
Soon sinks beyond it into utter sadness,
And sees its grief before it like a hill.
Oh ! I have suffered till my brain became
Distinct with woe, as is the skeleton leaf
Whose green hath fretted off its fibrous frame,
And bare to our immortality of grief.

MARIAN. Like the light line that laughter leaves
One moment on a bright young brow,
So truth is lost ere love believes
There can be aught save truth below.

FESTUS But as the eye aye brightlier beams
For every fall the lid lets on it,
So oft the fond heart happier dreams
For the soft cheats love puts upon it.

MARIAN. I never dreamed of wretchedness ;
I thought to love meant but to bless.

FESTUS. It once was bliss to me to watch
Thy passing smile, and sit and catch
The sweet contagion of thy breath—
For love is catching—from such teeth ;
Delicate little pearl-white wedges,
All transparent at the edges.

MARIAN. False flatterer, cease.

FESTUS. It is my fate
To love, and make who love me hate.

MARIAN. No ! 'tis to sue—to gain—deceive—
To tire of—to neglect—and leave :
The desolation of the soul
Is what I feel—

A sense of lostness that leaves death
But little to reveal ;
For death is nothing but the thought
Of something being again nought.

HELEN. Cease, lady, cease those aching sighs,
Which shake the tear-drops from thine eyes,
As morning wind, with wing fresh wet,
Shakes dew out of the violet.
Forgive me, if the love once thine
Hath changed itself unsought to me ;
I did not tempt it from thy heart,
I nothing knew of thee ;
And soon, perchance, 'twill be my part,
As thou now art, to be.

MARIAN. I blame no heart, no love, no fate,
And I have nothing to forgive ;
I wish for nought, repent of nought,
Dislike nought but to live.

HELEN. Nay, sing ; it will relieve thy heart.

MARIAN. I cannot sing a mirthful strain ;
And feel too much to act my part,
E'en of an ebbing vein.

FESTUS. Our hearts are not in our own hands :
 Why wilt thou make me say
 I cannot love as once I loved ?

MARIAN. Hear !—'tis for this I stay—
 To say we part—for ever part ;
 But oh ! how wide the line
 Between thy Marian's bursting heart
 And that proud heart of thine.
 And thou wilt wander here and there,
 Ever the gay and free ;
 To other maids wilt fondly swear,
 As thou hast sworn to me ;
 And I—oh ! I shall but retire
 Into my grief alone ;
 And kindle there the hidden fire,
 That burns, that wastes unknown.
 And love and life shall find their tomb
 In that sepulchral flame :—
 Be happy—none shall know for whom—
 I will not dream thy name.

FESTUS. As sings the swan with parting breath,
 So I to thee ;
 While love is leaving—worse than life—
 Forewarningly.
 Speak not, nor think thou, any ill of me,
 If thou wouldest not die soon and wretchedly.
 I cannot waver on my path
 To shun fair lady's love or wrath ;
 Nor condescend the world to undeceive
 Which doth delight in error and believe.
 Thus then farewell, dear lady, ere I go :
 And dearly have I earned my lightest woe.

Oh ! if we e'er have loved, lady,
 We must forego it now ;
 Though sore the heart be moved, lady,
 When bound to break its vow.

I'll always think on thee,
 And thou sometimes—on whom, lady?
 And yet those thoughts must be
 Like flowers flung on the tomb, lady.
 Then think that I am blest, lady,
 Though aye for thee I sigh;
 In peace and beauty rest, lady,
 Nor mourn and mourn as I.

From one we love to part, lady,
 Is harder than to die;
 I see it by thy heart, lady,
 I feel it by thine eye.
 Thy lightest look can tell
 Thy heaviest thought to me, lady;
 Oh! I have loved thee well,
 But well seems ill with thee, lady;
 Though sore the heart be moved, lady,
 When bound to break its vow—
 Yet if we ever loved, lady,
 We must forego it now.—

LUCIFER. Come, I must separate you two:
 Such wretchedness will never do.
 The little cloud of grief which just appears,
 If left to spread, will drown us all in tears.

EMMA. Oblige us, pray, then, with a song.

CHARLES. I am sure he has a singing face.

WILL. At church I heard him loud and long.

LUCIFER. Pardon—but you are doubly wrong.

HELEN. Obey, I beg. Here—give him place.

LUCIFER. I have not sung for ages, mind;

So you must take me as you find.

This is a song supposed of one—

A fallen spirit—name unknown—

Fettered upon his fiery throne—

Calling on his once angel-love,

Who still remaineth true above.

Thou hast more music in thy voice
 Than to the spheres is given,
 And more temptations on thy lips
 Than lost the angels Heaven.
 Thou hast more brightness in thine eyes
 Than all the stars which burn,
 More dazzling art thou than the throne
 We fallen dared to spurn.

Go search through Heaven—the sweetest smile
 That lightens there is thine ;
 And through hell's burning darkness breaks
 No frown so fell as mine.
 One smile—'twill light, one tear—'twill cool ;
 These will be more to me
 Than all the wealth of all the worlds,
 Or boundless power could be.

HELEN. Entreat him, pray, to sing again.
 LUCIFER. Any thing any one desires.
 FESTUS. Your loveliness hath but to deign
 To will, and he'll do all that will requires.

LUCIFER *sings*. Oh ! many a cloud
 Hath lift its wing,
 And many a leaf
 Hath clad the spring ;
 But there shall be thrice
 The leaf and cloud,
 And thrice shall the world
 Have worn her shroud,
 Ere there's any like thee,
 But where thou wilt be.

Oh ! many a storm
 Hath drenched the sun,
 And many a stream
 To sea hath run ;

But there shall be thrice
 The storm and stream,
 Ere there's any like thee,
 But in angel's dream ;
 Or in look, or in love,
 But in Heaven above.

LUCY. What is love? Oh! I wonder so :
 Do tell me—who pretends to know ?

FRANK. Ask not of me, love, what is love !

Ask what is good of God above—
 Ask of the great sun what is light—
 Ask what is darkness of the night—
 Ask sin of what may be forgiven—
 Ask what is happiness of Heaven—
 Ask what is folly of the crowd—
 Ask what is fashion of the shroud—
 Ask what is sweetness of thy kiss—
 Ask of thyself what beauty is ;
 And, if they each should answer, I !
 Let me, too, join them with a sigh.

Oh ! let me pray my life may prove,
 When thus, with thee, that I am love.

FESTUS. I cannot love as I have loved,
 And yet I know not why ;

It is the one great woe of life
 To feel all feeling die :

And one by one the heartstrings snap
 As age comes on so chill ;

And hope seems left that hope may cease,
 And all will soon be still.

And the strong passions, like to storms,
 Soon rage themselves to rest,

Or leave a desolated calm—

A worn and wasted breast ;

A heart that like the Geyser spring,

Amidst its bosomed snows,

May shrink, not rest—but with its blood
 Boils even in repose.
 And yet the things one might have loved
 Remain as they have been,—
 Truth ever lovely, and one heart
 Still sacred and serene ;
 But lower, less, and grosser things
 Eclipse the world-like mind,
 And leave their cold dark shadow where
 Most to the light inclined.
 And then it ends as it began,
 The orbit of our race,
 In pains and tears, and fears of life,
 And the new dwelling place.
 From life to death, from death to life,
 We hurry round to God,
 And leave behind us nothing but
 The path that we have trod.

HELEN. In vain I try to lure thy heart
 From grief to mirth ;
 It were as easy to ward off
 Night from the earth.

FESTUS. Fill ! I'll drink it till I die—
 Helen's lip and Helen's eye !
 An eye which outsparkles
 The beads of the wine,
 With a hue which outdarkles
 The deeps where they shine.
 Come ! with that lightly flushing brow,
 And darkly splendid eye,
 And white and wavy arms which now,
 Like snow-wreaths on the dark brown bough,
 So softly on me lie.
 Come ! let us love, while love we may,
 Ere youth's bright sands be run ;
 The hour is nigh when every soul
 Which 'scapeth evil's dread control,

Nor drains the furies' fiery bowl,
 Shall into Heaven for aye,
 And love its God alone.

HELEN. Now let me leave my throne; and if the hours
 Have measured every moment by a kiss,
 As I do think, since first ye gave these flowers,
 It was to teach us how to dial bliss.
 Farewell, dear crown, thy mistress will not wear,
 Save when she sitteth royally alone.
 Farewell, too, throne! not quickly wilt thou bear
 A happier form, if fairer than mine own.

WILL. The ladies leave us!

LUCIFER. Oh! by all means let them;
 But say, for Heaven itself, we'll not forget them;
 Say we will pledge them to the top of breath,
 As loud as thunder, and as deep as death.

FESTUS *apart*. Where is thy grave, my love?
 I want to weep.
 High as thou art this earth above
 My woe is deep;
 And my heart is cold as is thy grave,
 Where I can neither soothe nor save.
 Whate'er I say, or do, or see,
 I think and feel alone to thee.
 Oh! can it—can it be forgiven,
 That I forget thou art in Heaven?
 Thou wilt forgive me this, and more:
 Love spends his all, and still hath store.
 Thou wilt forgive, if beauty's wile
 Should win, perforce, one glance from me;
 When they whose art it is to smile
 Can never smile my heart from thee;
 And if with them I chance to be,
 And give mine ear up to their singing,
 It, wind-like, only wakes the sea,
 In all its mad monotony,
 Of memory forth thy music ringing.

Thou wilt forgive, if now and then
 I link with hands less loved than thine,
 Whose gold-like touch makes kings of men,
 But wakes no will in blood of mine ;
 And if with them I toss the wine,
 And set my soul in love's ripe riot,
 It echoes not—this desert shrine,
 Where still thy love from Heaven doth shine,
 Moon-like, across some ruin's quiet.
 Thou wilt forgive me, if my feet
 Should move to music with the fair ;
 When, at each turn, I burn to meet
 Thy stream-like step and æry air ;
 And if before some beauty there,
 Mine eye may forge one glance of gladness,
 It is but the ripple of despair
 That shews the bed is all but bare,
 And nought scarce left but stony sadness.
 Thou wilt forgive, if e'er my heart
 Err from the orbit of its love ;
 When even the bliss-bright stars will start
 Earthwards, some lower sphere to prove.
 And if these lips but rarely pine
 In the pale abstinence of sorrow,
 It is, that nightly I divine,
 As I this world-sick soul recline,
 I shall be with thee ere the morrow.
 Thou wilt forgive, if once with thee
 I limned the outline of a Heaven ;
 But go and tell our God, from me,
 He must forgive what He hath given ;
 And if we be by passion driven
 To love, and all its natural madness,
 Tell Him that man by love hath thriven,
 And that by love he shall be shriven ;
 For God is love where love is gladness.
 Thou wilt forgive, if clay-bound mind

Can scarce discover that thou art ;
 But wait ! I feel the outward wind
 Rush fresh into my fluttering heart.
 Perchance thy spirit stays in yon mild star
 In peace, and flame-like purity, and prayer ;
 And, oh ! when mine shall fly from earth afar,
 I will pray God that it may join thine there ;
 'Twere doubling Heaven, that Heaven with thee to share.
 And while thou ledest music and her lyre,
 Like a sunbeam holden by its golden hair,
 May I, too, mingling with the immortal choir,
 Love thee, and worship God ! what more may soul desire ?
 Enough for me ; but if there be
 More it shall be left for thee.

WALTER. If any thing I love in chief
 It is that flowery rich relief
 That wine doth chase on mortal metal
 Before good wine begins to settle ;
 But all seem smilingly, serenely dull,
 And melancholy as the moon at full.
 Quenched by their company they seem
 Like sparks of fire in clouds of steam.

CHARLES. They who mourn the lack of wit
 Shew, at least, no more of it.

FESTUS. I cannot bear to be alone,
 I hate to mix with men ;
 To me there's torture in the tone
 Which bids me talk again.
 Like silly nestlings, warned in vain,
 My heart's young joys have flown ;
 While singing to them, even then,
 They left me one by one.
 I envy every soul that dies
 Out of this world of care ;
 I envy e'en the lifeless skies,
 That they enshrine thee there ;
 And would I were the bright blue air

Which doth insphere thine eyes,
 That thou mightst meet me everywhere,
 And feel these faithful sighs.
 E'en as the bubble that is mixed
 Of air and wine right red,
 So my heart's love is shared betwixt
 The living and the dead.
 If on her breast I lay my head,
 My heart on thine is fixed :—
 Wilt thou I loose, as I have said,
 Or keep the soul thou seekst ?
 From me thou canst not pass away
 While I have soul or sight ;—
 I see thee on my waking way,
 And in my dreams thee bright ;
 I see thee in the dead of night,
 And the full life of day ;
 I know thee by a sudden light ;
 It is thy soul, I say.
 If yonder stars be filled with forms
 Of breathing clay like ours,
 Perchance the space that spreads between
 Is for a spirit's powers ;
 And loving as we two have loved
 In spirit and in heart,
 Whether to space or star removed,
 God will not bid us part.

FRANK. As to this seat—its late and fair possessor
 Should, ere she went, have chosen her successor.

FESTUS. In right of her who sat thereon
 I think I might demand the throne ;
 I rather choose to let it be.

ALL. George shall be King of the company !

GEORGE. My loving subjects ! I shall first promulge
 A few good rules by which to indulge ;
 They are good, according to my thinking,
 And shall be held the laws of drinking.

First—each man shall do what he chooses,
 Provided that he ne'er refuses,
 But shall be sworn, by stand and stopper,
 To drink as much as I think proper.

WILL. Stay!—all of you who think, with me,
 This law should pass,
 Will please to signify the same
 By emptying their glass.

WALTER. Filling again and emptying, and so on,
 At each law—*pari passu*, as we go on.

GEORGE. Secondly—no man shall be held as mellow
 Who can distinguish blue from yellow.

Thirdly—no man shall miss his turn nor toast,
 Nor yet give more than two at once, at most.

Fourthly—if one at table should fall under,
 There let him lie—so much extinguished thunder.

Fifthly—let all, in such case, who still stay,
 Like living lightnings, but the brighter play.

Sixthly, and last but one—mind this, there shan't
 Be aught said that is not irrelevant.

Seventhly—if any of these edicts should not
 Be kept, it shall be good to plead, I would not.

CHARLES. Oh, let the royal law
 Be writ in rosy wine!

And read and kept

At every feast

Where wit and mirth combine.

FESTUS. How sweetly shine the steadfast stars,
 Each eyeing, sister-like, the earth;
 And softly chiding scenes like this,
 Of senseless and profaning mirth.

LUCIFER. Thou art ever prating of the stars
 Like an old soldier of his scars;

Thou shouldst have been a starling, friend,
 And not an earthling: end!

FESTUS. And could I speak as many times
 Of each as there are stars in Heaven,

I could not utter half the thoughts—
 The sweet thoughts one to me hath given.
 The holy quiet of the skies
 May waken well the blush of shame,
 Whene'er we think that thither lies
 The Heaven we heed not—ought not name.
 Oh, Heaven! let down thy cloudy lids,
 And close thy thousand eyes ;
 For each, in burning glances, bids
 The wicked fool be wise.

LUCIFER. I can interpret well the stars.

CHARLES. Indeed! they need interpreters.

LUCIFER. Then thus, in their eternal tongue
 And musical thunders, all have sung
 To every ear which ear hath given,
 From birth to death, this note of Heaven :—
 Deathlings! on earth drink, laugh, and love ;
 Ye mayn't hereafter—under or above.
 Yes, this the tale they all have told,
 Since first they made old Chaos shrink—
 Since first they flocked creation's fold,
 And filled all air like flakes of gold
 Which drop yon royal drink :
 For as the moon doth madmen rule,
 It is, that near and few they are ;
 And so in Heaven each single star
 Doth sway some reasonable fool,
 Whether on earth or other sphere ;
 For what's above is what is here.
 Moons and madmen only change ;
 What can truth or stars derange ?

EDWARD. Brave stars, bright monitors of joy!
 Right well ye time your hours of warning ;
 For, sooth to say, the eve's employ
 Doth wax less lovely towards the morning.
 So push the goblet gaily round—
 Drink deep of its wealth—drink on!

Our earthly joy too soon doth cloy,
 Our life is all but gone ;
 And, not enjoy yon glorious cup,
 And all the sweets which lie,
 Like pearls, within its purple well—
 Who would not hate to die ?

WILL. And who, without the cheering glance
 Of woman's witching eye,
 Could stand against the storms of fate,
 Or cankering care defy ?
 It adds fresh brightness to the bowl ;
 Then why will men repine ?
 Content we'll live with Heaven's best gifts—
 With women, and with wine.

HARRY. Cups while they sparkle—
 Maids while they sigh ;
 Bright eyes will darkle—
 Lips grow dry.
 Cheek while the dew-drops
 Water its rose ;
 Life's fount hath few drops
 Dear as those.
 Arms while they tighten—
 Hearts as they heave ;
 Love cannot brighten
 Life's dark eve.

GEORGE. Oh! the wine is like life ;
 And the sparkles that play
 By the lips of the bowl
 Are the loves of the day.
 Then kiss the bright bubble
 That breaks in its rise ;
 Oh! love is a trouble
 As light when it dies.

FESTUS. Well might the thoughtful race of old
 With ivy twine the head
 Of him they hailed their god of wine,—

Thank God! the lie is dead;
 For ivy climbs the crumbling hall
 To decorate decay;
 And spreads its dark deceitful pall
 To hide what wastes away.
 And wine will circle round the brain
 As ivy o'er the brow,
 Till what could once see far as stars
 Is dark as Death's eye now.
 Then dash the cup down! 'tis not worth
 A soul's great sacrifice:
 The wine will sink into the earth,
 The soul, the soul—must rise.

CHARLES. A toast!

FREDERIC. Here's beauty's fairest flower—
 The maiden of our own birth-land!

HARRY. Pale face!—oh for one happy hour
 To hold my splendid Spaniard's hand!

FESTUS. Why differ on which is the fairest form,
 When all are the same the heart to warm?
 Although by different charms they strike,
 Their power is equal and alike.
 Ye bigots of beauty! behold I stand forth,
 And drink to the lovely all over the earth.
 Come, fill to the girl by the Tagus' waves!
 Wherever she lives there's a land of slaves.
 And here's to the Scot! with her deep blue eye,
 Like the far off lochs 'neath her hill-propt sky.
 To her of the green Isle! whose tyrants deform
 The land, where she beams like the bow in the storm.
 To the Norman! so noble, and stately and tall;
 Whose charms, ever changing, can please as they pall:
 Two bowls in a breath! here's to each and to all!
 Come, fill to the English! whose eloquent brow
 Says, pleasure is passing, but coming, and now;
 Oh! her eyes o'er the wine are like stars o'er the sea
 And her face is the face of all Heaven to me.

And here's to the Spaniard! that warm blooming maid,
 With her step superb, and her black locks' braid.
 To her of dear Paris! with soul-spending glance,
 Whose feet, as she's sleeping, look dreaming a dance.
 To the maiden whose lip like a rose-leaf is curled,
 And her eye like the star-flag above it unfurled!
 Here's to beauty, young beauty, all over the world!

WILL. Hurrah! a glorious toast;
 'Twould warm a ghost.

FESTUS. It moves not me. I cannot drink
 The toast I have given.
 There!—Earth may pledge it, and she will—
 Herself and her beauty to Heaven.
 Drink to the dead—youth's feelings vain;
 Drink to the heart—the battered wreck,
 Hurl'd from all passions' stormy main;
 Though aye the billows o'er it break,
 The ruin rots, nor rides again.

CHARLES. Friend of my heart! away with care,
 And sing, and dance, and laugh;
 To love, and to the favourite fair,
 The wine-cup ever quaff.
 Oh, drink to the lovely! whatever they are,
 Though fair as snow—as light;
 For whether or falling, or fixed the star,
 They both are heavenly bright.
 Out upon Care! he shall not stay
 Within a heart like thine;
 There's nought in Heaven or earth can weigh
 Down youth, and love, and wine.
 Then drink with the merry! though we must die,
 Like beauty's tear we'll fall;
 We have lived in the light of a loved one's eye,
 And to live, love, and die is all.

FESTUS. Vain is the world and all its boasts;
 How brief love's pleasure's date!
 We turn the bowl and all forget

The bias of our fate.

GEORGE. How goes the enemy?

LUCIFER.

What can he mean?

FESTUS. He asks the hour.

LUCIFER.

Aha! then I

Advise, if Time thy foe hath been,

Be quick! shake hands, man, with Eternity.

SCENE—*A Church-yard.*

FESTUS *and* LUCIFER *beside a Grave.*

FESTUS. Let years crowd on, and age bow down
My body to the earth which gave,
As yon grey, worn-out, crumbling stone
Dips o'er the grave!

What, though for me no music thrill,
Nor mirth delight, nor beauty move;
Though the heart stiffen and wax still,
And make no love;
Still, deep and bright, like river gold,
Imbedded here thy love shall lie—
Sun-grains, that with the sands are rolled,
Of memory.

Shall that soul never burst the tomb,
Draped in long robes of living light?
Or, worm-like, always eat the gloom
And dust of night?

LUCIFER. Oh! life in sporting on earth lies,
Till death share up the rich green sod;
But if the spirit lives or dies,
Why try ye God?
What, should it never smile nor sigh
From cheeks or lips but those beneath?
Doth love not weigh the world's vast lie?
Doth life not death?

FESTUS. I ask why man should suffer death?

LUCIFER. Answer—what right to life hath he?
 God gives and takes away your breath:
 What more have ye?
 Breath is your life, and life your soul;
 Ye have it warm from His kind hands:
 Then yield it back to the great Whole
 When He demands.

Why, deathling, wilt thou long for Heaven?
 Why seek a bright but blinding way?
 Go, thank thy God that he hath given
 Night upon day:
 Go, thank thy God that thou hast lived,
 And ask no more: 'tis all He gave:
 'Tis all there needs to be believed—
 God and the grave.

FESTUS. For Thee, God, will I save my heart;
 For Thee my nature's honour keep;
 Then, soul and body, all or part—
 Rest, wake, or sleep!

SCENE—*Space.*

FESTUS *and* LUCIFER.

FESTUS. Listen! I hear the harmonies of Heaven,
 From sphere to sphere and from the boundless round
 Re-echoing bliss to those serenest heights
 Where angels sit and strike their emulous harps,
 Wreathed round with flowers and diamonded with dew;
 Such dew as gemmed the everduring blooms
 Of Eden winterless, or as all night
 The tree of Life wept from its every leaf
 Unwithering. And now methinks I hear
 The music of the murmur of the stream
 Which through the Bridal City of the Lord

Floweth all life for ever; and the breath
 Through the star-shading branches of that Tree
 Transplanted now to Heaven, but once on earth,
 Whose fruit is for all Beings—breathed of God.
 Oh! breathe on me, inspiring spirit-breath!
 Oh! flow to me, ye heart-reviving waves;
 Freshen the faded soul that droops and dies.

LUCIFER. The universe is but the gate of Heaven.
 Lo! from this highest orb, the crown of space
 And footstool unto Heaven, we can look up
 And gain a glimpse of glory unconceived.

FESTUS. See how yon angels stretch their shining arms;
 Wave their star-haunting wings which gleam like glass,
 And locks that look like Morning's when she comes
 Triumphant in the East. Is this their joy
 O'er some world penitent?

LUCIFER. Lo! there it rides;
 Blest to discharge on Heaven's all peaceful shores
 Its long accumulated load of life,
 Its deathless freight,—pilgrims of time and space.
 Yon guilty orb of hesitating light
 Slow looming, there, on its dark path, goes up
 At the forewritten hour, as do all worlds
 To God, to judgment; and the earthquake groans
 Which rend its adamantine breast forebode
 Its agonizing doom.

FESTUS. And doth not Heaven
 Grieve with the lost as gladden with the saved?

LUCIFER. How may immortals mourn at the decree
 Of righteous wisdom, which alone to them
 Is bliss sufficient, being infinite?

FESTUS. If God hath made all He alone it is
 Who hath to answer for all.

LUCIFER. He hath made.
 To secondary nature it seems just
 That justice should be realised, and there
 Is one example extant in the skies.

FESTUS. But wherefore did it not repent in time?

LUCIFER. What unto us is time, stands before God
Eternity. Repentance is the grief
For and effectual abstinence from sin,
Which secondary natures without God
Cannot attain to.

FESTUS. Cloudy and clear by turns
Thy words as Heaven. I know not what to think
Nor how to act.

LUCIFER. It is natural ; and none
Can aim or hit but as appointed them.
There is but one great sinner, human nature,
Predict of every world and predicate :
The wicked one, the enemy of God,
To be destroyed in the eternal fire
Of His wrath, even thus in Deity—
In whom as they begin must all things end.
God loveth only His own spirit, so
All that is base shall perish. From the first
These things were fixed, and are and aye shall be
Consummating, and are revealed as writ
In words always fulfilled and burning truth
Under the buried basements of the skies ;
Which after overthrown shall reappear.
The unenlightened mind sees Deity
In all things, but the spiritual soul
All things in God. Now, ere we higher rise,
Look downwards from this coping of the world ;
And know that down to the profoundest depth
Of utter space, where not an atom mars
The void invisible, it were easier far
To cast a line and calculate its rate,
Or pierce all space, nor cross the path of light,
Than fathom man's dark heart, or sound his soul.

SCENE—*Heaven.*LUCIFER and FESTUS, *entering.*

THE ARCHANGELS. Infinite God! Thy will is done :
 The world's last sand is all but run :
 The night is feeding on the sun.

LUCIFER. All-being God! I come to Thee again,
 Nor come alone. Mortality is here.
 Thou bad'st me do my will, and I have dared
 To do it. I have brought him up to Heaven.

GOD.

Than canst not do what is not willed to be.
 Suns are made up of atoms, Heaven of souls ;
 And souls and suns are but the atoms of
 The body I, God, dwell in. What wilt thou
 With him who is here with thee ?

LUCIFER.

Shew him God.

GOD.

No being, upon part of whom the curse
 Of death rests—were it only on his shadow,
 Can look on God and live.

LUCIFER.

Look, Festus, look !

FESTUS. Eternal fountain of the Infinite,
 On whose life-tide the stars seem strown like bubbles,
 Forgive me that an atomie of Being
 Hath sought to see its Maker face to face.
 I have seen all Thy works and wonders, passed
 From star to star, from space to space, and feel
 That to see all which can be seen is nothing,
 And not to look on Thee the invisible.
 The spirits that I met all seemed to say,
 As on they sped upon their starward course,
 And slackened their lightning wings one moment o'er me,
 I could not look on God whate'er I was.
 And Thou didst give this spirit at my side

Power to make me more than them immortal.
 So when we had winged through Thy wide world of things,
 And seen stars made and saved, destroyed and judged,
 I said—and trembled lest Thou shouldst not hear me,
 And make Thyself right ready to forgive,
 I will see God, before I die, in Heaven.
 Forgive me, Lord!

GOD.

Rise, mortal! look on me.

FESTUS. Oh! I see nothing but like dazzling darkness.

LUCIFER. I knew how it would be. I am away.

FESTUS. I am thy creature, God! oh, slay me not,
 But let some angel take me, or I die.

GENIUS. Come hither, Festus.

FESTUS. Who art thou?

GENIUS. I am

One who hath aye been by thee from thy birth,
 Thy guardian angel, thy good genius.

FESTUS. I knew thee not till now.

GENIUS. I am never seen

In the earth's low thick light, but here in Heaven,

And in the air which God breathes I am clear.

I tell to God each night thy thoughts and deeds;

And watching o'er thee both on earth and here,

Pray unto Him for thee and intercede.

FESTUS. And this is Heaven. Lead on. Will God forgive
 That I did long to see him?

GENIUS. It is the strain

Of all high spirits towards Him. Thou couldst not

Even if thou wouldst, behold God; masked in dust,

Thine eye did light on darkness; but when dead,

And the dust shaken off the shining essence,

God shall glow through thee as through living glass,

And every thought and atom of thy being

Shall guest His glory, be overbright with God.

Hadst thou not been by faith immortalized

For the instant, then thine eye had been thy death.

Yet but the surface-shadow canst thou see.
 The substance is to be. Behold yon group
 Of spirits blest! In their divinest eyes
 The Spirit speaks, and shews that in their own
 All doubt and want hath ceased, as death hath ceased.
 Hither they come, rejoicing, marvelling.

FESTUS. How all with kindly wonder look on me!
 Mayhap I tell of earth to their pure sense.
 Some seem as if they knew me. I know none.
 But how claim kinship with the glorified
 Unless with them like-glorified! Yet, yes—
 It is—it must be;—that angelic spirit!—
 My heart outruns me—mother! see thy son.

ANGEL. Child, how art thou here?

FESTUS. God hath let me come.

ANGEL. Hast thou not come unbidden and unprepared?

FESTUS. Forgive me, if it be so. I am come.

And I have ever said there are two who will
 Forgive me aught I do—my God and thou!

ANGEL. I do.—may He!

FESTUS. Dear mother, thou art blessed;
 And I am blessed, too, in knowing thee.

ANGEL. Son of my hopes on earth and prayers in Heaven!
 The love of God! oh, it is infinite
 Even as our imperfection. Promise, child,
 That thou wilt love Him more and more for this,
 And for His boundless kindness thus towards me.
 Now, my son, hear me; for the hours of Heaven
 Are not as those of earth; and all is all
 But lost that is not given unto God.
 Oft have I seen with joy thy thoughts of Heaven,
 And holy hopes, which track the soul with light,
 Rise from dead doubts within thy troubled breast,
 As souls of drownéd bodies from the sea,
 Upwards to God, and marked them so received,
 That oh! my soul hath overflowed with rapture
 As now thine eye with tears. But O my son

Beloved! fear thou ever for thy soul;
 It yet hath to be saved. Nought perfect stands
 But that which is in Heaven. God is all-kind;
 And long time hath He made thee think of Him;
 Think on Him yet in time. Ere I left earth,
 With the last breath which air would spare for me,
 With the last look which light would bless me with,
 I prayed thou mightst be happy and be wise—
 And half the prayer I brought myself to God—
 And lo! thou art unhappy and unwise.

FESTUS. Blessed one! I rejoice that thou art clear,
 And all who have cared for me, of my misdeeds.
 Thy spirit was on those who nurtured me.
 All word and practice that could be of good,
 Was given me; so that my sin is splendid.
 Yes! if I have sinned, I have sinned sublimely;
 And I am glad I suffer for my faults.
 I would not if I might be bad and happy.

ANGEL. God laughs at ill by man made and allows it.
 The vaunt of mountainous evil and the power
 To challenge Heaven from a molehill, child!

FESTUS. God hath made but few better hearts than mine,
 However much it fail in the wise ways
 Of the world, as living in the dull dark streets
 Of forms and follies wherein men build themselves.

ANGEL. The goodness of the heart is shewn in deeds
 Of peacefulness and kindness. Hand and heart
 Are one thing with the good as thou shouldst be.
 The splendour of corruption hath no power
 Nor vital essence; and content in sin
 Shews apathy, not satisfied control.
 Do my words trouble thee? Then treasure them.
 Pain overgot gives peace as death does Heaven.
 All things that speak of Heaven speak of peace.
 Peace hath more might than war. High brows are calm.
 Great thoughts are still as stars; and truths, like suns,
 Stir not; though many systems tend round them.

Mind's step is still as Death's ; and all great things
 Which cannot be controlled, whose end is good.
 Behold yon throne ! there, Love, Faith, Hope are one !
 There judgment, righteousness, and mercy make
 One and the same thing. God's salvation is
 His vengeance, and his wrath glory, as on earth
 Destruction restoration to the pure.
 Humanity is perfected in Heaven.

FESTUS. I did not make myself, nor plan my soul.
 I am no angel nursed in the lap of light,
 Nor fed on milk immortal of the stars,
 Nor golden fruit grown in the summery suns.
 How am I answerable for my heart ?
 It is my master, and is free with me,
 As fixed with fate, even as a star which moves,
 Yet moveth only on a certain course
 In certain mode ;—its liberties are laws,
 Its laws tyrannic ; I cannot hinder it,
 It cannot hinder God. All that we do
 Or bear is settled from eternity ;
 Whereof is no beginning, midst, nor end.
 To act, is ours ; quite sure, whate'er we do,
 Whether it be for our own good or ill,
 Or others' ill or good, it is for God's
 Glory—the same and always : it is ordered.
 The soul is but an organ, and it hath
 No power of good and evil in itself,
 More than the eye hath power of light or dark.
 God fitted it for good ; and evil is
 Good in another way we are not skilled in.
 The good we do is of His own good will,—
 The ill, of His own letting. Doth not nature—
 All light in life, shine marsh-like too, in death ?
 Yea, wandering fires wait even on rottenness,
 Like a stray gleam of thought in an idiot's brain.
 And thus I look on souls that seems decaying
 In sin, and flying off by elements.

All may not live again ; but all which do
 Must change perpetually e'en in Heaven ;
 And not by death to death, but life to life.

ANGEL. No ! Step by step, and throne by throne, we rise
 Continually towards the Infinite,
 And ever nearer—never near—to God.

FESTUS. Yet merit or demerit none I see
 In nature, human or material,
 In passions or affections good or bad.
 We only know that God's best purposes
 Are oftenest brought about by dreadest sins.
 Is thunder evil or is dew divine ?
 Does virtue lie in sunshine, sin in storm ?
 Is not each natural, each needful, best ?
 How know we what is evil from what good ?
 Wrath and revenge God claimeth as His own.
 And yet men speculate on right and wrong
 As upon day and night, forgetting both
 Have but one cause, and that the same—God's will,
 Originally, ultimately, Him.

All right is right divine. A worm hath rights
 A king cannot despoil him of, nor sin ;
 Yet wrongs are things necessitate, like wants,
 And oft are well permitted to best ends.
 A double error sometimes sets us right.
 In man there is no rule of right and wrong
 Inherent as mere man. Why, conscience is
 The basest thing of all. Its life is passed
 In justifying and condemning sin ;
 Accomplice, traitor, judge, and headsman too.
 But conscience knows its business and performs.
 Nothing is lost in nature ; and no soul,
 Though buried in the centre of all sin,
 Is lost to God ; but there it works His will
 And burns conformably. The weakest things
 Are to be made the examples of His might ;
 The most defective, of His perfect grace,

Whene'er He thinketh well. Oh! everything
 To me seems good, and lovely, and immortal!
 The whole is beautiful; and I can see
 Nought wrong in man nor nature, nought not meant;
 As from His hands it comes who fashions all,
 All holy as His word. The world is but
 A revelation. He breathes Himself upon us
 Before our birth, as o'er the formless void
 He moved at first, and we are all inspired
 With His spirit. All things are God or of God.
 For the whole world is in the mind of God
 What a thought is in ours. Why boast we then
 Of aught? All that is good belongs to God;
 And good and God are all things or shall be.

ANGEL. There lacks in souls like thine unsaved, unraised,
 The light within—the light of perfectness—
 Such as there is in Heaven. The soul hath sunk
 And perished like a light-house in the sea;
 It is for God to raise it and rebuild.

GENIUS. And his, thy son's, He will raise. Since with me,
 I have shewn him infinite wonders: we have oped
 And scanned the golden scroll of Fate, wherein
 Are writ, in God's own hand, all things which happen.
 There we have seen the record of his being—
 His long temptation, sin, and suffering.

FESTUS. And hear it, O beloved and blessed one!
 Mine own salvation.

ANGEL. God is great in love;
 Infinite in His nature, power, and grace;
 Creating, and redeeming, and destroying—
 Infinite infinitely. But in love—
 Oh! it is the truth transcendent over all—
 When thus to one poor spirit He gives His hand,
 He seems to impart His own unboundedness
 Of bliss. We seem to be hardly worth destroying,
 And much less saving; yet He loveth each
 As though all were His equal.

FESTUS. I know all
 I have to go through henceforth,—all the doubts,
 Passions of life, and woes ; but knowing them
 Hinders them not ; I bear obeyingly ;
 And pine no more, as once when I looked back
 And saw how life had balked, and foiled, and fooled me.
 Fresh as a spouting spring upon the hills
 My heart leapt out to life ; it little thought
 Of all the vile cares that would rill into it,
 And the low places it would have to go through,—
 The drains, the crossings, and the mill-work after.
 God hath endowed me with a soul that scorns life—
 An element over and above the world's :
 But the price one pays for pride is mountain-high.
 There is a curse beyond the rack of death—
 A woe, wherein God hath put out his strength—
 A pain past all the mad wretchedness we feel,
 When the sacred secret hath flown out of us,
 And the heart broken open by deep care,—
 The curse of a high spirit famishing,
 Because all earth but sickens it.

ANGEL. Go, child !
 Fulfil thy fate ! Be—do—bear—and thank God !
 To me it seems as I had lived all ages
 Since I left earth ; and thou art yet scarce man.

FESTUS. It was not, mother, that I knew thy face ;
 The luminous eclipse that is on it now,
 Though it was fair on earth, would have made it strange
 Even to one who knew as well as he loved thee ;
 And if these time-tired eyes ever imaged thine,
 It was but for a moment, and the sight
 Passed ; and my life was broken like a line
 At the first word—but my heart cried out in me.

ANGEL. I knew thee well. And now to earth again !
 Go, son ! and say to all who once were mine—
 I love them, and expect them.

FESTUS. Blessed one !

I will.

ANGEL. I charge thee, Genius, bear him safely.

GENIUS. Through light, and night, and all the powers
of air,

I have a passport.

ANGEL. God be with thee, child !

FESTUS. Where is the Spirit which induced me here ?

GENIUS. That Spirit is no more here ; not for long

Can he the light sustain which is in Heaven,

Permitted thee as foretaste to abide.

He by fulfilling all desires of life,

And instigating all the soul's vain aims,

Misdeems to cause thee lose God, and thyself

Forfeit to him ; but God contrariwise

Will overrule all to His own great ends,

In manner none forecasts. Nay, thine own sphere

The firstfruits of the great Destruction, earth,

Born of the mother night of ages once

Into a sad and struggling life, at last,

Shall be most blessed hailed among the worlds.

Come !

FESTUS. I feel happier, better, nobler now.

See where she sits and smiles, and points me out

To those who sit along with her. Who are

The two ?

GENIUS. One is the mother of mankind,

And one the mother of the Man who saved

Mankind ; and she, thine own, the mother of

The last man of mankind—for thou art he.

FESTUS. Am I ? It is enough : I have seen God.

GENIUS. God and His great idea, the universe,

Are over and above us. Be the one

Worshipped, the other reverently proved.

Wilt sojourn for a time among the worlds,

And test their natures ?

FESTUS.

Gladly.

GENIUS.

Seek we, then,

All rareness and variety these worlds

Can offer, ere we reach thine orb. Descend !
Now is the age of the worlds. Another comes.

ARCHANGELS. All are but particles of One Divine,
And never can in truthful gladness shine,
Till builded all into one common shrine,
Which God shall make His temple. As the woe
Each human heart on earth doth undergo,
Shall be the calm immeasurable flow
Of joy, united man in Heaven shall know.

SCENE—*A Garden and Pleasure House.*

MARIAN, HELEN, EDWARD, CHARLES, SOPHIA, *and* OTHERS

EDWARD. Again we meet in this fair scene ;
Ah ! might we be but ever young !

HARRY. Helen ! We pray thee be again our queen.

HELEN. I prithee hold thy tongue :
A royal revolution 'twere indeed
That I should twice reign, and myself succeed.

CHARLES. No nay, no nay ! it must be so :
Permit me.

HELEN. Well, there needs no shew
Of more reluctance than I feel ;
Both kings and queens must court the commonweal.

HARRY. A bumper at meeting, a bumper at parting !
As many you like be between ;
But we will have a right ruddy brimmer at starting—
A health to our beautiful Queen !

Long, long may she reign in our hearts and right arms,
And her all but omnipotence last !
She shall fear nothing rougher than love's light alarms—
There is nought in the coming can darken her charms—
There is nought can eclipse in the past.

A brimmer at sitting, a brimmer at starting,
As many you like be between ;

But we will have a right ruddy bumper at parting—
 A health to our beautiful Queen !
 Oh! while beauty shall live in the form of the fair,
 And love in the heart of the brave,
 The Queen of our souls, she shall never despair,
 For our hearts we would drain, and our deaths we would dare,
 To avenge whom we love, or to save.

HELEN. Born to exert the powers of my state,
 Charles, I have named thee poet-laureate.

HARRY. Kiss hands upon appointment.

CHARLES. Sovereign fair!

Behold thy grateful servant.

HELEN. Sit thou there,

In all but full equality with me ;
 Love rules the heart and the mind poesie ;
 In youth at least, and when in hours like this
 The rule is pleasure, the exception bliss.

LAURENCE. But where is Festus ?

HELEN. 'Tis to him we owe

The repetition of this scene of joy.
 He bids me say he loves ye all ye know,
 But deems his presence less attraction than annoy.
 Whatever ye can name, and I command,
 Is by his bidding welcome thus to all ;
 But pardon craves ; high quests he hath in hand
 Which wait not on his own nor pleasure's call.
 And though to me his presence be a power,
 His every word with love's bright magic rife,
 Yet he—nor him from that height would I lower—
 Lives in the upper hemisphere of life,
 Where angel thoughts and spiritual orbs
 Roll in the majesty of mind profound ;
 Where Truth's bright disk, all doubt-spots dark absorbs,
 And inspiration's lightning beams abound.
 Whether he e'er return to scenes like this
 I know not—much I question—but can trace
 The tone, methinks, of that sad soul of his

Roll ever-deepening down an endless bass,
 Like an abyss of thunder. But, away!
 These tears mine eyes have haunted all the day;
 Now they are vanished. Let us change, I pray,
 The matter of our converse.

SOPHIA. Aye, be gay!

HELEN. Come, we will consecrate the passing hour,
 With songs of love and lays of beauty's power;—
 For when the tale of Time hath told
 A thousand thousand years,
 His purple pinions starred with gold—
 Wherewith he doth the world enfold—
 Will still be stained with dust, and tears;
 And still life's sole brief Paradise, in sooth,
 Be love and beauty in the hour of youth.
 A song, a dance, one cup to beauty's name,
 Music, a jest, or pleasant tale in rhyme,
 Sufficient these, with mirth and gentle game
 Alternate with repose to fill our time.
 And first, a dance! for earth and Heaven
 Are both to choral influence given.
 All things their nature that fulfil,
 In harmlessness and joy, His will
 Worship and do; though dumb and still:—
 For noteless, countless are the ways
 Of nature practising His praise;
 And dancing hath a sacred birth
 Like all the happiest customs of the earth.

CHARLES. The sun in the centre turns solemnly round,
 And the pale god of shades, the conductor of souls,
 Seems to warm as he circles the glory profound,
 Where the goddess of beauty all beamingly rolls;
 While earth and her sister float brilliantly by,
 Her heart towards the sun and her love in her eye.
 Then Mars like a warrior gloomy and red
 Impetuous wheels, ever glancing at one;
 While six sister goddesses mazily tread

The bright fields of air which encircle the sun ;
 And Jove the majestic, serene in his might,
 Sweeps cloudy and thunderous aye to the light.
 Then Saturn, old grey bearded emblem of time,
 Comes slowly and chilly to join with the rest,
 And Ouranus next with young Eros sublime,
 Move slowly as though they partook with the blest ;
 And each, his bright bevy of servitors round,
 Complete the vast figure with harmony crowned.

HELEN. This then is your inaugural ode.

CHARLES. If you fair lady think it so.
 Your word imposes the sole code
 Of law, or justice, we may know.

HELEN. Then my authority is absolute.

EDWARD. As truth's my liege.

HELEN. We'll see then if it suit.
 So like the stars which circle through the skies,
 As Charles hath sung,
 Let us too dance with choral harmonies
 Ourselves among.

MARIAN, *apart*. Again that name hath knelled upon
 mine ear,
 Though I have never voiced it. 'Tis to me
 Too deeply, yea unutterably dear.
 How warmly too she loves him ! Let it be.
 Who most enjoy the light may best endure,
 When come, the darkness as it now is here.
 Whatever his, may my troth plight keep sure !
 I have turned to thee, moon, from the glance
 That in triumphing coldness was given ;
 And rejoiced, as I viewed thee all lonely advance,
 There was something was lonely in heaven.
 I have turned to thee, moon, as I lay
 In thy silent and saddening brightness ;
 And rejoiced, as high heaven went shining away,
 That the heart had its desolate lightness.
 I have turned to thee, moon, from my love,

And from all that once blessed me in sadness ;
 And can marvel no more that, abandoned above,
 Thou shouldst lend thy bright face to make madness.
 I have turned to thee, moon, from my heart,
 That in love hath long laboured and sorrowed ;
 And have hoped it might mix, as I watched thee depart,
 Like thyself, with the morn which had morrowed.

LAURENCE. Can I behold the lady of my love
 Mourning alone, from pleasure all apart ?
 Again I seek thee, though it be to hear
 The sentence of destruction to my heart.
 Yet if it be so, still one moment stay ;
 For it so haps whene'er I think of thee,
 So blent is thought with love's anxiety,
 My spirit doth invariably pray.
 Any blessing God can give
 Never be withheld from thee ;
 Nor will I desire to live
 If that prayer be lost to me ;
 Else I were unworthy thee.
 Read these eyes, love, and believe
 Ever I am only thine ;
 End of all my hopes, receive,
 Dearest, heart and all that's mine !

MARIAN. I thank thee, Laurence, and believe,
 But this is all I can for thee,
 Save grieve that thou should'st vainly grieve
 I to another am as thou to me,
 In this strange passion which pain sanctifies ;
 This folly sorrow makes sublime and wise.

LAURENCE. Oh ! there is nothing, in this world of ours
 So sad to see,
 As the dark worm which dwells wherever flowers
 Our destiny ;
 Eating the heart out of youth's budding hours
 Of glee.
 Not oft in sunny beds, nor sheltered bowers,

Life's lot is cast,
 But chiefly lost in shade, and chilled by showers,
 Or the rude blast;
 Till all its delicate and wholesome powers
 Are past.

And this then is the end of all the bliss
 Which love and beauty offered, and my soul
 Made certain of in natural triumph; this
 The heritage of life and this love's goal.

MARIAN. Peace! there is one I name not, came not here
 Partly because of me. But think'st thou I
 Came to indulge a wretched vanity
 With thee, or pry into another's sphere?
 With whom I grieve too; which is more unblest
 Whose love is shunned or sought let time attest!

HELEN. And now, for pastime, some one tell a tale;
 Come, an adventure, Charles.

CHARLES. Oh, pray dispense
 With my devoirs this time. I fain would try,
 If any wit be in the company;
 By observation, not experience,
 Of course I judge: for of my own
 The world and I are cognizant alone.

EMMA. Fatigued no doubt with over admiration
 Of your sweet self.

HELEN. Well, each one in rotation.

WALTER. Now I know a delicious tale
 Will suit you, Carrie, to a T.

CAROLINE. Do tell me then, and I'll believe
 It more than truth, if need should be.

WALTER. Well; Love is the child of bliss and woe;
 So, from his parents dear
 One eye is blinded with a smile,
 One drownéd in a tear.
 And on one lip there drops a kiss,
 Like honey from the wild woodbine;
 And that's the lip he had from bliss—

And that's the lip I will have mine :
 But on the other hangs a lie,
 And that—but that's 'tween you and I.

CAROLINE. How very odd!

WALTER. Why it's a fact,
 And therefore needs no illustration ;
 But if you think its principle abstract
 It is easily shown in operation.

CAROLINE. Oh dear! no, no! I'll vow it's true,
 Rather than have it proved by you.

GEORGE. Well, then, hear me. Now this is true,
 Although of love and the lyre too ;
 And, as it happened all to me,
 I say but what I could but see.
 I was with the maid I love,
 We were happy and alone ;
 Eve's star just lit the grove,
 And the day had been our own ;
 And my lyre lay by my side,
 But no music from it came ;
 For as sure as e'er I tried
 It was harsh or it was tame ;
 So I flung it to my feet,
 And I feigned the while I said
 Thy love I cannot meet ;
 Thou must not love me, maid.
 And more I might have feigned,
 When there came a little boy,
 And his step fell as light
 As a laugh of joy ;
 And he laughed, and said, I'm Love !
 Shall I teach you how to play ?
 And I said, my pretty boy,
 Teach away! teach away !
 So he lifted up the lyre,
 And he fingered its strings,
 Till I thought they did become

Like spiritual things ;
 And the gold chords shone,
 From the music he clouded,
 Like the links of the lightning,
 When tempests come crowded ;
 And the strain rose and fell,
 'Neath his pink little fingers,
 Like a soul due to earth,
 That in Heaven still lingers.
 He ceased ; and all over
 He smiled like the strain
 Of the music he made me,
 Nor made me in vain ;
 For I snatched at the lyre,
 While yet it was ringing,
 And I sang, it is love
 Gives the poet his singing.
 Then I turned to my beauty,
 Who kissed her young bard,
 As she said, love and song
 Shall have thus their reward.
 He laughed till he cried ;
 I pretended to frown ;
 So my love made him hide
 In her bosom of down ;
 Where at last he gasped out,
 Oh, forgive me, I pray !
 But I couldn't help laughing—
 Boy, I said, get away !
 Let none, then, who love not
 Ever offer to sing ;
 Let none who say false
 Ever strike the gold string—
 He said ; and I saw but the
 Wave of his wing.



LUCY. These stories are delightful ; I declare
 I never dreamed that Love was to be seen

More than a ghost in these enlightened days.

LAURENCE. Thrice wretched he to whom he comes, I ween.

CHARLES. I had a strange visit once from Love ;
But when, indeed I dread to date it.
It is so long since I half forget,
But if it please you I'll narrate it.

LAURA. Oh do ! a poet surely will have something
Pretty to say about the poor dear dumb thing.

HARRY. Dumb ! then you know but little of the tyrant,
He'd bellow down a fifth rate actor by rant.

CHARLES. It is true I have met him once or twice
Since the event of which I tell ;
He called I find the other day,
And left his card ; but T. T. L.
So if we meet again, the little god
Will get the cut celestial, or a nod
At best. But as I fear I am wasting time,
For shortness sake I'll tell my tale in rhyme.
I nursed with care a favourite fire
In secret and alone ;
And oft I blew it with my breath,
And oft 'twas all but gone.
And not a soul beside myself
Cared for my flame or me ;
It made me sad, it made me glad,
The very secrecy.
At length my absence made me missed ;
They sought me far and near,
With muttered scorn, with smile, with sigh,
With silence, and a tear ;
And one said, let the boy alone,
His flame will soon expire ;
And others said, 'tis nought to us ;
And still I fed my fire.
And friends and kindred all condemned,
With stern and fixed eye,

The love of folly which, they said,
 Possessed me ;—spake not I.
 So one by one they went away,
 'Twere useless to remain ;
 Their presence or their absence nought—
 I fanned my fire again.

And Beauty came, but blamed me not ;
 So sweetly did she ask,
 Of life and peace, I half forgot
 To tend my wayward task ;

Till, while her eyes were lift above,
 I spied it as I turned ;
 Sprang like a bowstring to the bow,
 And stirred it till it burned.

And Pride and World-Ambition came,
 And tried to tread it out ;

But every ember found its nerve,
 And each with pain did shout ;

And Love came, not as he was wont,
 With kiss and merry brow,

And eyes like two forget-me-nots,
 Dipped in the stream below :—

But up he came with torrent tears,
 And pale and reckless look,

And eye as cold as any stone,
 In petrifying brook ;

He broke his bow ; his shafts he snapped,
 And swore he would expire ;—

I took his bow and arrows both,
 And burned them in my fire.

And all that all or aught could do
 Was useless to its end ;

The flame, though fitful, flourished still,
 In spite of foe or friend.

It warms me now ; I feel it must
 Respond to my desire ;

For I have heaped both heart and soul

Upon that deathless fire.

LUCY. Poor thing! I think you served him very ill;
But it accounts for our distressed condition;
For without arms nor wound can he nor kill:
I'm half afraid he'll die of inanition.

WILL. With poets every thing must deathless be;
Now it's the passingness of things that gives
Their most exciting charm to me;
Life hath less beauty if it ever lives.
All loveliest things pass soonest; clouds and flowers,
Rainbows, heart-kindling glances, the sweet smile;
Because brief, we admire, or make them ours;
But we should slight them lived they longer while.

CHARLES. It is sweet to be awakened by a kiss,
When dreaming of the very lips which waken;—
Ah! never be that visionary bliss,
But for the bright reality forsaken.
It is sweet to dream we are blest at last with her
Who first made pleasure in our nature stir:
Though fairer, kinder, since we may have known,
That first voluptuous vision sits her throne;
Still, in our sleep, plays o'er young passion's part,
As pleasure's ghost still haunts the ruined heart
Where lie the buried loves of younger years,
Whose rites and requiems are sighs and tears.
Sleep on, ye living dead, in day! nor rise,
But in night's shadowy shapes and dreamy eyes;
Then let me graft me in your breasts again,
And stanch my bosom of its tearing pain.
Oh! fade not—stir not—hold me till I die,
In the desire of what I most possess;
For I would die, as I have lived, in love;
To dream of happiness is happiness:
And be it but a dream; these very dreams
Are elements of immortality;
As mind on earth almightily beseems,
And body but an impotent reality.

But dearer than the kiss, and than the dream ;
 Than busy bliss, or than remembered love,
 It is to feel we shall be deathless here,—
 That earth will speak of us when gone above.

GEORGE. It is sweet to taste the clear close kiss of
 meeting,
 And sweet to lengthen still the long embrace ;
 It is sweet to see the man we back is beating—
 Sweet to be startled by a pretty face.
 It is sweet to hear if fat that we grow thinner ;
 Sweet the first drop of claret after dinner ;
 But sweeter still than all that's sweet before
 Is to hear some say I will say no more ;
 A blessing I can scarce expect to be
 From those who are more near than dear to me ;
 You, Charles, for instance.

CHARLES. Why, you greedy elf,
 Would you have all the nonsense to yourself ?

HELEN. Now let us have no argument I pray.

FRANK. Suppose we have a pretty lively song.

EMMA. Suppose you sing it then.

FRANK. Well, never say
 I dont intend to help you, right or wrong.
 Will no one else ? Then I'll essay
 A song I learned but yesterday.

Oh ! gaze on her beautiful soft rolling eye,
 And revel with bliss in its languishing love ;
 Oh ! look on its brightness and darkness, and sigh
 That truth from that Heaven should ever remove.
 Oh ! gaze on her ringlets of raven-black hair,
 And her delicate eyebrow's soft pencilly line ;
 Oh ! wish that her bosom were pure as it's fair,
 That the saint were as worthy of love as the shrine.

I have gazed—I have loved—I have worshipped ; and fain
 I now would declare it—my madness is past ;

But pleasure no more in my heart will remain
 Than the sparkle of spray on the sand beach cast.
 I loathe her, and love her—I never can rail—
 It is past, and I reckon not—my fortune I dare ;
 Henceforward the shroud of my hopes is my sail,
 And the peace which I sought I have found in despair.

CAROLINE. If that's called lively, or in part or wholly,
 The gods preserve me from your melancholy.

HARRY. 'Tis no use saying that I love you, Sophy,
 For if I do you only cry out, oh fy !
 Nathless as some one else must sing,
 Wait only till I screw this string.

I love not horse,
 I love not wine ;
 Nor song nor dance
 Be joys of mine.
 And dull to me
 Are the skies above ;
 I love not lore,
 I love not love.
 But thee I now
 Love, and e'er will ;
 For love's the best
 Point in me still.
 And since my heart
 Owns nought above thee,
 It must be Phil-
 Osophy to love thee.

LAURA. Hast thou got anything there for me ?
 For surely thou never shouldst bring me near thee
 Unless thou hast some gift with thee,
 To bribe me to hear thee.

EDWARD. I bring thee neither bribe nor boon,
 I offer only flowers,
 Which, gathered thus, devise the hope
 Each other's hearts are ours.

But mind I see one poison bloom
 Thrust like a motto from the tomb,
 Amid some merry song ;
 As every being hath its bane,
 As the brightest clouds are thick with rain,
 And the day hath night-shade long ;
 But if one gem of joy there be,
 Too many for the day's bright wreath,
 Then may the night-shade give it thee,
 Though it be joy to death ;
 For I would neither love nor die
 Beneath a broad and laughing sky :
 No ; heart and spirit, take your flight,
 Aye in the still and starry night ;
 Receive them, lady, in that breast,
 With peace and purity to rest ;
 And oh ! if not too much for prayer,
 My life, my love, my all be there.
 Ah, happy flowerets ! if the while
 Ye ope beneath her summer smile ;
 But to pluck the poison from the rest,
 Beauty of night, come deck my breast.
 Beauty of night, thou art blithe and bright,
 While all thy sister blooms are sleeping ;
 And though thou canst but bloom to blight,
 Wilt wake and laugh in dewy light,
 While they are dreaming, they are weeping.
 Beauty of night, I will, will win thee ;
 Flower of life, my life is in thee.
 Beauty of night, I knew that light
 Had shade, and knew that night had deeper ;
 But they but bring to weary wight
 The sleep which love alone will slight,
 And thou who wringest life from the sleeper.
 Beauty of night, I have, have won thee ;
 Flower of death, my death be on me.

LAURA. Thou may'st be happy if thou wilt,

Nor envy these poor flowers their spot ;
 For close as in a clenched hand
 Thy love within my heart hath lot.

FANNY. Who mentioned ghosts ? In nothing I so glory
 As a true thrilling, chilling, good ghost story.

EDWARD. But on a soft and fragrant summer eve,
 With glistening flowers and flashing waters by,
 One lacks the proper impulse to believe :—
 But then I don't believe them.

WILL. Oh ! nor I.

LUCY. They want a fireside and a howling storm ;
 Summer time seems too sensual and warm.

FREDERIC. Oh ! you are a parlous little infidel,
 Or I could tell a tale ; but I'm not well.
 My head seems wrong, and somehow altogether
 Feels like a bullet on a peacock's feather.

WALTER. Do you believe that spirits interfere
 With men, events, or actions anywhere ?

CHARLES. Let gold bagged priests from Ganges to
 Bermudas

The gospel preach, according to St. Judas ;—
 It's my opinion, if the truth were known,
 That earth pertains to man and beast alone ;
 And neither saint, nor fiend, nor bright nor dark angel,
 Between the south Pole and the port of Archangel,
 Have any call, or leave, or will, or power
 To meddle with a mortal for an hour.

FANNY. Oh ! you're an unbeliever.

CHARLES. That is true,
 So far as this—I don't believe in you.

HELEN. Sir, you are rude. But since my faith's attacked,
 What of immortals ? Is it not a fact
 That saints and demons oft-times interact ?
 Such the belief at least in times of yore,
 Which, if we share not, our disgrace is more.
 Things sacred and supernal did we mind
 More, and omit the meaner cares of life,

Our souls would grow like holy, like refined,
 With loftier thoughts and nobler actions rife.
 There is an ancient legend I have heard
 About a saint, a demon, and a stone,
 Which bears upon this matter word for word ;
 A marvel I myself have seen and known.

HARRY. Enchant us, pray, still further. We will be
 Moveless and mute to meet your wishes ;
 Your's the sole speech, your awful audience we,
 Between us, Saint Antonio, and the fishes.

HELEN. A stone stands in a rustic town,
 Which once the neighbouring hill did crown ;
 Nigh to the house of God it lay
 Before 'twas set where now it stands,
 And how and why there graybeards say
 Was ne'er the work of mortal hands ;
 But list, and ye eftsoons shall know,
 From runes translated into rhyme,
 How saint and fiend would have it so
 Far back within the olden time.
 That village church stands fair and free,
 Those village bells peal merrily,
 As well they might and still they may
 On many a bright autumnal day,
 When both in hostel, cot, and hall,
 They hold the village festival.
 The godly rustics on that day
 At church had met to praise and pray,
 And thank the Giver of all good,
 By Him that died upon the rood,
 For harvests stored and daily food ;
 And as saint Wilfrid's care they claimed
 Oft in their prayers his name was named.
 At morn, at noon, at eventide,
 Their task the merry ringers plied,
 Peeling each time with joy increased
 A welcome to the rustic feast.

But it roused the wrath of the fell fiend,
 As high o'er minster fane he leaned,
 In the dim glooming of the day,
 Blent with the moonlight's silvery gray.
 Quoth he, "I hate that holy peal,
 Yon village church my wrath shall feel,"
 He said; and from the stately lands,
 Whereon the high cathedral stands,
 He heaved a huge gray granite stone
 Erst as a Druid altar known;
 And lifting it between his teeth,
 And three times scanty drawing breath,
 Wide on the air his arms he spread,
 And dropped it on the minster's head;
 E'en as an eagle drops a hare
 Brought for her callow younglets' fare.
 Upon the main tower straight he stands,
 And as he glanced o'er field and fell
 He weighed the weapon in his hands,
 And took his aim and distance well;
 And when the moon's last glimmering ray
 Died on the tall church spire away,
 Three hours he gazed it through the dark,
 Nor winked his eye once on the mark.
 As midnight tolled—for mightiest then
 Is all demoniac power o'er men—
 The rock he raised—Foul fiend forbear!
 And hurled it, hurtling, through the air.
 Saint Wilfrid, from his seat above,
 Where with the blest, whose deathless days
 Are passed 'tween deeds of sacred love
 And their adored Redeemer's praise,
 Cast on the house of praise and prayer,
 The object of his hallowed care,
 One glance, and marked the missile fly
 Midway betwixt the earth and sky.
 A momentary prayer he made;

And there the mighty mass was stayed ;
 Aloft in air the altar hung,
 As moveless as before 'twas flung.
 Then spake saint Wilfrid : " Baffled fiend,
 What evil can from Heaven be screened ?
 Though in the depth of midnight thou
 Didst ween to crush yon pile below,
 Yet know that to celestial eyes
 Divinest daylight never dies,
 And saints defend the things they love
 As God protects the saints above.
 While men invoke their holy names,
 And on their prayers for succour call,
 So long shall saints fulfil their claims,
 So long their shrines shall never fall.
 He ceased ; the air-arrested rock
 Fell earthwards with a harmless shock,
 A long half mile beyond the bound
 Of the good church's hallowed ground.
 The Demon baulked made off in rage,
 And the stone slept for many an age.
 And still, a startling sight I ween,
 The foul fiend's teeth-dints may be seen ;
 And still, though gray and wondrous old,
 The stone itself is never cold,
 But keeps within its fated form
 A gust of the fiend's firebreath warm.

CHARLES. Well, may we speak ?

HELEN. Oh, certainly. Give tongue.

CHARLES. I know not what is false if that be true,
 Nor need we care or reckon what is wrong.

HELEN. You are content to take the shallowest view.

Apollo laid his lyre upon a stone ;
 The stone was seized with music ; and the touch
 Of mortal could awake the god's own tone
 For ever after. Marvel ye not much.
 Wherever God may choose or man may dwell

This is an ever acting miracle.
 When once the gift of godlike poesy
 Hath touched the heart, it answers everything
 In its own tongue, but with a harmony
 Instinct of Heaven. Let the world then fling
 Its arms of honour round the Poet's breast,
 And Heaven may hear earth's music and have rest.
 Now true it is the great earth knoweth not
 That it is part of Heaven and God's own lot;
 But some there are who know it. So there be
 Bards who affect much infidelity;
 Although they never can abandon quite
 Their loyal love to the pure Infinite.

CHARLES. True, my liege.

HELEN. Hush! now Frederic we wait.
 The story that you spoke of. Tell it straight.

FREDERIC. Please you my liege, I'll try then and re-
 member;
 And for the rest—why, fancy it's December.
 'Twas midnight, and a noble sat in his ancestral hall,
 Where many a stern old portrait gloomed along the gilded
 wall;
 And ivory, marble, ebony, and tapestries adorned
 The seats he used, the floors he trode; for meaner things he
 scorned.
 And youth, and fame, and might were his—the splendid
 might of mind;
 His spirit swept and bowed all hearts as bending forests wind;
 Yet youth and genius oft, too oft, in worship bow the knee
 At pleasure's shrine, in folly's fane; more madly none than he.
 He sat, but not in solitude: a damsel by his side,
 Of beauty bright and gay of heart, him with the wine cup
 plied,
 Gazing on him with eye as though to him her soul were due:
 Oh, nought 'neath Heaven itself might match that eye's
 dark sunny blue!
 From which, too, ever and anon smiles o'er her face would fly,

Like the electric flames which flit o'er summer's evening sky;
 And pearls were beaded o'er her brow, and gems lit up her
 breast,

Like dew drops on the morning rose when wakening from rest.
 "One parting goblet," cried the youth, "ere I away to night:
 Bring me the old monk's skull-cup, girl; peace to his jovial
 sprite!"

She by the lofty window went,—where in the moon's pale
 sheen

The gray old cloisters arch about their fountain-centred green;
 The statued satyrs seemed to grin and jibber 'neath her eye,
 And as she looked, a death-like cloud came creeping up the
 sky,

And in one long and trembling moan the night gust strove
 to die;—

Up to the ebon cabinet with flowery pearl inlaid,
 And seized the goblet-skull, and laughed,—how laughed that
 merry maid!

He poured it full with bubbling wine, impatient to be quaffed,
 Full to the silver-written rim, and drained it at a draught;
 "Ah would its owner were but here!" and gaily both they
 laughed.

"Again," he cried,—“but what is that stirs in the far off
 gloom?”

The lady looked and shrieked, and rushed out of that royal
 room.

Enveloped in a sable cowl and stole of sightless hue,
 A ghostly figure glided swift that noble youth unto.

Why drops the goblet from his grasp? Why trembles he
 with dread?

The grave hath given birth;—he sees a spirit of the dead.
 Another moment, unappalled, erectly still he stands;
 He would not quail to man nor fiend, for half his goodly lands,
 Yet, like a tree by sudden gust, his soul was seized with fear
 An instant—and his spirit shook as drew the spectre near;
 His small white hand, veined like a leaf, close to his bosom
 clung,

And every nerve and sinew grew like to a bowstring strung,
As with a shadow's voice it said—"I am the Monk of old,
A fragment of whose mortal frame I at thy feet behold.

For that I plead not, reckon not now; a thing of nobler fate
Hast thou perverted and defiled than aught of human state,
Than bone or body; sin, in truth, the soul doth desecrate."

"Nay, holy father!" said the youth, "if thou hast left old
Death

To preach to me, at dead of night, waste not thy pious breath!
Pledge me in this! the night is cold, yet colder is the grave,
And wine will warm thee. Shrink not back: immortals
should be brave.

Ah! know'st the cup? Well, heed it not! right welcome
shalt thou be

To drain it with me every night, and—*benedicite*."

With that he raised the cup to fill and quaff it as before,
Till fast as poured the wine became but dust encrusted gore;
He cast it on the fire,—the lake could not have quenched it
more.

Again the spectre spake, and still in cold and tomb-like tone,
"Drink thou with whom thou wilt, with girls, with gallants,
or alone;

I come to warn thee of thy fate; a fate to me made known."
The old monk raised his cowl; nor face, nor feature was
there there;

Nay, nothing but two eyes which burned like stars distinct
in air.

"Thou in a foreign clime shalt die, and thy poor fleshly frame
Be borne across the seas to rest by theirs from whom it came.
Thy heart alone shall be inurned upon the spot where thou
Wilt pay the forfeit of thy life, where Death looks for thee
now.

Embalmed, enshrined thy heart shall be, in gemmed and
costly case,

And as a thing of worship set before a nation's face;
Till, in the lapse of coming years, some sacrilegious thief
Shall filch that relic, set at nought that weeping people's grief.

The sacred dust which dwelt within, the dust which now
swells high

Within thy bosom, he shall strew abroad relentlessly.
And this in retribution, youth, for that thou there hast done.”
The voice, the vision ceased, and lo! that instant it was gone.
Again the night wind sweeps along those old and ivied halls;
Again o’er lake and fountain free the witching moonlight
falls;

Chequering through the panes the dim old paintings round
the walls.

But there was one who never went into that room again;
And prayers, and tears, and jeers were each alike essayed
in vain.

That dark unearthly visitor was ever in her mind,
Like to the awe which filleth fanes where gods have once
been shrined.

And morning met the youth all pale and pacing to and fro;—
But ah! the goblet-skull he touched never again I trow.

LUCY. There; does not that convert you?

CHARLES. Not a whit.

I don’t believe a single word of it;
Nor yet of summer fairies, winter ghosts,
Nor any other spiritual hosts.

SOPHIA. See then how inconsistent you must be
In the sad tale you told us about Love.

CHARLES. The credit of my creed concerns but me,
Either in earth below or Heaven above.

HELEN. Men! I give notice I am sitting here
To answer and console the sad in heart.
Who is in love?

CHARLES. I am, sweet judge, I fear,
And hope unbiassed you will take my part.

HELEN. What do you wish?

CHARLES. Fair justice, if it please—

HELEN. To mock our ears with your mock miseries?—
Sit; we’ll not hear them. You shall truly tell
That love does oftener than he says, farewell.

CHARLES. With truth I cannot ; but I'll state my case.

HELEN. May it bear out your miserable face !

CHARLES. I have lived on ladies' eyes,
 Dined on kisses, supped on sighs ;
 I have warmed me by their smiles,
 I have been wet through with tears ;
 They've half-slain me with their wiles—
 Charming, cheating, pretty dears ;
 They have scratched me in their play,
 Sighed and sucked the wound away ;
 They have squeezed me black and blue,
 Roughed my hair and boxed my ears,
 Laughed and looked me through and through :
 Oh the cruel angel dears !

FANNY. Indeed you have been sadly treated.

CHARLES. Ah me ! how I have been jilted, cheated ;
 It would move the passion of a stone ;
 And yet when not with ladies I'm alone.
 I like the company of women most,
 And after their's my own :
 Among men I feel always lost.
 Ladies' society for me, or none.

HELEN. Peace ! say no more. We all agree in part.
 This court thinks fit to confiscate your heart ;
 And, till the fine be paid, to one at least—
 Some lady here—you cannot be released.
 Begone ! thank us that you escape so well
 From what it is impossible to tell.

CHARLES. Oh ! I appeal against my fate.

HELEN. Just as a cur a coach may bait.
 It nought avails.

CHARLES. But what am I to do ?
 The puzzling power of a pair of eyes !
 One pair is black, one grey, and one is blue :
 I am a sacrifice !
 They are three—the sweet sisters I love in my heart,
 And all so unlike and so fair :

When with all, I am longing to love them apart,
 And apart, I would all of them there.
 By the world, I dare say, I shall greedy be reckoned,
 But my wish I can name in a word:
 I would live with the first, I would die with the second,
 And immortal I'd be with the third.

HELEN. Go; we have pardoned you with like contrition
 As we condemned—without condition;
 This point excepted—that you sing a song
 In token your deliverance is wrong,
 Though just my judgment. Pray don't keep us long;
 Or banishment perhaps may be your lot.

CHARLES. Oh! I protest against it.

OTHERS. Despot fair!

Your sentence is too cruel.

HELEN. Hold, slaves! what?
 Dispute! I fine you each: So now, despair.
 Thus I adopt first the most stringent measure,
 Our taxes are your songs, your fines our pleasure.
 These ladies will assist you now and then.

LAURA. Oh, certainly.

EMMA. Behave yourselves like men.

CHARLES. There's no escaping, it appears to me,
 However nod and wink, etc., be.

I look on thee while singing,
 Thou bright-eyed love of mine,
 As misers while they're ringing
 The gold they love to shine.

Then while on this poor earth,
 Where pain and sorrow bound us,
 We'll quaff the wine in mirth,
 And music make around us;

We'll drink the wine-god, Bacchus,
 And all our merry friends,

And if old Death attack us,
Why, then, the frolic ends.

LAURENCE. Pray, is that all? The moral, to my thought,
Is yet to come, as certainly it ought.

FRANK. When a man asks for morals, it's a sign
That he is wanting either them or wine.

CHARLES. Let the young be glad! though cares in crowds
Leave scarce a break of blue,
Yet hope gives wings to morning clouds;
And while their shade the sky enshrouds—
By love and wine, which through them shine—
They are turned to a golden hue.
Then give us wine, for we ought to shine
In the hour of dark and dew.

HELEN. A broad hint truly. Pay the bard his fee.
I dare say he is thirsty.

FRANK AND OTHERS. So are we!

CHARLES. What ho! a butt of sack!

HELEN. But no butt here!

Or sack you'll get another way I fear.
Remember that within our sacred sight
You should continue abstinent, to-night.
Indeed I don't approve that sort of song,
And think it very rude and rather wrong.
To make my subjects good is my main plan;
Let them be merry with it, if they can:
Mind, as it is, I am resolved almost,
To make you forfeit your important post.

CHARLES. Lady, I swear I never to offend meant.
Our next shall move you all as an amendment.

HELEN. Now seriatim, gentles, if you please;
We are quite resolved to list your melodies.

LUCY. Come, no more flinching.

FRANK, WALTER, and OTHERS, *apart*. Let us sing a glee,
And so by singing all at once evade
The separate penalty.

Are much the same in practice.

FRANK. I believe you.

EDWARD. Now lest rebellion dare dispute the helm
With her, appointed over us, to be
The crownéd mistress of our joyous realm,
I here maintain her sacred sovereignty.
Firm to her throne, her crown, I stand,
And vouch her irresponsible command.

HELEN. Thanks, Edward ; I would knight you on the spot,
But, really, I'm afraid, my sword's forgot.
However, take my verbal accolade !
Imagine I embrace you ; and in proof
Of your high act of fealty just made,
Sing, Sir, I charge you, on your own behoof.

EDWARD. Sing I cannot ; but if you please to list
A fable, from a fine old moralist,
Whose name I have forgotten—but no matter—
Æsop or some one—probably the latter—
Mark ! In the silver age, ere guile had birth,
While beasts yet spake the mother tongue of earth,
Which the birds set to music, and each kind
Lived in pure order, and with friendlike mind,
The lion and the horse, the ass and mule,
Had shared the earth among them ; but each grown
Ambitious to possess all power alone,
They therefore met to settle who should rule.
The eagle they petitioned to preside,
And swore by his decision to abide.
The bird of curvéd beak and radiant eye
Bowed wordlessly, and swept down from the sky.
Imprimis, said the ass, be it known that I,
Beside myself—though now being noon they sleep—
Speak for the beeves, and represent the sheep.
A pack, the lion cried, of lazy elves !
Take notice, that we represent ourselves.
The horse responded, true ! The mule concurred.
Now, quoth the eagle, let the cause be heard.

My liege, the lion took him at the word.
 He need not say he came of royal race ;
 His voice was thunder ; most he loved the chase,
 And hated aught was cowardly or base.
 He for his magnanimity was famed ;
 And only what he killed he fairly claimed.
 The Deity beside had honoured him
 And chose his countenance 'mid the cherubim.
 The horse, too, claimed descent from noblest blood ;
 His fathers formed the sun-god's fiery stud ;
 Foremost in war, in peace, in use, in show,
 The choicest he of all the brutes below.
 The ass then ; what you each have said is true ;
 But has an angel e'er appeared to you ?
 I trow not ; humbly therefore I precede
 Lion and horse, I think ; both great indeed,
 But ne'er have known the glory to be rode
 As I have by the son, on earth, of God :
 In memory whereof across my shoulders
 A cross may be beheld by all beholders.
 At this the horse and lion jerked their manes ;
 Their mouths could boast of honours without reins :
 Neither did glory in subjection lie.
 I boast not, quoth the ass, Heaven knows, not I ;
 But to be guided by a mightier mind
 Than of your own, or man's, your master's, kind,
 Is honour. Said the horse, in pride self-schooled,
 That only proves you fittest to be ruled.
 The question now is—as I understand—
 Which of us four is fittest to command.
 That is the question, said the lion coldly.
 Why, then, broke in the mule, a trifle boldly,
 If in my own poor person I can prove
 All your chief virtues, at but one remove,
 Or those of two of you, at least, 'twere best
 Choose me at once, and set the thing at rest.
 'Tis true I do not roar, nor do I bray ;

Some think my whinny very like a neigh ;
 And with good reason, I am proud to say.
 To you, dear ass, upon the sire's side,
 To you, sir steed, I'm on the dam's allied ;
 Wherefore,—A fig for this vain pedigree,
 Exclaimed the lion ; what's all this to me ?
 Shall I my long-lived ancestry declare,
 And tawny mothers in their Libyan lair ?
 My race preceded Adam's ; that I swear.
 Perhaps you'll say next who's your son and heir.
 His would-be majesty hung down his head.
 Mark him ! the mule's indulgent kindred said.
 Go, child. Content you with an humbler rule.
 Seek not the throne. Remember you're a mule.
 Your many rare and virtuous parts we own ;
 But make no pretext to the bestial throne.
 We all are sensible—The mule replied
 We are all sensible, on our own side.
 It goes against my nature to contend,—
 I never was called obstinate—with a friend.
 From this dispute I henceforth hold aloof,
 And here abjure,—but no, accept my hoof.
 Good, said the eagle ; on that view I base
 My judgment in this all important case.
 Let each competitor his natural place
 Resume. The lion, monarchlike, alone
 Hath sympathies with no race but his own ;
 And therefore may, impartial, fill the throne.
 The rest, that with each other kindly blend,
 And form one type of being, we commend
 To labour and endure, this ; that, to fend
 The throne against the legioned herd, or those
 'Gainst any that may chance to prove their foes.
 And if aught hostile 'tween those twain should pass,
 Let the great lion guard the burdened ass ;
 For labour is most honoured, as we see
 The ass, by Heaven's all-working Deity.

In rank though last, in honour first he stands,
 Conscious of contact with Divinest hands.
 Let horse, ass, lion, thus to live agree,
 Share and obey a mutual sovereignty ;
 And the fourth aid and mediate 'tween the three,
 Intact in nature, ever furthering peace,
 And moderated temper. So shall cease
 All strife among you, and supreme respect
 Grace the pure power such good that can effect.
 To this the four assented, and retired
 Well pleased. The eagle into heaven aspired.

CAROLINE. O happy days ! but then, you must allow,
 Brutes spoke as sensibly as men do now.

EDWARD. If all said square not wholly with the time
 Firstly laid down, it matters not in rhyme ;
 Which, with an all-controlling care of things,
 Gives its own laws to chaos or to kings.

FRANK. A heart full of feeling, a cup full of wine,—
 Come—sip, love ; come—sip, love ;
 There's nothing I lack but that sweet lip of thine,—
 Thy lip, love—thy lip, love.
 Thine eyes are like two romping stars,
 That look as they had drank of wine ;
 And flying from night's brow, had brought
 Their liquid love to thine.
 But I forget : they're not the words I mean.

HELEN. Wilt sing, Sophia ?

SOPHIA. I obey thee, Queen.
 Of knight and lady to each other true,
 I sing the generous lay, their due.

Yes, lady dear, for aye—adieu !
 The false world I defy, lady ;
 But thou, sweet soul, so fair, so true,
 I would thou couldst not sigh, lady.
 Oh ! mind thee not of me when gone,
 But lay thy memory by, lady ;

In light and joyaunce live thou on ;
 Leave me, leave me to sigh, lady !

O fair ! O true ! for aye I go ;
 From thee, from thee I hie, lady ;
 I must not yield me to thy woe,
 I dare not list thee sigh, lady.
 Yonder thou seest my father's hall,
 Whose turrets pierce the sky, lady ;
 Ah ! rather might they on me fall,
 Than I would hear thee sigh, lady.

To far-off lands now wends his way ;
 And, if he there should die, lady,
 Oh ! let thy true love, happy, say
 He never caused thee sigh, lady.
 Farewell for aye ! It wrings thy heart ;
 It drowns thy darkening eye, lady.
 Farewell ! I feel what 'tis to part ;
 But say thou wilt not sigh, lady.

WILL. May none here ever know as true
 The false cold lover's last adieu !
 But yet to shew things as they be,
 The false maid thus ye all may see.

Thou lov'st another maiden !
 And I am free as thou ;
 My heart with scorn is laden,
 To speak but with thee now.
 Though through thy glossy ringlets
 My hand hath often played,
 Here—take it back ! I loathe it—
 The long imbosomed braid.
 Away, away ! no more with thee,
 Thou falsest, fairest maid !

One heart is ripe and laden
 With love for me e'en now ;
 I'll woo me, then, the maiden
 More kind, more true than thou.
 Then give it to my rival,
 The black and glossy braid ;
 And give the hand which twined it,
 The cheek whereon it played.
 Away, away ! no more with thee,
 Thou fairest, falsest maid.

HELEN. There beams, methinks, a story in those eyes,
 Lucy, of thine, of faithfulness to death,
 Unlike the desolate discords which now rise
 So oft 'tween hearts love still companioneth.

LUCY. Most gentle sovereign ! sacred be thy hest ;
 Would the light levy yet were worthier thee.
 My lay belongs then to the city bright,
 Which, goddess-like, sprang sparkling from the sea.

Thus to a fair Venetian maid,
 The proudest of the train,
 With which the Doge went forth arrayed
 To wed his vassal main,
 " This very day," her lover said,
 " Will Venice go the sea to wed."

" Now tell me, lady, what to do,
 To win this hand of thine ;
 I'll risk both soul and body too,
 For such a prize divine."
 " I'll have the bridal ring," said she,
 " Wherewith the Doge will wed the sea."

Came forth the Doge and all his train,
 And sailed upon the sea ;
 The banners waved, and music's strain

Rose soft and heavenwardly ;—
 And blue waves raced to seize the ring
 Which glided through them glittering.

The lover through the bright array
 Rushed by the Doge's side :—
 A plunge—and plume and mantle gay
 Lay lashing on the tide ;
 He heard a shriek, but down he dived,
 To follow where the ring arrived.

He sought so long, that all above
 Believed him gone for aye,
 Nor knew they 'twas his haughty love
 Who shrieked and swooned away.
 At length he rose to light—half-dead—
 But held the ring above his head.

The lady wept—the lover smiled—
 She had not deemed he would
 Have dared it,—was a foolish child—
 And loved as none else could.
 “Take it and be a faithful bride
 To death,” the lover said, and died.

The lady to a convent hied,
 And took the holy vows,
 And was till death a faithful bride
 To her Eternal spouse.
 And then the ring her lover gave
 They buried with her in the grave.

WALTER. A gem may have a hundred sides,
 And glitter bright in each :
 Where true philosophy presides
 Pleasure it is to teach ;
 I therefore choose the charms of happy faith,

Secure in love's all present joy ;
 From aught that might e'en dreams alloy,
 With dread of future skaith.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the eve,
 And I lay among bright blushing flowers ;
 I awoke—and, ah ! how could I grieve,
 If the blooms hurried back to their bowers ?

I dreamed of thee, love, in the night,
 And the stars stood around by my head ;
 I awoke to thy beauty so bright,
 And the stars hid their faces and fled.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the morn,
 And a poet's bright dreamings drew nigh ;
 I awoke, and I laughed them to scorn :
 They were black by the blink of thine eye.

I dreamed of thee, love, in the day,
 And I wept as I slept o'er thy charms ;
 I awoke as my dream went away,
 And my tears were all wet on thine arms.

HELEN. Ah ! who would long for bliss above,
 That tastes the joys below ?
 Or, hanging on the lips of Love,
 Would seek to kiss his brow ?
 Unless to change and clear the taste,
 Lest sweets in sameness run to waste.

GEORGE. Come, do you dance ?

LAURENCE. No ; we two here remain.

MARIAN. But why indulge in mutual sorrows vain ?
 And if I grant this one request—

LAURENCE. It is the last time I shall be so blest.
 Oh ! thou art kind, and I will think
 This wine to be thy love I drink ;

Blood my heart would gladly miss,
 Could it so be filled with this ;
 And each pulse would madlier move,
 Warm with wine, alive with love.
 Look upon it, love, and weep
 Thine eyelight o'er its purple deep ;
 So each luminous glance shall be
 Like a phosphor globelet in the sea.
 Other lovers soon will sue thee—
 Let them—they will ne'er possess
 More than I enjoy who view the
 Lightning of thy loveliness.
 It may be love and light in Heaven,
 But here on earth such love is death ;
 And such light is blindness driven,
 Lance-like, through the breast and breath.
 All who love thee sure will die :
 Thy beauty hath fatality.
 For now is near my heart's last hour ;
 I feel it failing like a flower,
 When folding up its leaves to rest,
 And narrowing in its own sweet breast.
 I mean not that I die to-day,
 But that my spirit wears away ;
 And, save thyself, sees nought to lure it
 Back to earth's falsehoods which immure it.

MARIAN. Thou wilt live yet many happy years,
 Far more in number than the tears
 Men shed o'er broken hearts, if not
 When first forsaken, aye forgot ;
 While we, according to old fashion,
 With our own tears must slake our passion ;
 Or, weeping in our bosoms lorn and lone,
 Try if tears cannot turn the heart to stone.

LAURENCE. Promise, dearest, when I die,
 Not to mourn, nor weep, nor sigh ;
 Eyes like thine should never weep,

Nor sweet bosom sorrow keep.
 Let nor stone, nor verse, nor aught
 Mark where rests—what loved and thought ;
 If they ask thee where I lie,
 Say, within thy memory.
 Weep not thou o'er grave of mine,
 Sprinkle on it sparkling wine ;
 That shall keep the grass all new
 Like to an immortal dew ;
 And some fallen star shall stay,
 Watching, while thou art away.
 Scatter rose and ivy wreath
 On the turf I rest beneath ;
 Dance and sing my favourite song
 Through the deep blue twilight long ;
 In that rich and ringing tone,
 Heaven to thee, love, lends alone.
 When I'm gone, then, come again ;
 Talk to me in lightsome strain ;
 Should I answer, start not thou !
 I'll but say I'm blest as now ;
 Should no sound the silence break,
 Think me, oh ! too blest to speak.
 Let me lie till angels say,
 Wake ! the world's long week is past.
 Spirit ! this is holy-day ;
 This is God's—the best and last.

HELEN. Come Marian, having finished our parade
 We have leisure now to list another lay ;
 But since you have not been dancing, I'm afraid
 Laurence and you are idle, lovesick, say ?

MARIAN. Could I comply I'd not remain thus mute.

FREDERICK. Shall I sing for you as a substitute ?

I saw a rose was fading—
 Fading 'neath mine eye ;
 When thus, with love's upbraiding,

I heard that past one sigh :—
 Oh! give me back one blush—
 But one from out the many
 I loved to give to thee
 Ere other I knew any—
 Liked or looked on any.

For I am sad and lonely—
 Lone, and like to die ;
 Oh! give me back one only,
 I am too weak to cry.
 The beam, the breeze, the dew,
 Shun now my shrinking bosom ;
 Tears I have need but few,
 Their brine can bring no blossom—
 Me, nor blight nor blossom.

Then to that rose was failing—
 Failing 'neath mine eye,
 I said, 'tis useless wailing ;
 Forget, forgive, and die.
 One look to Heaven in prayer,
 And one to me in kindness ;
 The deathwind shook its leaves,
 And I was one with blindness—
 Lone in burning blindness.

HARRY. Although I would not needlessly intrude—

FANNY. To sing, not being asked, is rude.

HARRY. To cease with such a dull down-hearted ditty
 Would be a wrong, I think, as well as pity.

LUCY. Pray, sing us something livelier, then.

SOPHIA. And don't be personal again.

HARRY. Annie's eyes are like the night,
 Nell's are like the morning grey,
 Fanny's like the gloaming light,

Hal's are sunny as the day :
 Bright—dark—blue—grey,
 I could kiss them night and day :
 Grey—blue—dark—bright—
 Morning, evening, noon, and night.

Annie's brow's arched like the sky,
 Nell's is white without a spot,
 Hal's is as a palace high,
 Fanny's lowly like a cot :
 High—arched—low—white,
 I could kiss them day and night ;
 White—low—arched—high,
 Kiss them night and day could I.

Annie's lips are warm and bright,
 Fanny's free and full of play,
 Hal's are sweetest out of sight,
 Nell's are always in the way :
 Bright—warm—sweet—play,
 I could kiss them night and day ;
 Play—sweet—warm—bright,
 All the day and all the night.

WILL. Muled in song I hasten to discharge
 The debt I owe, and pay it thus in large.

Oh ! Love's a bold pirate—the soul of the sea !
 He impresses the proud and he fetters the free ;
 His flag's a red heart, in the bows are his guns,
 And the wind's always with him—the foe ever runs.

Oh, Love's a bold pirate—the son of the sea !
 The winds are his laws, and his laws make him free.
 The star that he steers by, her eye he adores,
 And the haven he's bound for, earth's infinite shores.

Oh! Love's a bold pirate—the sword of the sea!
 For the poor he hath plunder, and fame for the free;
 At home in a chase, he nor spares foe nor friend;
 Though a stern chase, and long chase, the longest must end.

Oh! Love's a bold pirate—the pet of the sea!
 He will do all, and dare all, 'gainst all that may be;
 He hails her all fair, just before they fall to't,
 And his foe makes his prize and his consort to boot.

HELEN. The day hath darkened into twilight, night
 Hath glittered into starlight, since we met;
 The restorative dew hangs thick and bright
 On herb and tree and flower: yon foamy jet
 Flings up its bubbling music chillier now,
 And droop the blooms that long have wreathed the brow.
 Ladies, and you bold serfs! I now propose
 To bring this joyous vigil to a close,
 And as all bidden have now paid their fine,
 To leave these heroes to their fate—their wine.

CHARLES. Except yourself, dear despot, all
 Have done their best to hum or squall;
 But if your beautyship would condescend
 To teach us what true melody might be,
 There's not a creature present but would lend
 His ears to listen for a century.

HELEN. Sir, I respect you for your flattery,
 All compliments of course are strange to me;
 The moral strength required for flattery now,
 To a fair Queen is great you must allow:
 I only envy you the power to make them.

CHARLES. 'Tis sure the better part to take them.

HELEN. We don't believe them when you pay them.

CHARLES. Nor we when we say them.
 No longer then, ladies, I pray,
 At our flattery or fickleness grieve;
 If you never believe what we say,

We never say what we believe.

HELEN. From our rule and example, gentles, learn,
And lay this to your hearts, each one in turn,
Pay compliments, pay visits, pay respects,
But pay your just debts first.

HARRY. Our whole effects !

HELEN. The royal rule of pure equality,
In complaisance and kindness, still shall be
Confided in, and revered by me ;
So shall my deed of abdication make
All love the loser for the losing's sake.
Attend ! my song the constancy discovers
Of a right royal pair of lovers.

Come beloved, let us roam
Forth into the golden fields ;
Yon high palace marks our home,
Ours is all that nature yields ;
Come, betrothed and espoused,
Earth is rising towards the sun,
And with light and joy aroused
Meets the love within us one.

Open now thy sleep-dewed eyes,
Shew the subject soul its queen ;
Brighter than the new born skies
Their delicious depths I ween.
Don thee, love, thy royal white ;
Needs no more divine array ;
Fairer than the morning light,
Rule thou ever with the day.

Come the morrow, day divine,
All shall wake and bless the sun ;
Those thou lovest shall be mine,
They and thou and I be one ;
Crown and throne the world shall gain,

Thou the universal state ;
 Bride of beauty ! rise and reign,
 Love thy life, and Heaven thy fate.

CHARLES. The meaning whereof as I take it,—

HELEN. True ; it's exactly what you make it.

GEORGE. There's only one thing wanting that could mend
 That song ;—a blaze of fireworks at the end.

HELEN. Farewell friends ! let us hope to meet again
 When others may be present whom we know.

EDWARD. Adieu ! ye semideities ! in vain
 The world may worship idols.

GEORGE. Pray, do go !—

WALTER. At last the so called soulless have departed,
 Leaving sundry broken-hearted.

FREDERICK. To make the life of perfect mould,
 Like that in Paradise of old,
 Each must give their better part ;—
 We our soul and they their heart.

LAURENCE. The night hath gone, and all the stars
 Have vanished at the sun's bright warning ;
 Still the moon, ghost-like, haunts the heaven,
 As though she deemed to her 'twas given :
 What hath the moon to do with morning ?
 So love is fled, and all the fair
 Gone ; some with smiling, some with scorning,
 Save one the fairest far above :
 But what have I to do with love,
 More than the moon hath with the morning ?
 The moon hath lost her light, and seems
 To dim the scene she once was adorning :
 So my poor heart, its lovelight gone,
 Still in the heavens where late it shone,
 Lags like the moon upon the morning.
 But I am likest to that moon in this,
 That I am brightest when my love's away ;
 For when with her my borrowed light is lost,

As is the moon's amid the dazzling day.

HARRY. Come pass the ruby round. There's nought
so dull

As to behold a noble vessel full
Of radiant blessings halt upon its way ;
So fairly give and fairly take, I say.
Progress is nature's unexcepted law,
'Twere better e'en to go from bad to worse,
Than 'tween two like degrees of ill see-saw ;
Stagnation is an universal curse.
There is nothing stands still—so old sages declare,
But the world's ever changing in earth, sea, and air ;
All the powers of nature, in truth if we trace,
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
The winds from all quarters career through the sky,
They blow hot, they blow cold, they blow swift, they blow
high ;

They follow, they flank, and they fly in our face ;
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
The rivers that run to the ends of the earth
Flow thousands of miles from the place of their birth ;
From the old and the new world they pour out apace—
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
The worlds they call wanderers, rolling on high,
That enlighten the earth and enliven the sky,
Going hundreds of miles in a minute through space—
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?
Then with goblets before us, whatever they hold,
Let the hue of the nectar be purple, be gold,—
Let us say as we sit among friends, face to face,
What are they ?—what are they, but running a race ?

LAURENCE. All this is lively. Beauty, love, and mirth
Might seem to flavour even vapid earth
To a pure spirit's lips. For my own part
I own it sinks life deeper in my heart
At every fresh recurrence : but at times
A thought comes tolling o'er the darkened soul

Which we dare hardly guest ; but ill it chimes
 With scenes of joy like this, which from the roll
 Of memory we oft would fain erase.

GEORGE. Not I, one jot, save your ill-omened face.

WALTER. For sacred riddles this is neither time nor place.

LAURENCE. No ; but of earth some sacred writings tell
 Its flower was paradise, its fruit was hell.

Such is the fruit of worldly pleasure now ;
 And thus perhaps my meaning you may trace.

HARRY. We do ; but think it useless to avow
 Such views at festive moments like the present.

CHARLES. Indeed they call up notions quite unpleasant.
 So, let us rout them by another draught
 And thoughts bright as the beverage quaffed.

HARRY. The future is the world of youth—
 The future is our joy ;

We dream of honour, love, and truth,
 And bliss without alloy.

But harp not now on love or truth,
 Forget your dreams of glory ;

The wine will double us our youth—
 To-morrow dream again of sooth—

But now to what's before ye.

Oh ! age will cloud youth's sunny brow,
 And sorrows plough the cheek ;

The mirth we spread, the joy we know,
 Then it will be vain to seek.

The old say, life has more of ill
 Than good—of grief, than gladness ; still,

Within our cup one drop of joy,
 Too small, if not two sweet, to cloy,

Always doth remain.

With us it shall be more than love,

Or fame, or faith, or gain ;

And sweet as Heaven's own fruit above,

The common sweeteners of life's bitter grain.

Yes ! yes ! the memory of this night,

In age's veriest midnight hours,
 Shall flash on our minds with a northern-light light,
 And a prelude of pleasure illumine the night,
 Whose morn we shall breathe in immortal bowers.

CHARLES. Some say Truth lies in water, some in wine ;
 Suppose I mix them ; now she must be mine.

FRANK. Nothing again will serve to make us merry.

FREDERIC. 'Twas stupid in you, Laurence.

LAURENCE. Was it ?

WILL. Very.

EDWARD. Infernal cant you'll always find
 Upsets all pleasant parties of this kind.

GEORGE. He has put the company, 'tis plain, to flight.

WALTER. And so I say—

CHARLES. I'm going, too.

ALL. Good night !

SCENE.—*A Visit.*

FESTUS *and* HELEN.

HELEN. Come to the light, love ! Let me look on thee !
 Let me make sure I have thee. Is it thou ?
 Is this thy hand ? Are these thy velvet lips,—
 Thy lips so lovable ? Nay, speak not yet !
 For oft as I have dreamed of thee, it was
 Thy speaking woke me. I will dream no more.
 Am I alive ? And do I really look
 Upon these soft and sea-blue eyes of thine,
 Wherein I half believe I can espy
 The riches of the sea ? These dark rolled locks !
 Oh God ! art Thou not glad, too, he is here ?—
 Where hast thou been so long ? Never to hear,
 Never to see, nor see one who had seen thee—
 Come now, confess it was not kind to treat
 Me in this manner.

FESTUS. I confess, my love.
 But I have been where neither tongue, nor pen,
 Nor hand could give thee token where I was ;
 And seen,—but 'tis enough ! I see thee now.
 I would rather look upon thy shadow there,
 Than Heaven's bright thrones for ever.

HELEN. Where hast been ?

FESTUS. Say, am I altered ?

HELEN. Nowise.

FESTUS. It is well.

Then in the resurrection we may know
 Each other. I have been among the worlds,
 Angels and spirits bodiless.

HELEN. Great God ;
 Can it be so ?

FESTUS. It is :—and that both here
 And elsewhere. When the stars come, thou shalt see
 The track I travelled through the light of night ;
 Where I have been, and whence my visitors.

HELEN. And thou hast been with angels all the while,
 And still dost love me ?

FESTUS. Constantly as now.
 But for the time I did devote my soul
 To their divine society, I knew
 Thou wouldst forgive, yet dared not trust myself
 To see thee, or to pen one word, for fear
 Thy love should overpower the plan conceived,
 And acting, in my mind, of visiting
 The spirits in their space-embosomed homes.

HELEN. Forgive thee ! 'tis a deed which merits love.
 And should I not be proud, too, who can say,
 For me he left all angels ?

FESTUS. I forethought
 So thou wouldst say ; but with an offering
 Came I provided, even with a trophy
 Of love angelic, given me for thee ;
 For angel bosoms know no jealousy.

HELEN. Shew me.

FESTUS. It is of jewels I received
From one who snatched them from the richest wreck
Of matter ever made, the holiest
And most resplendent.

HELEN. Why, what could it be?
Jewels are baubles only; whether pearls
From the sea's lightless depths, or diamonds
Culled from the mountain's crown, or chrysolith,
Cat's eye or moonstone, toys are they at best.
Jewels are not of all things in my sight
Most precious.

FESTUS. Nor in mine. It is in the use
Of which they may be made their value lies;
In the pure thoughts of beauty they call up,
And qualities they emblem. So in that
Thou wearest there, thy cross;—to me it is
Suggestive of bright thoughts and hopes in Him
Whose one great sacrifice availeth all,
Living and dead, through all eternity.
Not to the wanderer over southern seas
Rises the constellation of the Cross
More lovelily o'er sky and calm blue wave,
Than does to me that bright one on thy breast.
As diamonds are purest of all things,
And but embodied light which fire consumes
And renders back to air, that nought remains,—
And as the cross is symbol of our creed,
So let that ornament signify to thee
The faith of Christ, all purity, all light,
Through fervency resolving into Heaven.
Each hath his cross, fair lady, on his heart;
Never may thine be heavier or darker
Than that now on thy breast, so light and bright,
Rising and falling with its bosom-swell.

HELEN. I thank thee for that wish, and for the love
Which prompts it—the immeasurable love

I know is mine, and I with none would share.
 Forgive me ; I have not yet felt my wings.
 Now have I not been patient ? Let me see
 My promised present.

FESTUS. Look, then—they are here ;
 Bracelets of chrysoptase.

HELEN. Most beautiful !

FESTUS. Come, let me clasp them, dearest, on thine
 arms ;

For these of those are worthy, and are named
 In the foundation stones of the bright city,
 Which is to be for the immortal saved,
 Their last and blest abode ; and such their hue,
 The golden green of paradisaal plains
 Which lie about it boundlessly, and more
 Intensely tinted with the burning beauty
 Of God's eye, which alone doth light that land,
 Than our earth's cold grass garment with the sun ;
 Though even in the bright, hot, blue-skied East,
 Where he doth live the life of light and Heaven ;
 Where, o'er the mountains, at midday is seen
 The morning star, and the moon tans at night
 The cheek of careless sleeper. Take them, love.
 There are no nobler earthly ornaments
 Than jewels of the city of the saved.

HELEN. But how are these of that bright city ? I
 Am eager for their history.

FESTUS. They are
 Thereof prophetically, and have been—
 What I will shew thee presently, when I
 Relate the story of the angel who
 Gave them to me.

HELEN. Well ; I will wait till then,
 Or any time thou chooseth : 'tis enough
 That I believe thee always ;—but would know,
 If not in me too curious to ask,
 How came about these miracles ? Hast thou raised

The fiend of fiends, and made a compact dark,
 Sealed with thy blood, symbolic of the soul,
 Whereby all power is given thee for a time,
 All means, all knowledge, to make more secure
 Thy spirit's dread perdition at the end?
 I of such awful stories oft have heard,
 And the unlawful lore which ruins souls.
 Myself have charms, foresee events in dreams;
 Can prophesy, prognosticate, know well
 The secret ties between many magic herbs
 And mortal feelings, nor condemn myself
 For knowing what is innocent; but thou!
 Thy helps are mightier far and more obscure.
 Was it with wand and circle, book and skull,
 With rites forbid and backward-jabbered prayers,
 In cross-roads or in churchyard, at full moon,
 And by instruction of the ghostly dead,
 That thou hast wrought these wonders, and attained
 Such high transcendent powers and secrets? Speak!
 Or is man's mastery over spirits not
 Of such a vile and vulgar consequence?

FESTUS. Were not my heart as guiltless of all mirth
 As is the oracle of an extinct god
 Of its priest-prompted answer, I might smile
 To list such askings. Mind's command o'er mind,
 Spirit's o'er spirit, is the clear effect
 And natural action of an inward gift,
 Given of God, whereby the incarnate soul
 Hath power to pass free out of earth and death,
 To immortality and Heaven, and mate
 With beings of a kind, condition, lot,
 All diverse from its own. This mastery
 Means but communion, the power to quit
 Life's little globule here, and coalesce
 With the great mass about us. For the rest,
 To raise the devil were an infant's task
 To that of raising man. Why, every one

Conjures the Fiend from hell into himself
 When passion chokes or blinds him. Sin is hell.

HELEN. How dost thou bring a spirit to thee, Festus ?

FESTUS. It is my will which makes it visible.

HELEN. What are those like whom thou hast seen ?

FESTUS. They come,

The denizens of other worlds, arrayed
 In diverse form and feature, mostly lovely ;
 In limb and wing ethereal finer far
 Than an ephemeris' pinion ; others, armed
 With gleaming plumes, that might o'ercome an air
 Of adamantine denseness, pranked with fire.
 All are of different offices and strengths,
 Powers, orders, tendencies, in like degrees
 As men, with even more variety ;
 Of different glories, duties, and delights.
 Even as the light of meteor, satellite,
 Planet and comet, sun, star, nebula,
 Differ, and nature also, so do theirs.
 With them is neither need, nor sex, nor age,
 Nor generation, growth, decay, nor death ;
 Or none whom I have known ; there may be such,
 Mature they are created and complete,
 Or seem to be. Perfect from God they come.
 Yet have they different degrees of beauty,
 Even as strength and holy excellence.
 Sexless are angels, but the mental seals
 Of either holy kind in all prevail.
 Some seem of milder and more feminine
 Nature than others, Beauty's proper sex,
 Shewn but by softer qualities of soul,
 More lovable than awful, more devote
 To deeds of individual piety,
 And grace, than mighty missions fit to task
 Sublimest spirits, or the toil intense
 Of cultivating nations of their kind ;
 Or working out from the problem of the world

The great results of God,—result, sum, cause.
 These oft-times charged with delegated powers,
 Formative or destructive ; those in chief,
 Ordained to better and to beautify
 Existence as it is ; with careful love
 To tend upon particular worlds or souls ;
 Warning and training whom they love, to tread
 The soft and blossom-bordered, silvery paths,
 Which lead and lure the soul to paradise,
 Making the feet shine which do walk on them ;
 While each doth God's great will alike, and both
 With their whole nature's fulness love His works.
 To love them lifts the soul to Heaven.

HELEN.

Let me, then !

Whence come they ?

FESTUS.

Many of them come from orbs

Wherein the rudest matter is more worth
 And fair than queenly gem ; the dullest dust
 Beneath their feet is rosy diamond :—
 Others, direct from Heaven ; but all in high
 And serious love towards those to whom they come.
 None but the blest are free to visit where
 They choose. The lost are slaves for ever ; here
 Never but on their Master's merciless
 Business, nor elsewhere. Still sometimes with these
 Dark spirits have I held communion,
 And in their soul's deep shadow, as within
 A mountain cavern of the moon, conversed
 With them, and wormed from them the gnawing truth
 Of their extreme perdition ; marking oft
 Nature revealed by torture, as a leaf
 Unfolds itself in fire and writhes the while,
 Burning, yet unconsumed. Others there are
 Come garlanded with flowers unwithering,
 Or crowned with sunny jewels, clad in light,
 And girded with the lightning, in their hands
 Wands of pure rays or arrowy starbeams ; some

Bright as the sun self-lit, in stature tall,
 Strong, straight, and splendid as the golden reed
 Whereby the height, and length, and breadth, and depth,
 Of the descendent city of the skies,
 In which God sometime shall make glad with man,
 Were measured by the angel ;—the same reed
 Wherewith our Lord was mocked that angel found
 Close by the cross and took ; God made it gold,
 And now it makes the sceptre of His Son
 Over all worlds ; the sole bright rule of Heaven,
 The measure of immortal life, the scale
 Of power, love, bliss, and glory infinite ;—
 Some gorgeous and gigantic, who with wings,
 Wide as the wings of armies in the field
 Drawn out for death, sweep over Heaven, and eyes
 Deep, dark as sea-worn caverns, with a torch
 At the end, far back, glaring. Some with wings
 Like an unfainting rainbow, studded round
 With stones of every hue and excellence,
 Writ o'er with mystic words which none may read,
 But those to whom their spiritual state
 Gives correlative meaning, fit thereto.
 Some of these visit me in dreams ; with some
 Have I made one in visions, in their own
 Abodes of brightness, blessedness, and power ;
 And know moreover I shall joy with them,
 Ere long their sacred guest, through ages yet
 To come, in worlds not now perhaps create,
 As they have been mine here : and some of them
 In unimaginable splendours I
 Have walked with through their winged worlds of light,
 Double and triple particoloured suns
 And systems circling each the other, clad
 In tints of light and air, whereto this earth
 Hath nothing like, and man no knowledge of :—
 Orbs heaped with mountains, to the which ours are
 Mere grave-mounds, and their skies flowered with stars,

Violet, rose or pearl-hued, or soft blue,
 Golden or green, the light now blended, now
 Alternate ; many moons and planets, full,
 Crescent, or gibbous-faced, illumining
 In periodic and intricate beauty,
 At once those strange and most felicitous skies.
 According to the nature of those spheres
 Their natives are, some humanlike, and some
 Of great gigantic grace and happiest air,
 Yet solemn as the sun ; they walk like winds,
 Whose dwelling is all immaterial space,
 And vanish slowly in the hollow heavens.
 Some of still vaster size and mightier mien,
 Whose movement is as thunder in a cloud
 Devouring space ; some like to flickering ghosts
 Of fire, while underneath their every step
 Spring perfumes up and flowers, bedight in rays
 Aerial of the purest, brightest skies ;—
 Others of sanguine hue whose step is like
 An instantaneous trembling of the Heavens ;
 Others again whose forms for utter bright
 Are indefinable ; from place to place
 Their feet pass like the twinklings of the stars ;
 Some of a cold, pure bodily rayonnance
 As is the moon's of naked light, ungarbed
 In circumspherical air, who glide like clouds ;
 And some in bands, some singly, some in groups ;
 For all perchance is starlife after death ;
 While others sworded, sceptred, crowned, and robed,
 Spirits of power who rule each one his star,
 Spirits who through all time have hoped and seen
 Through godless darkness and deistic drawn
 The solar revelation of Heaven's light ;—
 Spirits whose form is fire, whose life is strength,
 Precipitate as tempests, are :—to these
 Add what gives earnest of inferior life,
 Eagle, dove, lion, lamb, ox, serpent, horse ;

Nor lightly estimate such signs, but mind
 The potent meaning of the simplest sign,
 To one whose mind is meaning to itself.
 For angels can assume the form they please,
 And transform things inanimate, as once
 With earth's angelic watcher I beheld.
 The lonely diamond which decked her pale
 Transparent brow was worth a mansion ; worth
 A mine and an estate ; so pure and clear,
 All globular and gloriously sized,
 Like one large drop of paradisal dew
 Immortalized, it shone ; and so it was,
 Which from a leaf she gathered of the tree
 Of perfect life on Eden's natal morn.

HELEN. How I should love to visit other worlds,
 Or see an angel !

FESTUS. Wilt thou now ?

HELEN. I dare not.

Not now at least. I am not in the mood.
 Ere I behold a spirit I would pray.

FESTUS. Light as a leaf they step, or arrowy
 Footing of breeze upon a waveless pool ;
 Sudden and soft, too, like a waft of light,
 The beautiful immortals come to me ;
 Oh, ever lovely, ever welcome they !

HELEN. Thou speakest me of visions : I would learn
 The nature of all spiritual things.

FESTUS. Matter and mind comprise the universe,
 All conscious nature and self conscious art,
 As the twin tidal wave inarms the world.
 Spirit and nature act contrariwise,
 Yet harmonize in contrariety.
 Now it is earth which riseth towards the sun
 And not the sun on earth : yet let us deem
 God seeketh us, illuminating life ;
 Not that it is our earth rise into Heaven,
 Forced by orbital reason towards the Truth

Even when retrogressive. In the pure
 Black, lifeless void, no star is to be seen,
 Nothing but nothing seeming palpable.
 It is only through their sensuous atmospheres
 That worlds can view each other, or that light
 Itself becomes enlightening. So with man.
 So brightest stars are but the darkest dust
 Illumined from without, and central fire
 Is self consummative of death alone :
 So light all colourless all colours holds.
 Art is man's nature, nature is God's art :
 Eternal this, that temporal ; and thus
 Soul in itself may realize all time
 By indagation of supremest spheres
 Material and spiritual, born
 Of effluent or influent Deity
 Whereby the universe revolves round God
 In everlasting period,—He Himself
 Conceiving, bearing, suffering, ending all,
 Affiliating and inheavening :—power
 And means vouched heretofore to some, and now
 To him who words the wonders he hath seen.
 There is a secret sign whereby the soul
 Feels certainty of safety and of power
 Imparted, public to the universe,
 Which then looks joyful as in sight of rest,
 And yet unwist of by a single world ;
 Infallible to one who hath received
 The birthright of the death-begotten life ;
 Stamped in the spirit, as the gleaming seal
 Upon the brows of those imparadised,
 The true trilateral monogram of God.
 High o'er the sensible Heavens translated far,
 Beyond the interchanging universe
 Of sense and substance, body, life and death,
 And deathfulness of evil, being's bane,
 The soul to whom this sign is given lives ;

And is a soul of the first magnitude.
 All truth is vague, all error is distinct ;
 One being less, one greater than man's soul :
 Whereof the true transfiguration takes
 Place, and reception in supernal truth
 When we view all things from a point of Heaven
 Opposed to the world's wisest certainty.
 For then all bright, high, seeming-scattered thoughts
 By ardent contemplation star themselves
 Into the shapes which Faith and Reason love
 To fill up with a Heaven of their own.
 The world is as a great sarcophagus
 Engraven inwardly and outwardly
 With living emblems of its inner life
 And soul containing tenant of all time.
 The same hath infinite meanings as the work
 Of spirit and tenure of humanity ;
 Backwards to God and forwards read for man :
 Oft differ text and order ; wise is he
 Who scans and construes all in harmony.
 A sacred side there is to every thing,
 As given or forbidden, false or true ;
 According to the greater truth involved
 One side is always bright, one always dark,
 Leaflike and moonlike ; and each separate life
 Is as a leaf which waits the shining breath
 Of nature, our mysterious prophetess,
 To give it its due order in the world.
 But as God's own true name is uttered not
 If known in Heaven the highest, nor on earth,
 So too there are innominable depths,
 Which cannot be revealed, of human life,
 And ought not if they could ; the elements
 Of the premortal manhood which inhered
 In the conception of creative mind ;
 Since shewn to few and only dimly known.
 Speech is divine, but silence Deity.

As sleep in life, and dreams in sleep, is truth
 In dreams to man. Many, the greatest, truths
 Have been made known in visions or in dreams.
 For then it is the soul recalls the spheres
 Of preexistent nature, and evokes
 The ghosts of coming ages, or unites
 Past, present, future, in one windlike touch
 Which loosens the world's zone and renders mind
 The master of creation. Be it so!
 Once I received a vision—for the crown
 Of nature is passivity, and our
 Best mood the pure recipient—in a state
 Of twilight-like existence, such as that
 Of universal substance when the sun,
 And light, and darkness, moon, and Heaven, and earth,
 Were nigh all one, and nought distinct save souls,
 Echoes of Light, reacting heavenwardly.
 It was the spirit of the universe,
 Whose breast was of like hemispheres of bliss,
 Whereon the worlds were nursed, that I beheld.
 The fragrance of the fadeless fields of Heaven,
 The endless blessings of an act of grace,
 Or mercy's matron bosom filled her words;
 And each articulate air she did expire,
 O'erladen with the lore of ages, e'en
 As earth was with her old baptismal flood.
 In her deep eye immortal quiet dwelt,
 As though all Heaven had settled on one star.
 She spake, and I regarded with such awe
 As eaglet when he first beholds the sun.
 And though what I remember be all true,
 Yet in so far as worded it is not
 The entire truth uncircumscribable;
 Can a spar speak how it was crystallized?
 She spake, I said, the spirit, and at her word
 Behold the Heavens were opened as a book.
 I am the world-soul, nature's spirit I.

Ere universe or constellation was,
 System, or sun, or orb, or element,
 Darkness, or light, or atom, I first lived ;
 I and necessity, though twain in life,
 Yet one in Being. Time and life are one :
 But insomuch as nature is destroyed
 In God's assumption to Divine estate
 Of an especial soul, necessity
 Ends in extreme original nothingness ;
 And leaves all supernatural existence free,
 As breath in air, like-natured with the same,
 Yet altered in condition, function, form,
 And glorified. God is, and men exist.
 Free agency extends 'tween man and man,
 And every finite nature ; between God
 And man, and every finite being, fate.
 What is divine is of necessity free.
 I heard and I received, and from my soul,
 Intense in quiet, perfect in repose,
 Like sleep's fantastic frost-work melted death ;
 And entering straight the heaven-surrounding state
 Of deified existence among gods,
 It grew ignited with divinity.
 Again the world-soul voiced itself, and I
 Drank in the fruitful glories of her words
 As earth consumes the golden skiey clouds.
 Two books there are which must be read ; the one
 Wherein the elements exist as leaves,
 And all the worlds as signs and symbols ; thus
 Earth is the symbol of humanity,
 Water of spirit, fire of Deity,
 And air of all things ; stars the truths of Heaven.
 Water and fire are elements divine ;
 Earth and air human ; Heaven and the soul
 From one proceed, and the blue heated skies ;
 Out of the other, body and abode.
 The sun too symbols spirit, and the moon

Soul, and the earth life-essence through all space ;
 And agents of destruction, like the flood,
 Presign regeneration ; also fire.

This present is the result of what is past
 And coming, but the temporal present only ;

The eternal present is before both past
 And future, and posterior to them both :

And these are verified in the Eterne,
 In act as in religion ; thus in man ;

Judgment is life, and memory like death,
 Imagination immortality.

The actual and ideal meet but once,
 Where pure impossibilities are facts.

Judge doubtful things by certainest, and dark
 By what is clear, and dangerous by safe ;

And prophesy of God to all which live,
 And aboriginal Heaven. And of the soul,

The other tome I spake of, believe thou,
 Body surrounds the human soul as in

Divine nature, which is its contrary,
 God's infinite spirit bounds the universe.

For Thy creation, although infinite,
 Is infinitely less than Thee, O God !

Thine is the spirit, and the soul is Thine,
 And all the thousand instincts of the heart.

The universe is simple ; God and I,
 Cause and effect, are all that in it is ;

And more ; for Cause containeth its effect.
 Cause, operation, and effect, are God,

Nature, and man : which both partake of one.
 Through error human souls accept the truth,

As through distorting air, the light whereby
 They live, of sun or star ; and thus through time,

And ceaseless as the pulsings of the blood,
 The inspiration of the spirit acts

In one or other's bosom. Through the world
 The soul receives God, but from God, the soul

Receives the spirit ; thus the chosen, thus the world ;
 The cloud-led many, the star-guided wise ;
 For spirit makes all time and nature clear,
 As of old water purified by fire.
 Methought I answered, as it might be, thus.
 Life, like a floating island, comes and goes,
 We know not, mean not how. From Heaven to earth
 A star falls, and we track a cold dark mass
 Of trembling half-transparent somethingness,
 Which is, in our conception, as unlike
 All astral issue and celestial birth,
 As wind is unlike wisdom ; thunder, snow.
 We know not that we are, nor how, nor why.
 The distance between finite, howsoe'er
 Great, and the infinite is infinite.
 Our life is incomplete and sectional ;
 And the large unity of all we seek
 In vain to realize ; yet much we strive ;
 And every ideal of union,
 Which youth makes to itself, is beautiful,
 Or blissful, mostly. Still through every sign,
 From morn all musical to blank starred night,
 Death's wolflike shadow haunts the vital orb ;
 With spectral darkness, and eclipse of life,
 Freezing the fiery marrow of the world.
 While yet these words were vibrant on my tongue,
 I saw the sun-god stall his flaming steeds
 In customary splendour ; which, in turn,
 Shaking their lightning trappings off to earth,
 And snatching a few golden grains of sleep,
 Solaced them with their corner in the west ;
 Towards where earth uplifts her crystal crown,
 White with all yearéd snows and radiant rime ;
 While ever and again the dancing morn,
 E'en in the mid abyss of solar night,
 With roseate blaze impowers the shining skies,
 And pure prismatic fire, that lights the stars.

Stretching her hand into the nebulous depths
 Of everlasting space, again the spirit spake.
 As the ætherial essence of the world,
 Whereof all matter is mere increment,
 Speak I in truth to thee ; and now of earth ;—
 For as there is one Father of all things,
 And as of spirit is all action born,
 So of one substance is all nature made.
 Regard not earth as the whole universe,
 Nor minify the orb into a point
 Where all relations vanish. Earth receives
 In an immortal influence, and gives back.
 Out of her bright and generative heart,
 To all that is therein conceived, and born
 Of her exuberant bosom inwardly,
 The vital virtues of the potent Heavens ;
 Backwards and forwards passing, night and day,
 With an invisible radiance filling up
 The interstitial skies. To all the forms
 Of plant, fish, brute, bird, insect, and the lives
 Insensible and unconceived, which were,
 One time, as living continents, whereof
 The elemental matter of the world
 Is mainly made, so that men live on life—
 Round to tyrannic man, whose soul's composed
 Of diverse powers and passions, He who made
 Out of life's infinite estate, doth give
 To all these forms renewal in the mass
 Ceaseless ; to man alone a personal
 Regeneration ; for as true as 'tis
 That all are generated, so like surely
 All are to be regenerated ; all
 Differ among each other in degree,
 Of beauty, eminence, vitality ;
 The individuals of each species, too,
 Among themselves. If some excel, the rest
 Suffer not therefore. Wrong to none is wrought

By honour to a high peculiar few,
 Self-meritless, whose whole position stands
 Ingenerable by themselves. Exists
 This class elect in all things ; best in man ;
 In whom the motional music of the Heavens,
 The elemental workings of the world,
 Upward and downward, circular and plane,
 The spirit pure impassible of fire,
 Are symbolled all in sunlike excellence.
 Behold ! the spirit said and I beheld
 Earth, the horizon black with numberless
 Men, and a mountainous altar high amidst,
 Shaped like a vast inverted pyramid,
 Whereby four forms stood ; one arrayed in white
 And one in uniformal black ; in green
 The third, and of all hues the fourth. And most
 I marked at first the two first-named. All bliss
 Each claimed as his alone, denouncing one
 The other :—both all warning that fierce fire
 Burned for their sake who sware not by a creed
 Garbled, patched up and contradictory ;
 Confounding text and comment, with no rule
 Interpretative ; now as literal,
 Now figurative holding laws like plain,
 Which where most true impracticable were,
 Where possible, intolerable. Love
 Nathless they said, this pair, from first to last
 Being its Author's nature, infinite
 Love to a mortal creature, the sole cause
 Which prompted God to sacrifice His Son,
 In order that like infinite return
 Of glory and of blessing might accrue
 To the enfranchised universe ; their creeds
 And deeds as arctic from antarctic wide.
 At either side they stood and pressed the world,
 And prayed right earnestly and honestly
 All men to serve God and obey the law,

Accept of Heaven's free grace, and something do
 To help God in the saving of their souls.
 And myriads sought their several priestly sides,
 And did as was enjoined them, and rejoiced.
 Then something passed between them and the twain
 Ceasing opponent duarchy atoned,
 In friendship for past enmity, and straight
 Culling all contraries from holy grounds,
 Built up an idol of all elements
 Most disaccordant. Thus his deathly feet
 They framed of fire, of earth his lower limbs,
 His upper part of water, his head air;
 And throned him on the broad and upturned base
 Of that earth-piercing altar pyramid.
 And round about him last a fane they reared,
 To which all earth in divers modes gave aid;
 A circular temple patent to the sun,
 Sea-lavered, mountain-columned, kingdom-paved.
 When as he sat his throne there rose a shout
 From the foregathered multitudes, which caused
 The circumspatial skies shake, cold with dread,
 And earth revibrate to her inmost base.
 In his right hand he held the sun and moon,
 And in his left a winged orb cross-crowned;
 Bare by his side hung down a sword of fire
 Curved comet-wise. A rosary of stars
 Decked either wrist. With stars his breast was mailed
 Like to a knight's of old, with scales steel-gilt,
 Or like an ice-plant with perpetual dew,
 Or diamond beetle round beglobed with light.
 And the unsphered skies darkened momentarily.
 To him was brought the world bound hand and foot,
 Which more intently worshipped than the poor
 Bewildered devotee of eastern lands,
 Whose idol-car wheels roll through human dust,
 His golden squatting demons diamond eyed.
 Round that great altar thousand lesser were,

Each one enringed with crowds. The monarch there,
 Upon that central shrine where sate the god,
 Laid down his crown ; the warrior cast his sword,
 The peer his glittering badge ; the merchant prince
 His hoarded coffer. There the statesman placed
 His seal of power, the priest his robe, the bard
 And the harmonious master lyre and pen ;—
 Who soar or mine, in science or in art,
 Their elements, and implements, and gifts ;
 The scribe, and the physician, and the wright
 His several offering. Thither hied the crowds
 Of mediate millions between gain and toil ;
 Thither the brawny armed and brown browed hind,
 Whose wealth was in his will and daily work,
 Repaired, and earth's luxurious toilless tribes
 Followed, with each their handsfull of good things,
 And felt their conscience lightened ; blessed their lot,
 And all went well and ended happily.
 Those minor altars were the hate and scorn
 Of the majestic pair who served the highest,
 And sware athwart the cross to make all souls
 Believe alike in clockworklike content.
 Yet might they not. The many most succeed—
 The great few fail ; and among those few these.
 Each leader held within his hand and read
 Choice scraps to those about him, from the book
 Whose words are volumes, and whose laws are life
 To spiritual reason only. Hence
 A countless train of misbeliefs arose,
 Like pure parhelia, high above all power
 Of man or priest to hinder or destroy.
 Some of belief thought most ; of practice some.
 Some thought of God as darkness, some as light ;
 And worshipped each ; some held that space was God ;
 While others said, and wisely, God is what ?
 Some held that God, and all the Heavenly powers,
 As with the starry panarchy of space,

Were of one essence, like divine and high ;
 Some that the Word and Holy Spirit were
 Deific functions only of one God :
 He who in Heaven was Father, was on earth
 Born as the Son, and, in the chosen twelve,
 Spake him as tonguéd fire ; conceiting thus ;
 God as the sun, His word our Lord, its light,
 And its all comforting heat the Holy Ghost.
 Some deemed that He, the all-existent One,
 Revolving all things orblike in Himself,
 And future fates, abyss within abyss,
 Through endless ages, hit at last on man
 As the consummate accident of time,
 And everlasting bubble, to whom were
 Nought necessary save necessity.
 Some that in mystical quaternity
 All Deity existed ; and the first
 Y'cleped Ineffable, and the last Truth ;
 Father and Son, gods intermediate.
 These deemed that, wholly contemplating God,
 The soul, suffused in Deity, required
 No active virtue, but on God's own breast
 Lay lulled in glory, and in unitive
 Life with divinity, its end fulfilled,
 Inordinately happy. Some maintained
 That it was necessary to believe
 That whatsoe'er is done by men, is done
 By God's spirit ; and thence conclude no sin
 Exists, unless to those who think it such ;
 And that to live without all doubt or dread,
 Were to restore to life the paradise
 Initiate of the soul—that pleasant place,
 Erst deafforested—and realize
 The catholic salvation of the world.
 Some held that, now and then, there speaks in all
 The word of God, His light enlightening all,
 If not resisted carnally. Some judged

The evil of sin and punishment alike
 Reflected on divine rule, if eterne ;
 And some believed, despite all threats of fire,
 Here and hereafter, that the soul ere yet
 Clad with the body had forelived in Heaven
 A holy creature, but that sinning, earth
 Was its amercement made, its prison flesh ;
 From which emerging, it shall gather back
 Its preexistence, and by grace resume
 The heavenly powers belonging it : in dreams,
 They said, dim glimpses come of blessed states,
 And shadowings of power, which to the soul
 Seem inborn and accustomed as a star,
 When first immersed in light it leaves the sun.
 Some held, and erred, that makers there were twain ;
 One good, one evil ; that the soul was made
 By the good Lord, the body by the bad,
 And sin was fleshly ; that the Lord of Life
 Lived in the sun, the Holy Spirit air,
 Wisdom the moon, the Father the abyss
 Of light inhabited ; that Christ was Eve's
 Tempter in Eden, that baptismal rites
 Should be performed with fire, and milk and wine
 Be held accursed. Some believed two souls
 In every man ; celestial this, and that
 Infernal, but expellable by prayer
 And holy habit, fasting, watching, alms.
 Some thought the Christian world to reconcile,
 And Heathendom and Jewry, by a creed
 Of one eternal Father-God, and two
 Christs ; one in Heaven, the other born on earth ;
 And that the Holy Spirit Wisdom was,
 The sister of the Son. Some held that He
 And Satan were two lower powers, whom God
 Had pitted 'gainst each other during time ;
 But that the final conquest is the Lord's.
 Others that, at His second coming, Christ

Would give His saints a carnal paradise ;
 Nothing in Being vieing with that vast
 Impossibility. Some deemed our Lord
 Alone was God, the Father and the Spirit ;
 And some that He was simply best of men ;
 Others that Christ was God and Jesus man ;
 Believing not the aforetime unity
 Of the Divine and human. Some maintained
 That each believer was himself a Christ ;
 Some that the mortal mother of our Lord
 A goddess was, and sacrificed to her,
 Pretemporal, immortal. Some believed
 The person of our Saviour, while on earth,
 Was everywhere at once, and that the same,
 At His ascension, settled in the sun—
 And that the body of the universe
 With Him was coeternal. Some that Christ
 Received His flesh-frame of the elements,
 Which at His death He paid back to the world,
 And rose to Heaven incorporal. Others deemed
 His body was a dreary phantom, only
 Impassible of pain, or thirst, or death ;
 Making the love of God of no effect,
 And thus the deicidal tribes made quit :
 The deeds of nations, being thoughts of God.
 Others that Deity in bread and wine,
 Made into consecrated elements,
 Resided ; round it some, some under it ;
 As though the hand of man imparted God.
 Some thought perfection was attainable
 In this life, and with these means, as in Heaven ;
 And that with man it rests to reinstate
 The Adamic Eden, and by converse pure,
 And holy life, redeem the sacred day,
 When nature's every work was miracle ;
 When man, and brute, and angel all communed
 In happy ease, and fruits made good and wise ;

As ere the immortal seraph-serpent stung
 Heaven's virgin star, or brake young nature's seal,
 Or left his lightning trail through all divine
 Traditions, and became what now he is,
 The spiritual discord of all life ;
 But ah ! from that primitival world to this,—
 From Eden to Chaldæa what a change,
 From Paradise to Persia ! Some eschewed
 All earth-lore, and would have that God required
 Good deeds alone from men ; some that nor law
 Nor gospel profited the human soul ;
 That good works furthered not, ill hindered not
 Salvation ; but pure faith alone sufficed ;—
 Others that neither worship, work, nor faith
 Was requisite ; that war and socialty
 Were equal evils ; and that marriage was
 Nor type, nor bond, nor good, but simple sin.
 Some said all deadly sin was past church power
 To pardon, even on due penitence ;
 And that the blessed twelve could never hope
 Of aught but venial sins to be released
 Even of God Himself. And two there were
 Of mortal men who deemed that they, the last
 God witnesses on earth, could save or damn
 Whome'er they willed ; false birth of falsity !
 Conformably to fate they lived and died,
 Their souls absorpt of darkness, brides of death,
 For over all Death works his hellish will.
 Some thought the gates of Heaven were sealed to all
 Until the great re-rising ; some that the world
 Was made by angels only, and not by God,
 Who would not with aught earthly soil His hand.
 Some in annihilation placed their hope,
 Wherein to be absorbed was bliss thrice blest ;
 And deified the devil in their hearts,
 In dreams of everlasting nothingness.
 Some thought a kind indifference towards aught

Which haps in this life, and full consciousness
 Of blest necessity in every act,
 And charity in all opined of man,
 Made true religion and philosophy.
 Some grains of truth-gold, some few lines of life,
 Starring the vast formations of the false ;
 And for thus meddling with these mysteries
 Unmeant by Heaven to be cleared up on earth ;—
 Outtaking those who have eyes trained to see,
 Nor all its scriptural darknesses illumed,
 Those twin compellers of conformity,
 Erst marked, condemned, from time to time, to hell,
 Rack, massacre, and fire each bubble sect
 Which rose in full-blown emptiness, to shew
 Their own familiar charity, and prove
 The inspiration which they claim of God,
 Who tells all, He is love. Those sects themselves,
 Full of molecular motion, fought like mites
 Which fill a water-drop, and day by day
 Consumed or cursed each other. For the rest
 Who stood round the great altar saying creeds,
 And each had his dissenting heretics,
 The third one simply smote by the sword-edge
 All who dared doubt his darkly chequered tale,
 Which was nor very truth nor very lie,
 But hung suspended between Heaven and earth,
 Baseless as utter void. The fourth was meek
 In mood, as ignorant as tolerant ;
 Though every now and then he closed his eyes
 And rose, and slew promiscuously round.
 The various modes of practice next I marked
 Wherein devoutest trust is oftentimes placed
 Among mankind, and much my mind was moved ;
 And my soul sank within me like a star
 Sea-setting, when it leaves all Heaven behind.
 Some burned, some drowned, some maimed, some clammed
 themselves,

Or others, all in proof of piety ;
 Some sacrificed their children, some their sires ;
 Some fruits, some flowers, beasts, and the young of beasts ;
 In honest, obstinate hope of earning Heaven.
 Others heaped stone on stone, and shrine on shrine,
 To mock the span of Heaven and the stars ;
 Silver inlaid with gold, gold decked with gem.
 Others dug out the earth, and worshipped fumes,
 And paid respect to vapours which inhaled
 Bred holy inspiration. Some in warm
 And reeking entrails read the signs of God,
 Or deemed they did, prophetic. Others sun,
 And moon, and stars, or fixed or wandering,
 Adored, in the belief that through them came
 Vast spiritual inflow : earth-born fire
 Or sun-born, rivers, mountains, seas, stones, herbs,
 Brute, insect, fish, bird, earth, and air, and man ;
 All these were sworn by, prayed to, in the wild
 Sad faith, that man's humanity by them
 Could gain some earnest of divinity.
 Some only ate of certain meats, or laid
 Under dread ban all flesh and milk and wine,
 Extolling green food and the sparkling spring ;
 As though brutes only spiritually lived,
 And virtue were a vegetable thing.
 Some ate and drank, at stated intervals,
 Or more or less, a certain something which
 If what they say, we wrong the cannibals ;
 While others fasted forty days a year,
 Prayed fifty times a day, or in the face
 Of babes cold water splashed, wherewith, past doubt,
 That generation was much edified,
 And the original sin-burnt soul well cooled.
 Others wore iron spikes around their waists,
 Burned fire in their bosoms, with their bread
 Mixed dust and filth, ate grass, and naked lived,
 Or crawled for leagues, like serpents, in the dust,

In sign of self abasement. Base indeed
 Such writhings to propitiate our God,
 In whom was perfected all sacrifice,
 All penalty, all humbument, all death ;
 He who was God in Heaven ere man on earth ;
 Who left His universal work complete,
 The spiritual as the natural,
 When at His bright ascent to Heaven He gave
 A second sabbath to the universe ;
 Who of His own free will gives life to all,
 And once too of His own free choice chose death,
 That all might of necessity be free ;
 Turning humanity into deity,
 As water into wine, and saved the whole.
 These things are true of all, some few except,
 Versed in the ways of Heaven as are the stars,
 Who through all time have trusted nought but God,
 Whose seats are on the mounts of Paradise,
 Hewn out of living rock, though here they feel
 The flat deformity of creature life.
 Once more I looked around, and hour by hour
 The multitudes departed yet increased ;
 But one way came they, countless ways they went ;
 Through age, birth, pestilence, vice, folly, war,
 Disease, excess, woe, famine, sin, and fate ;
 And as I gazed, priest, altar, crowd, and god
 Vanished and were no more. On earth's bright head
 The dew of morn and even fell as wont,
 The tear of sorrow and the tear of joy.
 Behold now Heaven ! the spirit said and I
 One vast and universal Heaven behold,
 God's universal and perpetual smile,
 Which harmonizing all things all o'erspreads.
 There every thing hath life, the elements
 All vitalized, and glorified, and named
 Love, wisdom, strength, and beauty, and all hues
 Which nature owns, from earth's original blush

To Heaven's eternal azure, hallowed are ;
 While winds all musical and odorous,
 Like breath of Deity, in sentient clouds,
 The delicate chariots of journeying souls,
 Issue their fruitful blessings round the skies.
 There all exalting joys abide ; there flow
 The fountains of eternal life and streams
 Of perfect virtue for soul-baptism ;
 There roll the wide abyssal mysteries
 Yet luminous with life ; there grow the groves
 Whose trees of golden boles and pearly fruits
 Wind-moved forth utter all harmonious praise.
 Cities and fanes of diamond crown the hills,
 Bright with the sole companionship of Heaven,
 Of this preearthly paradise ; wherein
 Who enter are by kindest angels clad
 In garments wrought of rainbows, and in robes
 Woven of sunset clouds, while viny wreaths
 Gemberries bearing form their coronals,
 Exuberant of all fruitage. Food they need not
 Who live on life and quaff eternal joy,
 And rest in peace as in the down of doves.
 There many pass all time the hour of God
 In pure and whole contentment. Others still
 In ceaseless, boundless progress, as from star
 To star, from bliss to bliss pass, until all
 Return to God renewed, like rays of light,
 The all-attractive and delightful light
 Redeemed up to the sun. In one band there
 Jew, christian, moslem, heathen, gracious live
 In mutual forgiveness blessing each
 The other ; what too in their several creeds
 Is proven false each casts away, what true
 All keep uniting and amending, for
 In all was truth though thrice the truth in one.
 As to the sleepless eye form forth at last
 The long immeasurable layers of light

And beams of fire enormous in the east,
 The broad foundations of the Heaven-domed day
 All fineless as the future, so uprose
 On mine the great celestial certainty.
 The mask of matter fell off. I beheld,
 Void of all seeming, the sole substance mind,
 The actual ideal of the world.
 An absolutest essence filled my soul,
 And superseding all its modes and powers,
 Gave to the spirit consciousness divine ;
 A sense of vast existence in the skies,
 Boundless commune with spiritual light,
 And ultimate eternity of Heaven.
 And I returned mine hungry eyes to the light
 Of the great spirit's eyes which past the first
 Intensifying blindness clearer saw
 The words she uttered of triumphant truth ;
 For truly as my vision heightened, lo !—
 The universal volume of the Heavens,
 Star-lettered in celestial characters,
 Moved musically into words like these,
 Which her breath framed, and varied momentarily ;
 And I perceived that thus she spake of God.
 God is the sole and self-existent one
 Superessential being, of whom was
 He who is with the father co-eterne,
 The first and last of Being ; and of both
 The spirit, and these all are one and same
 In Godhood, yet distinct in Deity.
 From the Son's hand came all things visible,
 And from the Spirit all invisible,
 Forth flowing from and ebbing back to Him,
 Creation's God, regeneration's Lord.
 Man's Saviour must be God ; and such was Christ.
 The father of the faithful and the first
 Of men was each in Him retyped ; and thus
 The chosen and the world are blessed both.

And all effect, commensurate with its cause,
 Each infinite, Creation stands redeemed
 By Him, first, last, and mediate, God with man.
 Full in the bosom of humanity
 As on the waters of the unborn world
 The spirit God came down, uniting thus
 The mortal and eternal in the word
 Foreuttered ere all ages, blessing all.
 This is the legend which surrounds the world
 Though the best part be nigh obliterate.
 Men are of one kind therefore and two sorts
 Irrelative as in mortality,
 United only in the spirit state.
 With each is imperfection, but to these
 Comes by God's grace one elemental shock
 To fuse the ruinous chaos wrought by sin,
 And nature make communicant of Heaven.
 Both gain the end so sought, and must ; but those
 Labour along with wheels while these have wings.
 To these God gives His spirit ; while for all
 The Son laid down the Heavens as a crown,
 And clothed Himself in clay ; thus taking up
 Of all the nature, that all might in Him
 Be one ; and full and holy equalness
 Belong humanity as angelhood,
 Of glory varied, level all in bliss.
 The nations, all which die to be redeemed,
 Shall find desire unite with destiny.
 And for the chosen, 'tis enough to know
 God knoweth all whom He doth choose and save ;
 And they know that He knows. Though all the powers
 Of air array themselves in lines of fire,
 And arm them with the armoury of death ;
 Though all the hosts of hell encamp them round,
 High as the tented mountains of the earth,
 Yet, at a wave of His hand, like to slaves,
 They vanish from the assiegement of the saints.

Transition is to all which live, life's law ;
 To some of downward and deterior lot ;
 The soul subdued to superstition sinks—
 To some the link of supramundane bliss,
 Whose souls are dominations incarnate,
 Yea sons of stars which darting out of Heaven
 Made themselves mortal for the mother's sake ;
 Who with original motion fling off truths
 Of perfect light, oracular of God,
 Which in their minds who worthily receive
 Are full of inborn virtue more than known,
 Accomplative of destiny divine ;
 And like the luminous rudiments of Heaven,
 Which gradually gravitate to worlds,
 Corroborate their nature, and make free
 Their souls to course through the blank void of time
 To the bright fulness of eternity.

O'er all extends God's love ; for greater need
 Is that the base or ignorant soul should rise
 And be made noble, wise, blest, than slave on
 In hell through burning ages, to adjust
 The balance sin on earth had wronged ; for sin,
 Irreconcilable to Deity,
 Yet unavoidable to human soul,
 And wherefore He hath absolutely made
 His own hands answerable, shall become
 The contrary of all things, and not be.
 These are the great initials of the world :
 Being is one, the central, infinite cause,
 Common to both creator and create,
 The great substratum of the universe :
 Knowing and doing, and the fact of form,
 The coexistent laws of one extreme,
 The other all imbounding and alone.
 From one divine all permeant unity
 Proceeds the multitudinous infinite,
 Mental, material, and essential—God,

In justice to Himself, and love to all,
 Basing in elemental equalness
 The whole on grace ; thus earth and moon were made
 Like syllables of light, uttered of God ;
 The earth conceived in music, and the moon
 Lady of all the orbéd deities,
 Like her who wears in Heaven the twelve-starred crown,
 And with all creatures blest of God ; who with
 A sevenfold blessing and inviolate rest,
 Yea, with His sabbath, sealed the perfect world,
 Making it over to eternity,
 And angel musings ; the bright universe,
 The double tabled book of Heaven and earth,
 Despite all due deficiency and sin
 Which in all souls inhere till God assumes,
 Progressing aye, possessing too all bliss
 Elect and universal in the Heavens.
 From God, the sun-creator, nature was,
 Ætherial essences, all elements,
 And souls therein indigenous, and man
 Symbolic of all being. Out of earth
 The matron moon was moulded, and the sea
 Filled up the shining chasm. Both fulfil
 One orbit, and one nature, and all orbs
 With them, one fate, one universal end.
 From the projective moment of all light
 The moon was in the sun, and in the sun
 The form of earth was, and the sun in Heaven
 The incarnation of the fiery skies.
 And when in earth the sun and moon make one
 Nature is glorified, and enters Heaven.
 The spirit bursts its immaterial shell
 And form impalpable, regaining thus
 The vast vacuity which fills all life,
 And wherein dwells the incommunicable.
 Again the Spirit as a gale of light,
 Whose words like cloudless thunder, wrought in me

Meet apperception of the sum of things.
 The natural creation ended first,
 Commenced the spiritual, which in God
 Aforehand lived ; thus time unfolds the seed
 Sown in eternity and reapt therein ;
 The great paternal and invisible fire
 Which eateth that it issueth, and wherein
 All filiated nature ceaseth work ;
 Being an infinite means as well as end.
 Thy name, O Immortality ! to man
 Sounds clear essential music ; through the soul
 Thrilling, as through the heartstrings of a star
 Its tidal pulses and dim throbs of light,
 Ere fraternized in Heaven ; yea round that hope,
 So vast yet vague, which like the northern morn
 One hour usurps the midsky, and the next
 Lies buried 'neath the pole, are gathered thoughts
 And truths, which with their weight determine life ;
 As motion in an atom leads at last
 To a world's orbit—mote and motion given.
 For the exalted spirit prepared with power
 Sublimes and fuses in itself all else ;
 And thus self-conscious of its inner life
 Makes all externals subjèct, and maintains
 That rule o'er thoughts and things which in itself
 Is present proof of what the world most seeks,
 The boundless union of the soul with God.
 Now matter makes not one continuous orb,
 Nor is light all-where massed alike. The stars
 Perradiated each like thunder bolts
 Stand, clustered into omniformal spheres.
 The wise well know true union is in Heaven,
 And pure totality, and there alone.
 Behold ! the spirit said, and I beheld
 A bright miraculous mystery of God :
 The divine marriage of the sun and moon.
 The sun was flaming high in Heaven ; the moon

Mighty though mild, and all the saintly stars
 Softer than sunlight, stronger than the moon,
 Shining at once in grandeur and grave bliss.
 It was the world's All-sire gave the bride. The stars
 Were her immortal bridemaids, and strewed
 Along the glittering path she trode through Heaven
 Life-blooms and wreathed sun-rays of all hues.
 Deep in all dayless time degreeless space
 The shining fane stood: and the angels struck
 Their lyres of light, and even to the feet
 Of the Divine Ones bowed them, with serene
 Acclaim afar off hailing them, and cried
 Welcome thou Lord of life, thou Bride of light!
 All joy, all bliss be yours in Heaven and earth,
 And all the universal blessers choose.
 Choicest of all the chosen, art thou here?
 Thy love is more delicious than the rose,
 Yea, purer than the lily or the light.
 Lord of the day! the world awaits thee now;
 Earth's eyes are dim with watching for this day;
 The bread is broken and the wine is poured,
 And all the guests are gathered from the bounds
 Of Heaven's imperial horizon, to this
 The bright palatial centre. All things serve
 The hallowing rite which nature owns with God.
 And so they became one. In golden he,
 In silver car came she down the blue skies,
 But on return they clomb the clouds in one,
 And vanished in their snow. The marriage feast
 Was held an universal holiday
 Throughout the light-lit world: nor since have ceased
 The great congratulations. Peace and bliss
 Pervade the perfect state and all is love.
 Still as a star which overflows with light,
 She stood and spake intuitive of Heaven,
 The world-divining spirit whilom named.
 Now such as man is to himself is His

Divine idea ; but the God which is
 Is not the God men worship, not alone
 Ineffable, but inconceivable ;
 How shall an atom comprehend the Heaven ?
 Two points men occupy in space and time
 And half exist of matter and in form :
 Thus His existence is their opposite ;
 And all is either God or nothingness,
 Being with nonbeing identical.
 All terms are relative expressing bound,
 But Deity, interminable being,
 Hath ever therefore been unnamed ; but men
 Framed to exist in act and utterance,
 And grasping ever at the love of God,
 Strained to the breast of silence, breathe His name
 In pious perpetuity, and throw
 Off with orbicular action sphere on sphere,
 Like circlets of reiterated light
 Of thought on objects vastest and divine,
 In hope to know the great unknowable,
 The all prophetic universal I :
 Within whose ample essence all man's thought
 Respecting it, the infinite abstract
 And limitless negation, whether good
 Being, or life, or wisdom, the abyss,
 Silence, or truth, love, mind, will, intellect,
 Causer of causes, all theosophic lore
 Of man-born, or angelic mind, is lost,
 Like a stray wind which from some aëry height
 Soars, suicidal, up the dark inane.
 She ceased, the all-created, gazing down deep
 Into her own serene and shining breast ;
 O'er which inviolate and sublime abyss
 Her all-embracing arms she crossed in peace.
 She ceased, and all was silence. Earth and Heaven
 Like solar seas, unfathomably bright,
 Rolled forth their inmost radiance in twin tides,

Interminable. Since the first begotten day
 Until the last born eve when all shall end,
 And life's great vein within the embosoming Heavens
 Be utterly dried up ; till night shall come,
 As some cloud-monster eats up star on star
 The children of the light ; till never more
 Shall cloud refresh earth's lip, nor breeze her breast,
 Hath been beheld such glory, nor shall be
 Of nature serving God ; she sibyl-like
 Instinct with inspiration, and He her
 Endowing with all bliss unendingly.

HELEN. But why art thou of all men favoured thus ?
 To say there is a mystery in this
 Or aught is only to confess God. Speak !

FESTUS. It is God's will that I possess this power,
 Thus to attract great spirits to mine own,
 As steel magnetically charged draws steel ;
 Himself the magnet of the universe,
 Round whom all spirits tremble, and towards whom
 All tend.

HELEN. If as thou sayest it is good,
 May it be an immortal good to thee.

FESTUS. There is no keeping back the power we have.
 He hath no power who hath not power to use.
 Some of these beings whom I speak of are
 Pure spirits, other bodies soulical :
 For spirit is to soul as wind to air.
 They give me all I seek, and at a wish
 Would furnish treasures, thrones, or palaces ;
 But all these things have I eschewed, and chosen
 Command of mind alone, and of the world
 Unbodied and all-lovely.

HELEN. Is not this
 Pleasure too much for mortal to be good ?

FESTUS. All pleasure is with Thee, God ! elsewhere, none.
 Not silver-ceiled hall, nor golden throne,
 Set thick with priceless gems, as Heaven with stars,

Or the high heart of youth with its bright hopes ;—
 Nor marble gleaming like the white moonlight,
 As 'twere an apparition of a palace
 Inlaid with light as is a waterfall ;—
 Not rainbow-pinions coloured like yon cloud,
 The sun's broad banner o'er his evening tent,
 Can match the bright imaginings of a child
 Upon the glories of his coming years ;
 How equal, then, the full-assured faith
 Of him to whom the Saviour hath vouchsafed
 The Heaven of His bosom ? What can tempt
 In its performance equal to that promise ?
 My soul stands fast to Heaven as doth a star ;
 And only God can move it, who moves all.
 There are who might have soared to what I spurned ;
 And like to Heavenly orders human souls ;
 Some fitted most for contemplation, some
 For action, those for thrones, and these for wheels.

HELEN. Tell me what they discourse upon, these angels ?

FESTUS. They speak of what is past or coming, less
 Of present things or actions. Some say most
 About the future, others of the gone,
 The dim traditions of eternity,
 Or Time's first golden moments. One there was
 From whose sweet lips elapsed as from a well,
 Continuously, truths which made my soul,
 As they sank in it, fertile with rich thoughts—
 Spake to me oft of Heaven, and our talk
 Was of divine things always—angels, Heaven,
 Salvation, immortality, and God ;
 The different states of spirits, and the kinds
 Of being in all orbs, or physical,
 Or intellectual. I never tired
 Preferring questions, but at each response
 My soul drew back, sealike, into its depths,
 To urge another charge on him. This spirit
 Came to me daily for a long, long time,

Whene'er I prayed his presence. Many a world
 He knew right well which man's eye never yet
 Hath marked, nor ever may mark while on earth;
 Yet grew his knowledge every time he came.
 His thoughts all great, and solemn, and serene,
 Like the immensest features of an orb,
 Whose eyes are blue seas, and whose clear broad brow
 Some cultured continent, came ever round
 From truth to truth—day bringing as they came.
 He was to me an all-explaining spirit,
 Teaching divine things by analogy
 With mortal and material. Thus of God,
 He shewed, as the three primal rays make one
 Sole beam of Light, so the three Persons make
 One God; neither without the other is.
 However bright or beautiful itself
 The theme he touched, he made it more so by
 His own light, like a fire-fly on a flower.
 And one of all I knew the most of, yet
 The least can I say of him; for full oft
 Our thoughts drown speech, like to a foaming force,
 Which thunders down the echo it creates.
 Yet must I somewhat tell of him. He was
 The spirit evil of the universe,
 Impersonate. Oh, strange and wild to know!
 Perdition and destruction dwelt in him,
 Like to a pair of eagles in one nest.
 Hollow and wasteful as a whirlwind was
 His soul; his heart as earthquake, and engulfed
 World upon world. In him they disappeared
 As might a morsel in a lion's maw.
 The world which met him rolled aside to let him
 Pass on his piercing path. His eyeballs burned
 Revolving lightnings like a world on fire;
 Their very night was fatal as the shade
 Of Death's dark valley. And his space-spread wings—
 Wide as the wings of darkness when she rose

As bidding earth be still. The birds ceased singing,
 And the trees breathing, and the lake smoothed down
 Each shining wrinkle, and the wind drew off.
 Time leant him o'er his scythe and, listening, wept.
 The circling world reined in her lightning pace
 A moment; Ocean hushed his snow-maned steeds,
 And a cloud hid the sun, as does the face
 A meditative hand: then spake she thus:—
 Scarce had the sweet song of the morning stars
 Which rang through space at the first sign of life
 Our earth gave, springing from the lap of God
 On to her orbit, ended, when from Heaven
 Came down a white-winged host; and in the east,
 Where Eden's Pleasance was, first furled their wings,
 Alighting like to snowflakes. There they built,
 Out of the riches of the soil around,
 A house to God. There were the ruby rocks,
 And there, in blocks, the quarried diamonds lay;
 Opal and emerald mountain, amethyst,
 Sapphire and chrysoprase, and jacinth stood
 With the still action of a star, all light,
 Like seabased icebergs, blinding. These, with tools
 Tempered in Heaven, the band angelic wrought,
 And raised, and fitted, having first laid down
 The deep foundations of the holy dome
 On bright and beaten gold; and all the while
 A song of glory hovered round the work
 Like rainbow round a fountain. Day and night
 Went on the hallowed labour till 'twas done.
 And yet but thrice the sun set, and but thrice
 The moon arose; so quick is work divine.
 Tower, and roof, and pinnacle without,
 Were solid diamond. Within, the dome
 Was eyeblue sapphire, sown with gold-bright stars
 And clustering constellations; the wide floor
 All emerald, earthlike, veined with gold and silver,
 Marble and mineral of every hue

And marvellous quality ; the meanest thing,
 Where all things were magnificent, was gold,
 The plainest. The high altar there was shaped
 Out of one ruby heartlike. Columned round
 With alabaster pure was all. And now
 So high and bright it shone in the midday light,
 It could be seen from Heaven. Upon their thrones
 The sun-eyed angels hailed it, and there rose
 A hurricane of blissfulness in Heaven,
 Which echoed for a thousand years. One dark,
 One solitary and foreseeing thought,
 Passed, like a planet's transit o'er the sun,
 Across the brow of God ; but soon He smiled
 Towards earth, and that smile did consecrate
 The temple to Himself. And they who built
 Bowed themselves down and worshipped in its walls.
 High on the front were writ these words—to God !
 The heavenly built this for the earthly ones,
 That in His worship both might mix on earth,
 As afterward they hope to do in Heaven.
 Had man stood good in Eden this had been :
 He fell, and Eden vanished. The bright place
 Reared by the angels, of all precious things,
 For the joint worship of the sons of earth
 And Heaven, fell with him, on the very day
 He should have met God and His angels there—
 The very day he disobeyed and joined
 The host of Death blackbanned. Eden fell ;
 The groves and grounds, which God the Lord's own feet
 Had hallowed ; the all-hued and odorous bowers
 Where angels wandered, wishing them in Heaven ;
 The trees of life and knowledge—trees of death
 And madness, as they proved to man—all fell ;
 And that bright fane fell first. No death-doomed eye
 Gazed on its glory. Earthquakes gulped it down.
 The Temple of the Angels, vast enough
 To hold all nations worshipping at once,

FESTUS. Love me as now, dear beauty!
Present or absent always, and 'twill be
More than enough of recompense for me.

HELEN. Hast met that angel late-while?

FESTUS. I have not.

Yet oft methinks I see her, catch a glimpse
Of her sun-circling pinions or bright feet
Which fitter seem for rainbows than for earth,
Or Heaven's triumphal arch, more firm and pure
Than the world's whitest marble;—see her seated oft
On some high snowy cloud-cliff, harp in hand,
Singing the sun to sleep as down he lays
His head of glory on the rocking deep:
And so sing thou to me.

HELEN. There, rest thyself. [*Sings.*

Oh! not the diamond starry bright
Can so delight my view,
As doth the moonstone's changing light
And gleamy glowing hue;
Now blue as Heaven, and then anon
As golden as the sun,
It hath a charm in every change—
In brightening, darkening, one.

And so with beauty, so with love,
And everlasting mind;
It takes a tint from Heaven above,
And shines as it's inclined;
Or from the sun, or towards the sun,
With blind or brilliant eye,
And only lights as it reflects
The life-light of the sky.

He sleeps! The fate of many a gracious moral
This, to be stranded on a drowsy ear.

SCENE—*Home.*

FESTUS *and* HELEN *at her Piano.—Dusk.*

HELEN. I cannot live away from thee. How can
A flower live without its root ?

FESTUS. I, too,
Must love or die.

HELEN. But I must have. Attend !
I am to say and do just as I please ;
I may command thee, may I ? that I will.

FESTUS. I love to be enslaved. Oh ! I would rather
Obey thee, beauty ! than rule men by millions.

HELEN. Near, as afar, I will have love the same—
With a bright sameness, like this diamond,
Which, wherever the light be, shines like bright.
And thou shalt say all sorts of pretty things
To me ; mind, to me only : write love-songs
About me, and I will sing them to myself ;
Perhaps to thee, sometime as it were now,
If I should happen to be very kind.

FESTUS. Sing now !

HELEN. No !

FESTUS. Tyrant ! I will banish thee.

HELEN. Nay, if to sing and play would please thee, I
Would die to music. It was very wrong
To say I would deny thee anything ;
But be not angry with me : for though God
Forgave me, I could ne'er forgive myself,
If I brought sorrow to thee. Could I, love ?

FESTUS. As thou art empress of my bosom, No !

HELEN. Nought fear I, but an unkind word from thee.
Dark death may frighten children, Hell the wretch
Who feels that he deserves it ; but for me,
I know I cannot do nor say aught worthy
Of the pure pain a frown of thine can cause,

Or a cold, careless look. No! never frown.
 If I do wrong, forgive me, or I die;
 And thou wilt then be wretcheder than I;—
 The unforgiving than the unforgiven.

FESTUS. I do absolve thee, beauty, of all faults,
 Past, present, or to come.

HELEN. Well, that will do.
 What was I saying? I love this instrument.
 It speaks, it thinks—nay, I could kiss it: look!
 There are three things I love half killingly;—
 Thee lastly, and this next, and myself first.

FESTUS. Thou art a silly, tiresome thing, and yet
 I never weary of thee; but could gaze,
 Faint with excess and not satiety,
 Upon thy countenance, with the serious joy
 With which we eye and eye the unbounded space
 Which is the visible attribute of God,
 Who makes all things within Himself; and thus
 It is the Heaven we hope for, and can find
 No point from which to take its altitude;
 For the Infinite is upwards, and above
 The highest thing created—upwards aye:
 So I could, thinking on thy face, believe
 An infinite expression, heightening still
 The longer that I thought, and leaving thee,
 Coming to thee, or being with thee,—love!

HELEN. I am so happy when with thee.

FESTUS.

And I.

They tell us virtue lives in self-denial.
 My virtue is indulgence. I was born
 To gratify myself unboundedly,
 So that I wronged none else. These arms were given me
 To clasp the beautiful, and cleave the wave;
 These limbs to leap and wander where I will;
 These eyes to look on every thing without
 Effort; these ears to list my loved one's voice;
 These lips to be divinised by her kiss:

And every sense, pulse, passion, power, to be
Swoln into sunny ripeness.

HELEN. Virtue is one
With nature, or 'tis nothing : it is love.

FESTUS. I come fresh from thee every time we meet,
Steeped in the still sweet dew of thy soft beauty,
Like earth at day-dawn, lifting up her head
Out of her sleep, star-watched, to face the sun—
So I, to front the world, on leaving thee.
Oh ! there is inspiration in thy look ;
Poesie, prophecy. Come hither, love ;
The evening air is sweet.

HELEN. It comes on us
Fresher and clearer through these dewy vine-leaves,
Fit for the forehead of the young wine-god.

FESTUS. A large, red egg of light the moon lies like
On the dark moor-hill, and now, rising slow,
Beams on the clear flood, smilingly intent,
Like a fair face, which loves to look on itself,
Saying—" There is no wonder that men love me,
For I am beautiful !"—as I heard thee.

HELEN. It was not right to overhear me that.

FESTUS. 'Twas very wrong to do what I could not help ;
But vanity speaks out.

HELEN. Well, I don't mind ;
I never knew that I was as I am
Till others told me.

FESTUS. Now were soon enough.

HELEN. Ah, nothing comes to us too soon but sorrow.

FESTUS. For all were happiness, if all might live
Long, or die soon, enough : for even us.

HELEN. Dost not remember, when, the other eve,
Thy friend the student called, there was a tale
Upon thy tongue he interrupted ?

FESTUS. Was there ?—

HELEN. A tale out of the poets, about love,
And happiness, and sorrow, and such things.

FESTUS. But I forget such things when thou art by.
Besides, I asked him here again, to-night,
Here at this hour ; and he is punctual.

HELEN. In truth, then, I despair of hearing it.
He keeps his word relentlessly. With not
More pride an Indian shews his foeman's scalp
Than he his watch for punctuality.

FESTUS. But tales of love are far more readily
Made than remembered.

HELEN. Tell-tale, make one, then.

FESTUS. Love is the art of hearts and heart of arts.
Conjunctive looks and interjectional sighs
Are its vocabulary's greater half.
Well then, my story says, there was a pair
Of lovers, once—

HELEN. Once! nay, how singular!

FESTUS. But where they lived indeed I quite forget ;—
Say anywhere—say here : their names were—I
Forgot those, too ; say any one's, say ours.

HELEN. Most probable, most pertinent, so far!

FESTUS. The lady was, of course, most beautiful,
And made her lover do just as she pleased ;
And consequently he did very wrong.
They met, sang, walked, talked folly, just as all
Such couples do, adored each other ; thought,
Spoke, wrote, dreamed of and for nought on earth
Except themselves ; and so on.

HELEN. Pray proceed!—

FESTUS. That's all.

HELEN. Oh, no!

FESTUS. Well, thus the tale ends ; stay!

No, I cannot remember nor invent.

HELEN. Do think!

FESTUS. I can't.

HELEN. Oh then, I don't like that:

'Tis not in earnest.

FESTUS. Well, in earnest, then.

She did but look upon him, and his blood
 Blushed deeper even from his inmost heart ;
 For at each glance of those sweet eyes a soul
 Looked forth as from the azure gates of Heaven ;
 She laid her finger on him, and he felt
 As might a formless mass of marble feel
 While feature after feature of a god
 Were being wrought from out of it. She spake,
 And his love-wildered and idolatrous soul
 Clung to the æry music of her words,
 Like a bird on a bough, high swaying in the wind.
 He looked upon her beauty and forgot,
 As in a sense of drowning, all things else ;
 And right and wrong seemed one, seemed nothing ; she
 Was beauty, and that beauty everything.
 He looked upon her as the sun on earth :
 Until, like him, he gazed himself away
 From Heaven so doing ; till he even wept,—
 Wept on her bosom as a storm-charged cloud
 Weeps itself out upon a hill, and cried—
 I, too, could look on thee until I wept,—
 Blind me with kisses ! Let me look no longer ;
 Or change the action of thy loveliness,
 Lest long same-seemingness should send me mad !
 Blind me with kisses ; I would ruin sight
 To give its virtue to thy lips, whereon
 I would die now, or ever live : and she,
 Soft as a featherfooted cloud on Heaven,
 While her sad face grew bright like night with stars,
 Would turn her brow to his and both be happy ;
 Numbered among the constellations they !
 Then as tired wanderer, snow-blinded, sinks
 And swoons upon the swelling drift, and dies,
 So on her dazzling bosom would he lay
 His famished lips, and end their travels there.
 Oh, happy they ! not he would go to Heaven,
 Not, though he might that moment.

HELEN. Nor I now.

FESTUS. Helen, my love!

HELEN. Yes, I am here.

FESTUS. It has

Been such a day as that, thou knowest, when first
I said I loved thee; that long, sunny day
We passed upon the waters—heeding nought,
Seeing nought but each other.

HELEN. I remember.

The only wise thing that I ever did—
The only good, was to love thee, and therefore
I would have no one else as wise as I.
Didst thou not say that student would be here?

FESTUS. I think I hear him every minute come.

HELEN. It is not kind. We should be more alone.
There was a time thou wouldst have no one else.

FESTUS. Am I not with thee all day?

HELEN. Yes, I know;

But often and often thou art thinking not
Of me.

FESTUS. My good child!—

HELEN. Well, I know thou lovest me;
And so I cannot bear thee to think, speak,
Or be with any but me.

FESTUS. Then I will not.

HELEN. Oh, thou wouldst promise me the clock round.

Now,

Promise me this—that I shall never die,
And I'll believe thee when I am dead—not till.
But let it pass. I am at peace with thee;
And pardon thee, and give thee leave to live.

FESTUS. Magnanimous!

HELEN. When earth, and Heaven, and all
Things seem so bright and lovely for our sakes,
It were a sin not to be happy. See,
The moon is up, it is the dawn of night.
Stands by her side one bold, bright, steady star—

Star of her heart, and heir to all her light,
 Whereon she looks so proudly mild and calm,
 As though she were the mother of that star,
 And knew he was a chief sun in his sphere,
 But by her side, in the great strife of lights
 To shine to God he had filially failed,
 And hid his arrows and his bow of beams.
 Mother of stars ! the Heavens look up to thee.
 They shine the brighter but to hide thy waning ;
 They wait and wane for thee to enlarge thy beauty ;
 They give thee all their glory night by night ;
 Their number makes not less thy loneliness
 Nor loveliness.

FESTUS. Heaven's beauty grows on us ;
 And when the elder worlds have ta'en their seats,
 Come the divine ones, gathering one by one,
 And family by family, with still
 And holy air, into the house of God—
 The house of light he hath builded for Himself,
 And worship Him in silence and in sadness,
 Immortal and immovable. And there
 Night after night, they meet to worship God.
 For us this witness of the worlds is given,
 That we may add ourselves to their great glory,
 And worship with them. They are there for lights
 To light us on our way through Heaven to God ;
 And we, too, have the power of light in us.
 Ye stars, how bright ye shine to-night ; mayhap
 Ye are the resurrection of the worlds,—
 Glorified globes of light ! Shall ours be like ye ?
 Nay, but it is ! this wild, dark earth of ours,
 Whose face is furrowed like a losing gamester's,
 Is shining round, and bright, and smooth in air
 Millions of miles off. Not a single path
 Of thought I tread, but that it leads to God.
 And when her time is out, and earth again
 Hath travailed with the divine dust of man,

Then the world's womb shall open, and her sons
 Be born again, all glorified immortals.
 And she, their mother, purified by fire,
 Shall sit her down in Heaven, a bride of God,
 And handmaid of the Everbeing One.
 Our earth is learning all accomplishments
 To fit her for her bridehood.

HELEN. He is here.

FESTUS. Welcome.

STUDENT. I thought the night was beautiful,
 But find the in-door scene still lovelier.

HELEN. Ah! all is beautiful where beauty is.

STUDENT. Night hath made many bards ; she is so lovely.
 For it is beauty maketh poesie,
 As from the dancing eye come tears of light.
 Night hath made many bards ; she is so lovely.
 And they have praised her to her starry face
 So long, that she hath blushed and left them, often.
 When first and last we met, we talked on studies ;
 Poetry only I confess is mine,
 And is the only thing I think or read of :—
 Feeding my soul upon the soft, and sweet,
 And delicate imaginings of song ;
 For as nightingales do upon glow-worms feed,
 So poets live upon the living light
 Of nature and of beauty ; they love light.

FESTUS. But poetry is not confined to books.
 For the creative spirit which thou seekest
 Is in thee, and about thee ; yea, it hath
 God's everywhere-ness.

STUDENT. Truly. It was for this
 I sought to know thy thoughts, and hear the course
 Thou wouldst lay out for one who longs to win
 A name among the nations.

FESTUS. First of all,
 Care not about the name, but bind thyself,
 Body and soul, to nature hiddenly.

Lo, the great march of stars from earth to earth,
 Through Heaven. The earth speaks inwardly alone.
 Let no man know thy business, save some friend—
 A man of mind, above the run of men ;
 For it is with all men and with all things.
 The bard must have a kind, courageous heart,
 And natural chivalry to aid the weak.
 He must believe the best of every thing ;
 Love all below, and worship all above.
 All animals are living hieroglyphs.
 The dashing dog, and stealthy-stepping cat,
 Hawk, bull, and all that breathe, mean something more
 To the true eye than their shapes shew ; for all
 Were made in love, and made to be beloved.
 Thus must he think as to earth's lower life,
 Who seeks to win the world to thought and love,
 As doth the bard, whose habit is all kindness
 To every thing.

HELEN. I love to hear of such.
 Could we but think with the intensity
 We love with, one might do great things, I think.

FESTUS. Kindness is wisdom. There is none in life
 But needs it and may learn ; eye-reasoning man,
 And spirit unassisted, unobscured.

STUDENT. Go on, I pray. I came to be informed.
 Thou knowest my ambition, and I joy
 To feel thou feedest it with purest food.

FESTUS. I cannot tell thee all I feel ; and know
 But little save myself, and am not ashamed
 To say, that I have studied my own life,
 And know it is like to a tear-blistered letter,
 Which holdeth fruit and proof of deeper feeling
 Than the poor pen can utter, or the eye
 Discover ; and that often my heart's thoughts
 Will rise and shake my breast, as madmen shake
 The stanchions of their dungeons, and howl out.

HELEN. But thou wast telling us of poesie,

And the kind nature-hearted bards.

FESTUS.

I was.

I knew one once—he was a friend of mine :
 I knew him well ; his mind, habits, and works,
 Taste, temper, temperament, and every thing ;
 Yet with as kind a heart as beats, he was
 Earthlike no sooner made than marred. Though young
 He wrote amid the ruins of his heart ;
 They were his throne and theme—like some lone king,
 Who tells the story of the land he lost,
 And how he lost it.

STUDENT.

Tell us more of him.

HELEN. Nay, but it saddens thee.

FESTUS.

'Tis like enough :

We slip away like shadows into shade ;
 We end, and make no mark we had begun ;
 We come to nothing, like a pure intent.
 When we have hoped, sought, striven, and lost our aim,
 Then the truth fronts us, beaming out of darkness,
 Like a white brow, through its overshadowing hair—
 As though the day were overcast, my Helen !
 But I was speaking of my friend. He was
 Quick, generous, simple, obstinate in end,
 High-hearted from his youth ; his spirit rose
 In many a glittering fold and gleamy crest,
 Hydra-like to its hindrance ; mastering all,
 Save one thing—love, and that out-hearted him.
 Nor did he think enough, till it was over,
 How bright a thing he was breaking, or he would
 Surely have shunned it, nor have let his life
 Be pulled to pieces like a rose by a child ;
 And his heart's passions made him oft do that
 Which made him writhe to think on what he had done,
 And thin his blood by weeping at a night.
 If madness wrought the sin, the sin wrought madness,
 And made a round of ruin. It is sad
 To see the light of beauty wane away,

Know eyes are dimming, bosom shrivelling, feet
 Losing their spring, and limbs their lily roundness ;
 But it is worse to feel our heart-spring gone,
 To lose hope, care not for the coming thing,
 And feel all things go to decay with us,
 As 'twere our life's eleventh month : and yet
 All this he went through young.

HELEN. Poor soul ! I should
 Have loved him for his sorrows.

FESTUS. It is not love
 Brings sorrow, but love's objects.

STUDENT. Then he loved.

FESTUS. I said so. I have seen him, when he hath had
 A letter from his lady dear, he blessed
 The paper that her hand had travelled over,
 And her eye looked on, and would think he saw
 Gleams of that light she lavished from her eyes
 Wandering amid the words of love there traced
 Like glow-worms among beds of flowers. He seemed
 To bear with being but because she loved him.
 She was the sheath wherein his soul had rest,
 As hath a sword from war : and he at night
 Would solemnly and singularly curse
 Each minute that he had not thought of her.

HELEN. Now that was like a lover ! and she loved
 Him, and him only.

FESTUS. Well, perhaps it was so.
 But he could not restrain his heart, but loved
 In that voluptuous purity of taste
 Which dwells on beauty coldly, and yet kindly,
 As night-dew, whensoever he met with beauty.

HELEN. It was a pity, that inconstancy—
 If she he loved were but as good and fair
 As he was worthy of.

STUDENT. It was his way.

FESTUS. There is a dark and bright to every thing ;
 To every thing but beauty such as thine,

And that is all bright. If a fault in him,
 'Twas one which made him do the sweetest wrongs
 Man ever did. And yet a whisper went
 That he did wrong : and if that whisper had
 Echo in him or not, it mattered little ;
 Or right or wrong, he were alike unhappy.
 Ah me ! ah me ! that there should be so much
 To call up love, so little to delight !
 The best enjoyment is half disappointment
 To that we mean or would have, in this world.
 And there were many strange and sudden lights
 Beckoned him towards them ; they were wreckers' lights :
 But he shunned these, and righted when she rose,
 Moon of his life, that ebb'd and flow'd with her,
 A sea of sorrow struck him, but he held
 On ; dashed all sorrow from him as a bark
 Spray from her bow bounding ; he lifted up
 His head, and the deep ate his shadow merely.

HELEN. A poet not in love is out at sea ;
 He must have a lay-figure.

FESTUS. I mean not
 To screen, but to describe this friend of mine.

HELEN. Describe the lady, too ; of course she was
 Above all praise and all comparison.

FESTUS. Why, true. Her heart was all humanity,
 Her soul all God's ; in spirit and in form,
 Like fair. Her cheek had the pale pearly pink
 Of seashells, the world's sweetest tint, as though
 She lived, one half might deem, on roses sopped
 In silver dew ; she spake as with the voice
 Of spherul harmony which greets the soul
 When at the hour of death the saved one knows
 His sister angels near ; her eye was as
 The golden pane the setting sun doth just
 Imblaze ; which shews, till Heaven comes down again,
 All other lights but grades of gloom ; her dark,
 Long rolling locks were as a stream the slave

Might search for gold and searching find. Her frown—

HELEN. Nay, could she frown ?

FESTUS. Ay, but a radiant frown
In common with the stars, which men malign
Who call malignant. Stars are always kind.

HELEN. Enough. I have her picture perfect. Cease.

STUDENT. What were his griefs ?

FESTUS. He who hath most of heart
Knows most of sorrow ; not a thing he saw
Nor did, but was to him, at times, a woe ;
At times indifferent, at times a joy.
Folly and sin and memory make a curse
Wherewith the future fires may vie in vain.
The sorrows of the soul are graver still.

STUDENT. Where and when did he study ? Did he mix
Much with the world, or was he a recluse ?

FESTUS. He had no times of study, and no place ;
All places and all times to him were one.
His soul was like the wind-harp, which he loved,
And sounded only when the spirit blew.
Sometimes in feasts and follies, for he went
Life-like through all things ; and his thoughts then rose
Like sparkles in the bright wine, brighter still.
Sometimes in dreams, and then the shining words
Would wake him in the dark before his face.
All things talked thoughts to him. The sea went mad,
And the wind whined as 'twere in pain, to shew
Each one his meaning ; and the awful sun
Thundered his thoughts into him ; and at night
The stars would whisper theirs, the moon sigh hers.
The spirit speaks all tongues and understands ;
Both God's and angel's, man's and all dumb things,
Down to an insect's inarticulate hum
And an inaudible organ. And it was
The spirit spake to him of everything ;
And with the moony eyes like those we see,
Thousands on thousands, crowding air in dreams,

Looked into him its mighty meanings, till
 He felt the power fulfil him, as a cloud
 In every fibre feels the forming wind.
 He spake the world's one tongue; in earth and Heaven
 There is but one, it is the word of truth.
 To him the eye let out its hidden meaning;
 And young and old made their hearts over to him;
 And thoughts were told to him as unto none
 Save one who heareth said and unsaid, all.
 And his heart held these as a grate its gleeds,
 Where others warm them.

STUDENT. I would I had known him.

FESTUS. All things were inspiration unto him:
 Wood, wold, hill, field, sea, city, solitude,
 And crowds and streets, and man where'er he was;
 And the blue eye of God which is above us;
 Brook-bounded pine spinnies where spirits flit;
 And haunted pits the rustic hurries by,
 Where cold wet ghosts sit ringing jingling bells;
 Old orchards' leaf-roofed aisles, and red-cheeked load;
 And the blood-coloured tears which yew trees weep
 O'er churchyard graves, like murderers remorseful.
 The dark green rings where fairies sit and sup,
 Crushing the violet dew in the acorn cup;
 Where by his new-made bride the bridegroom sips
 The white moon shimmering on their longing lips;
 The large o'erloaded wealthy-looking wains
 Quietly swaggering home through leafy lanes,
 Leaving on all low branches, as they come,
 Straws for the birds, ears of the harvest home.
 Summer's warm soil or winter's cruel sky,
 Clear, cold, and icy-blue like a sea-eagle's eye;
 All things to Him bare thoughts of minstrelsy.
 He drew his light from that he was amidst,
 As doth a lamp from air which hath itself
 Matter of light although it shew not. His
 Was but the power to light what might be lit.

He met a muse in every lovely maid ;
 And learned a song from every lip he loved.
 But his heart ripened most 'neath southern eyes,
 Which sunned their sweets into him all day long :
 For fortune called him southwards, towards the sun.

HELEN. Did he love music ?

FESTUS. The only music he
 Or learned or listened to was from the lips
 Of her he loved, and that he learned by heart.
 Albeit she would try to teach him tunes,
 And put his fingers on the keys ; but he
 Could only see her eyes, and hear her voice,
 And feel her touch.

HELEN. Why he was much like thee.

FESTUS. We had some points in common.

STUDENT. Was he proud ?

FESTUS. Lowliness is the base of every virtue :
 And he who goes the lowest builds the safest.
 My God keeps all His pity for the proud.

STUDENT. Was he world-wise ?

FESTUS. The only wonder is
 He knew so much, leading the life he did.

STUDENT. Yet it may seem less strange when we think back,
 That we, in the dark chamber of the heart,
 Sitting alone, see the world tabled to us ;
 And the world wonders how recluses know
 So much, and most of all how we know them.
 It is they who paint themselves upon our hearts
 In their own lights and darknesses, not we.
 One stream of light is to us from above,
 And that is that we see by, light of God.

FESTUS. We do not make our thoughts ; they grow in us
 Like grain in wood : the growth is of the skies,
 Which are of nature, nature is of God.
 The world is full of glorious likenesses.
 The poet's power is to sort these out,
 And to make music from the common strings

With which the world is strung ; to make the dumb
 Earth utter heavenly harmony, and draw
 Life clear, and sweet, and harmless as spring water,
 Welling its way through flowers. Without faith,
 Illimitable faith, strong as a state's
 In its own might, in God, no bard can be.
 All things are signs of other and of nature.
 It is at night we see Heaven moveth, and
 A darkness thick with suns. The thoughts we think
 Subsist the same in God as stars in Heaven.
 And as these specks of light will prove great worlds
 When we approach them sometime free from flesh,
 So too our thoughts will become magnified
 To mindlike things immortal. And as space
 Is but a property of God wherein
 Is laid all matter, other attributes
 May be the infinite homes of mind and soul.
 And thoughts rise from our souls, as from the sea
 The clouds sublimed in Heaven. The cloud is cold,
 Although ablaze with lightning—though it shine
 At all points like a constellation ; so
 We live not to ourselves, our work is life ;
 In bright and ceaseless labour as a star
 Which shineth unto all worlds but itself.

HELEN. And were this friend and bard of whom thou
 speakst,

And she whom he did love, happy together ?

FESTUS. True love is ever tragic, grievous, grave.
 Bards and their beauties are like double stars,
 One in their bright effect.

HELEN. Whose light is love.

STUDENT. Or is it poesie thou meanest ?

FESTUS. Both :

For love is poesie—it doth create ;
 From fading features, dim soul, doubtful heart,
 And this world's wretched happiness, a life
 Which is as near to Heaven as are the stars.

They parted ; and she named Heaven's judgment seat
 As their next place of meeting ; and 'twas kept
 By her, at least, so far that no where else
 Could it be made until the day of doom.

HELEN. So soon men's passion passes ! yea it sinks
 Like foam into the troubled wave which bore it.
 Merciful God ! let me entreat Thy mercy !
 I have seen all the woes of men—pain, death,
 Remorse, and worldly ruin ; they are little
 Weighed with the woe of woman when forsaken
 By him she loved and trusted. Hear, too, thou !
 Lady of Heaven, Mother of God and man,
 Who made the world His brother, one with God—
 Maid-mother ! mould of God, who wrought in thee
 By model as He doth in the world's womb,
 So that the universe is great with God—
 Thou in whom God did deify Himself,
 Betaking Him into mortality,
 As in Thy Son He took it into Him,
 And from the temporal and eternal made
 Of the soul-world one same and ever God !
 Oh, for the sake of thine own womanhood,
 Pray away aught of evil from her soul,
 And take her out of anguish unto thee,
 Always, as thou didst this one !

FESTUS. Who doth not
 Believe that that he loveth cannot die ?
 There is no mote of death in thine eye's beams
 To hint of dust, or darkness, or decay ;
 Eclipse upon eclipse, and death on death ;
 No ! immortality sits mirrored there,
 Like a fair face long looking on itself ;
 Yet thou shalt lie in death's angelic garb
 As in a dream of dress, my beautiful !
 The worm shall trail across thine unsunned sweets,
 And feast him on the heart men pined to death for ;
 Yea, have a happier knowledge of thy beauties

Than best-loved lover's dream e'er duped him with.

HELEN. It is unkind to think of me in this wise.
Surely the stars must feel that they are bright,
In beauty, number, nature, infinite ;
And the strong sense we have of God in us
Makes me believe my soul can never cease.
The temples perish, but the God still lives.

FESTUS. It is therefore that I love thee ; for that when
The fiery perfection of the world,
The sun, shall be a shadow and burnt out,
There is an impulse to eternity
Raised by this moment's love.

STUDENT. I pray it may !
Time is the crescent shape to bounded eye
Of what is ever perfect unto God.
The bosom heaves to Heaven, and to the stars ;
Our very hearts throb upwards, our eyes look ;
Our aspirations always are divine :
Yet is it in the gloom of soul we see
Most of the God about us, as at night.
For then the soul, like the mother-maid of Christ,
Is overshadowed by the Holy Spirit ;
And in creative darkness doth conceive
Its humanized Divinity of life.

FESTUS. Think then God shews His face to us no less
In spiritual darkness than in light.

HELEN. But of thy friend ? I would hear more of him.
Perhaps much happiness in friendship made
Amends for his love's sorrows.

FESTUS. Ask me not.

HELEN. But loved he never after ? Came there none
To roll the stone from his sepulchral heart,
And sit in it an angel ?

FESTUS. Ah, my life !
My more than life, my immortality !
Both man and womankind belie their nature
When they are not kind : and thy words are kind,

And beautiful, and loving like thyself;
 Thine eye and thy tongue's tone, and all that speak
 Thy soul, are like it. There's a something in
 The shape of harps as though they had been made
 By music: beauty's the effect of soul.
 And he of whom thou askest loved again.
 Could'st thou have loved one who was unlike men?
 Whose heart was wrinkled long before his brow?
 Who would have cursed himself if he had dared
 Tempt God to ratify his curse in fire:
 And yet with whom to look on beauty was
 A need, a thirst, a passion?

HELEN. Yes, I think
 I could have loved him; but, no—not unless
 He was like thee; unless he had been thee.
 Tell me, what was it rendered him so wretched
 At heart?

FESTUS. I will not tell thee.

STUDENT. But tell me
 How and on what he wrote, this friend of thine?

FESTUS. Love, mirth, woe, pleasure was in turn his
 theme,
 And the great good which beauty does the soul;
 And the God-made necessity of things.
 And like that noble knight in olden tale,
 Who changed his armour's hue at each fresh charge
 By virtue of his lady-love's strange ring,
 So that none knew him save his private page
 And she who cried, God save him, every time
 He brake spears with the brave till he quelled all—
 So he applied him to all themes that came;
 Loving the most to breast the rapid deeps
 Where others had been drowned, and heeding nought
 Where danger might not fill the place of fame.
 And 'mid the magic circle of those sounds,
 His lyre rayed out, spell-bound himself he stood,
 Like a stilled storm. It is no task for suns

To shine. He knew himself a bard ordained,
 More than inspired, of God, inspirited:—
 Making himself like an electric rod
 A lure for lightning feelings; and his words
 Felt like the things that fall in thunder, which
 The mind, when in a dark, hot, cloudful state,
 Doth make metallic, meteoric, ball-like.
 He spake to spirits with a spirit tongue,
 Who came compelled by wizard word of truth,
 And rayed them round him from the ends of heaven.
 For as be all bards, he was born of beauty,
 And with a natural fitness to draw down
 All tones and shades of beauty to his soul,
 Even as the rainbow-tinted shell, which lies
 Miles deep at bottom of the sea, hath all
 Colours of skies and flowers, and gems, and plumes,
 And all by nature, which doth reproduce
 Like loveliness in seeming opposites.
 And Nature loved him, for he was to her
 Faithful and loyal, tending well the weal
 Of every life, or blood, or sap, was hers,
 And his own balancing with an insect's life,
 Though but to help the beetle on his back,
 Often and often. Pain to life is pain
 To nature's soul, and any needless death
 A deadly sin. Him, therefore, in august
 Silence she edified in deeper things
 Than the world's babble robs of; speaking him
 In that instinctive Paradisal tongue,
 Known now to nature, poet-priests, and God,
 Who out of clouds, flowers, fountains, dreams, and stars,
 Weave a commutual language; and conveyed
 Clear to his eyes her veiled blaze of light,
 And led him by the hand, and made him trace
 'Neath Time's disguising dust the broad based truth,
 And iron impress, ineffaceable,
 Of the eternal die. Divinerlike,

He ate the hearts of things ere yet he could
 Prophecy of them, or predict of worlds
 By augury of angels, or foresee
 Life's round career accomplished in the skies.
 As though his ear had been by serpents lipped,
 He wist the world of life. Of every tribe
 Of living things the key-spell he could speak,
 And entered in its presence with the sign
 Of perfect acceptation. He of all
 Was free ; a branch from off the tree of light,
 Heaven-planted 'midst the wood we all indwell.
 There was a light in death itself to him,
 And the to-come had a clear presence. Thus
 Ofttimes, at eve, together, eying Heaven,
 Creating stars, we sat, and stretching forth
 The eagle-headed sceptre of the soul,
 Ruled them at ease enthroned, with gifts of power
 Widening the empyrean world on world.
 And dropping down the fathom-line of thought
 Into the future years, conceive what 'twere
 To quit this world's necessitated deeps,
 These strange librating bonds of birth and death,
 And sweep into the still, free, sphere on high,
 On faith and truth, our undeveloped wings,
 Like to a vital wind invisible,
 Yet firmed and bounded in a beauteous form ;
 To give up life for Being, and be gods :—
 Such were the heights we aimed at, such the deeps
 He reached and yet alive ; for, sooth to say,
 His soul was consonant to a certain star,
 And coætaneous with it. When he died
 The star died also.

HELEN.

Make a note of that.

STUDENT. Now, I beseech thee, be not as a stream
 Which publisheth its shallows, but keeps all
 Its deep things to itself ; what dost thou mean ?
 That all things have a soul, an inner life,

I much believe, such things as trees and flowers,
 The mountains and the rivers, seas, lakes, stars ;
 That substance implies essence, essence life ;
 That what to us mere matter shews may shew
 As mentally to others ; and that men
 Are but the invert shadows of the Gods.
 So at the fiery martyrdom of earth,
 When all the starry sisterhood of Heaven
 Shall sigh to see the blazing pyre, our souls
 Will with its spherul spirit rise, and there
 Abide in it for ever ; all the forms
 Of life beatified and beautified.

HELEN. What if it were that life commencing first
 In kind atomic, step by step, through all
 The countless grades, vegetive, animal,
 Of nature should progress at last to man,
 Possessed with all the intermediate powers
 Of all the schooling spheres he had passed through, till
 This mere noviciate of humanity,
 Encumbered with the veil of flesh, expired,
 The spirit takes the plenar vows of truth,
 And enters on the sanctity of Heaven ?

FESTUS. Our life is like the wizard's charmed ring :
 Death's heads, and loathsome things fill up the ground ;
 But spirits wing about and wait on us,
 While yet the hour of enchantment is.
 And while we keep in, we are safe, and can
 Force them to do our bidding. And he raised
 The rebel in himself, and in his mind
 Walked with him through the world.

STUDENT. He wrote of this ?

FESTUS. He wrote a poem.

STUDENT. What was said of it ?

FESTUS. Oh, much was said—much more than understood ;

One said, that he was mad ; another, wise ;
 Another, wisely mad. The book is there.

Judge thou among them.

STUDENT.

Well, but, who said what?

FESTUS. Some said that he blasphemed; and these men
lied

To all eternity, unless such men
Be saved, when God shall rase that lie from life,
And from His own eternal memory:
But still the word is lied; though it were writ
In honeydew upon a lily leaf,
With quill of nightingale, like love letters
From Oberon sent to the bright Titania,
Fairest of all the fays—for that he used
The name of God as spirits use it, barely,
Yet surely more sublime in nakedness,
Statuelike, than in a whole tongue of dress.
Thou knowest, God! that to the full of worship
All things are worship-full; and Thy great name,
In all its awful brevity, hath nought
Unholy breeding in it, but doth bless
Rather the tongue that utters it; for me,
I ask no higher office than to fling
My spirit at Thy feet, and cry Thy name
God! through eternity. The man who sees
Irreverence in that name, must have been used
To take that name in vain, and the same man
Would see obscenity in pure white statues.
Call all things by their names. Hell, call thou Hell;
Archangel, call archangel; and God, God.

STUDENT. And what said he of such?

FESTUS.

He held his peace

A season, as a tree its sap till spring,
Preparing to unfold itself, and let
All rigour do its worst, which only served
To harden him, though nothing nesh at first.
And then he said at last, what, at the first,
He deemed would have been seen by other men,
By men, at least, above low-water mark,

Grinning and howling, but seraphic forms—
 Embodied thoughts of worship, wisdom, love,
 Joining their fire-tipped wings across the shrine
 Where his heart's relics lay, and where were wrought
 Immortal miracles upon men's minds.

STUDENT. Take up the book, and if thou understandest,
 Unfold it to me.

FESTUS. What I can, I will.
 Well I remember me of thee, poor book !
 But there is consolation e'en for thee.
 Fair hands have turned thee over, and bright eyes
 Sprinkled their sparkles o'er thee with their prayers.
 The poet's pen is the true divining rod
 Which trembles towards the inner founts of feeling ;
 Bringing to light and use, else hid from all,
 The many sweet clear sources which we have
 Of good and beauty in our own deep bosom ;
 And marks the variations of all mind
 As does the needle an air-investing storm's.
 All nature in the poet's heart is limned
 In little, as in landscape-stones we see
 The swell of land, and groves, and running streams,
 Fresh from the wolds of Chaos ; or perchance
 The imaged hint of antemundane life,
 A photograph of pre-existent light,
 Or Paradisal sun. So, in his mind
 The broad conditions of the word are graven,
 Thoroughly and grandly ; in accord wherewith
 His life is ruled to be and eke to bear.
 Wisdom he wills not only for himself,
 But undergoes the sacred rites whereby
 The privilege he hath earned he may promulge,
 And all men make the partners of his light.
 Between the priestly and the laic powers
 The poet stands, a bright and living link ;
 Now chanting odes divine and sacred spells,
 Now with fine magic, holy and austere,

Inviting angels or evoking fiends ;
 And now, in festive guise arrayed, his brow
 With golden fillet bounden round, alone
 Earnest to charm the throng that celebrates
 The games now—now the mysteries of life,
 With truths ornate, and pleasure's choicest plea.
 Thus he becomes the darling of mankind,
 Armed with the instinct both of rule and right,
 And the world's minion, privileged to speak,
 When all beside, the medley mass, are mute ;
 Distils his soul into a song, and dies.

STUDENT. How does the book begin, go on, and end ?

FESTUS. It has a plan, but no plot. Life hath none.

HELEN. Tell us, love ; we will listen, and not speak.

I wish I understood it, for I know
 You would rather hear me than yourselves talk.

STUDENT.

Surely.

I'd give up half the organs in my head,
 Besides all undiscovered faculties,
 To list to such a lecturer ; and then
 Have quite enough, perhaps, to comprehend.

HELEN. 'Twere needless that, to one half-witted now.

FESTUS. This time is equal to all time that's past
 Of like extent, nor needs to hide its face
 Before the future. Each is missioned here.
 Our God is still as kind, and all His gifts
 Like wondrous, like unlimited, like fair,
 As when the wind first blew. Man is to God
 That he hath ever been. Still shines the sun
 As keen and pure on the grey rotting rock,
 As on the universal matter once,
 Ere now marmoreal floods had spread their couch
 Of perdurable snow, or granite wrought
 Its skyward impulse from earth's hearth of fire
 Up to insanest heights ; or thunder oped
 His cloudy lips and spake. And still to them
 Who live alone with nature and with God,

Smile with the sun and sadden with the moon,
 The elements their brethren, e'en as men,
 Come gifts unasked, unmeasured like the light
 Which lights at countless points the formless whole.
 Wherefore let us too bless God and take heart ;
 All ages are His children, and all worlds
 Form from His breath like dewdrops out of air ;
 He life in all infusing. Nor is this
 An outlawed orb nor excommunicate.
 All things He makes, He loves and blesses too,
 And renders rich with gifts and powers ; that each
 Teaching themselves and others, Him may learn.
 One gift to some, to some another. Thus
 Nature is justly deemed of but by few,
 And wisdom scantily welcomed ; for her fare
 Lacks dainties, though to all she setteth forth
 Her homely bread, and hospitable wine,
 And sacred salt. And though we should by art
 Bring earth to gas, and desiccate the sea
 To a thin sheet of vapour, we shall yet
 Find in the end, the volume of the world
 Is legible alone to those who use
 The interlinear version of the light ;
 Which is the spirit's, and given within ourselves.
 Poetry is itself a thing of God ;
 He made His prophets poets : and the more
 We feel of poesie do we become
 Like God in love and power,—under-makers.
 And song is of the supernatural
 Natural utterance ; and solely can
 Speak the unbounded beauty of the world,
 And the premortal concords of pure mind.
 All great lays, equals to the minds of men,
 Deal more or less with the Divine, and have
 For end some good of mind or soul of man.
 The mind is this world's, but the soul is God's ;
 The wise man joins them here all in his power.

The high and holy works, amid lesser lays,
 Stand up like churches among village cots ;
 And it is joy to think that in every age,
 However much the world was wrong therein,
 The greatest works of mind or hand have been
 Done unto God. So may they ever be !
 It shews the strength of wish we have to be great,
 And the sublime humility of might.
 True fiction hath in it a higher end
 Than fact ; it is the possible compared
 With what is merely positive, and gives
 To the conceptive soul an inner world,
 A higher, ampler Heaven than that wherein
 The nations sun themselves. In that bright state
 Are met the mental creatures of the men
 Whose names are writ highest on the rounded crown
 Of fame's triumphal arch ; the shining shapes
 Which star the skies of that invisible land,
 Which, whosoe'er would enter, let him learn ;—
 'Tis not enough to draw forms fair and lively,
 Their conduct likewise must be beautiful ;
 A hearty holiness must crown the work,
 As a gold cross the minster dome, and shew,
 Like that instonement of divinity,
 That the whole building doth belong to God.
 And for the book before us, though it were,
 What it is not, supremely little, like
 The needled angle of a high church spire,
 Its sole end points to God the Father's glory,
 From all eternity seen ; making clear
 His might and love in saving sinful man.
 For though sin-saturated like a wick
 In wax, consuming with cathartic fire,
 The spirit yet enshrined in Heaven shall shine,
 A burning glory dedicate to God.
 One bard shews God as He deals with states and kings ;
 Another, as He dealt with the first man ;

Another, as with Heaven and earth and hell ;
 Ours, as He loves to order a chance soul,
 Chosen out of the world, from first to last ;
 With whom, too, ends man's universal race.
 All points are central to the infinite :
 Therefore it is that Deity which fills
 The spheres, unnumbered but of Him who made
 The space-existent whole, one human heart
 With equal power and specialty inspires.
 And all along it is the heart of man
 Emblemed, created and creative mind.
 It is a statued mind and naked heart
 Which is struck out. Other bards draw men dressed
 In manners, customs, forms, appearances,
 Laws, places, times, and countless accidents
 Of peace or polity : to him these are not ;
 He makes no mention, takes no compt of them :—
 But shews, however great his doubts, sins, trials,
 Whatever earthborn pleasures soil man's soul,
 What power soever he may gain of evil,
 That still, till death, time is ; that God's great Heaven
 Stands open day and night to man and spirit ;
 For all are of the race of God, and have
 In themselves good. The life-writ of a heart,
 Whose firmest prop and highest meaning was
 The hope of serving God as poet-priest,
 And the belief that He would not put back
 Love-offerings, though brought to Him by hands
 Unclean and earthy, even as fallen man's
 Must be ; and most of all, the thankful show
 Of His high power and goodness in redeeming
 And blessing souls that love Him, spite of sin
 And their old earthy strain,—these are the aims,
 The doctrines, truths, and staple of the story.
 What theme sublimer than soul being saved ?
 'Tis the bard's aim to shew the mind-made world
 Without, within ; how the soul stands with God,

And the unseen realities about us.
 It is a view of life spiritual
 And earthly. Let all look upon it, then,
 In the same light it was drawn and coloured in ;
 In faith, in that the writer too hath faith,
 Albeit an effect, and not a cause.
 Faith is a higher faculty than reason,
 Though of the brightest power of revelation ;
 As the snow-headed mountain rises o'er
 The lightning, and applies itself to Heaven.
 We know in day-time there are stars about us,
 Just as at night, and name them what and where
 By sight of science ; so by faith we know,
 Although we may not see them till our night,
 That spirits are about us, and believe,
 That, to a spirit's eye, all Heaven may be
 As full of angels as a beam of light
 Of motes. As spiritual, it shews all
 Classes of life, perhaps, above our kind,
 Known to tradition, reason, or God's word,
 Whose bright foundations are the heights of Heaven.
 As earthly, it embodies most the life
 Of youth, its powers, its aims, its deeds, its failings ;
 And, as a sketch of world-life, it begins
 And ends, and rightly, in Heaven and with God ;
 While Heaven is also in the midst thereof.
 God, or all good, the evil of the world,
 And man, wherein are both, are each displayed.
 The mortal is the model of all men.
 The foibles, follies, trials, sufferings—
 And manifest and manifold are they—
 Of a young, hot, unworld-schooled heart that has
 Had its own way in life, and wherein all
 May see some likeness of their own,—'tis these
 Attract, unite, and sunlike, concentrate
 The ever-moving system of our feelings.
 The hero is the world-man, in whose heart

One passion stands for all, the most indulged.
 The scenes wherein he plays his part are life,
 A sphere whose centre is co-heavenly
 With its divine original and end.
 Like life, too, as a whole, the story hath
 A moral, and each scene one, as in life,—
 One universal and peculiar truth—
 Shining upon it like the quiet moon
 Illustrating the obscure unequal earth ;—
 And though these scenes to careless eyes may seem
 Irregular, and rough, and unconnected,
 Like to the stones at Stonehenge,—though convolved,
 And in primæval mystery,—still a use,
 A meaning, and a purpose may be marked
 Among them of a temple reared to God :—
 The meaning alway dwelling in the word,
 In secret sanctity, like a golden toy
 Mid Beauty's orbéd bosom. Scenes of earth
 And Heaven are mixed, as flesh and soul in man.
 Eternity pertains alone to God ;
 And immortality to man ; to those
 Which reason lack life only. Laws there are
 Twain in the which man walks ; the law of law,
 Of custom, conscience, creed, time, circumstance ;
 Law superficial this ; the other is
 To those which breathe the light, the law of laws,
 Eternal, spiritual, central. These
 To mix breeds chaos, and yet not to mix
 Impossible to cultivated man.
 The more developed the interior law
 The clearer things will brighten, till at last
 The whole world shines translucent, and we live
 Priests, prophets, princes, all predestinate
 Coæval with the eldest of the Heavens.
 Earth is the floor of Heaven ; in all we see
 The great world-worker, the eternal Lord,
 And operative Omnipotent, in all

Sunlike the sole inhabitant of Heaven,
 The dweller in each fairy orb of dew.
 He, the all Parent of the seed Divine ;
 He the eternal elements of Heaven,
 The golden generations of the light,
 Begets, brings forth. The world is God's great will
 In action, Heaven in repose. The soul
 Breathed into time, He aye at last translates
 Into celestial bliss, the life divine,
 The primal, final, total state of Heaven,
 And normal perfectness in Deity.
 All that is good is deathless, as of God.
 E'en in the petty segment of this life
 Our will involves our capability ;
 And in the vast conditions of the eterne,
 The possible, the probable, and that,
 The infinite becoming definite,
 The pure conclusive certainty of Truth.
 Necessity, like electricity,
 Is in ourselves and all things, and no more
 Without us than within us ; and we live,
 We of this mortal mixture, in the same law
 As the pure colourless intelligence
 Which dwells in Heaven, and the dead Hadëan shades.
 We will and act and talk of liberty ;
 And all our wills and all our doings both
 Are limited within this little life.
 Freewill is but necessity in play,—
 The clattering of the golden reins which guide
 The thunder-footed coursers of the sun.
 The ship which goes to sea informed with fire,—
 Obeying only its own iron force,
 Reckless of adverse tide, breeze dead, or weak
 As infant's parting breath, too faint to stir
 The feather held before it,—is as much
 The appointed thrall of all the elements,
 As the white bosomed bark which woos the wind,

And when it dies desists. And thus with man ;
 However contrary he set his heart
 To God, he is but working out His will ;
 And, at an infinite angle, more or less
 Obeying his own soul's necessity.
 He only hath freewill whose will is fate.
 Evil and good are God's right hand and left.
 By ministry of evil good is clear,
 And by temptation virtue : as of yore
 Out of the grave rose God. Let this be deemed
 Enough to justify the portion weighed
 To the great spirit Evil, named herein.
 If evil seem the most yet good most is :
 As water may be deep and pure below,
 Although the face be filmy for a time.
 And if the spirit of evil seem more in
 The work than God, it is but to work His will,
 Who therefore is all that the other seems.
 And evil is in almost every scene
 Of life more or less forward. Above all
 The mystery of the Trinity is held,
 Whose mystery is its reasonableness.
 All that is said of Deity is said
 In love and reverence. Be it so conceived.
 What comes before and after the great world,—
 Deep in the secretest abyss of Light,
 And Being's most reserved immensity—
 God alone knows eternally ; but with
 The present is communion creatural :
 He liveth in the sacrament of life.
 And for the soul of man delineate here—
 The outline half invisible—is shewn
 The self-sought grace, the self-aspiring truth,
 And natural religion of the heart,
 Contrasting Godhood with humanity
 Ever ; whereas the Spirit aye unites.
 Temptation, and its workings in the heart,

Whose faint and false resistance but assists,—
 Ambition, thirst of secret lore, joy, love—
 Riverlike, doubling sometimes on itself—
 Adventure, pleasure, travel heavenly
 And earthly, friendship, passion, poesie,
 Viewed ever in their spiritual end—
 And power, celestial happiness, and earth's
 Millennial foretaste, ill annihilate,
 The restoration of the angels lost,
 And one salvation universal given
 To all create,—all these, related, form,
 With much beside, the body of the work ;—
 The islands, seas, and mainland of its orb.
 Thus much then for this book. It aims to mark
 The various beliefs, as well as doubts,
 Which hold or search by turns the mind of youth
 Unresting anywhere. Its heresies,
 If such they be, are charitable ones ;—
 For they who read not in the best belief
 That all souls may be saved, read to no end.
 We were made to be saved. We are of God.
 Nor bates the book one tittle of the truth,
 To smoothe its way to favour with the fearful.
 It is not moral standards which the bard
 Is called on to inculcate ; such pertain
 To other ministries ; the law of life
 His all comprising province. Yet he errs
 Who faithful may be to his higher end,
 Unites not both in one symmetric plan,
 Lofty and plain and pure as are the skies ;
 All forms resolving to one element.
 All rests with those who read. A work or thought
 Is what each makes it to himself, and may
 Be full of great dark meanings, like the sea,
 With shoals of life rushing ; or like the air,
 Benighted with the wing of the wild dove,
 Sweeping miles broad o'er the far western woods,

With mighty glimpses of the central light—
Or may be, nothing—bodiless, spiritless.

STUDENT. But tell us more minutely.

FESTUS.

If you choose.

There is a porch, wherefrom is something seen
Of the main dome beyond. Though shadows cross
Each other's path, yet let us go through it.
And lo! an opening scene in Heaven, wherein
The foredoom of all things, spirit and matter,
Is shewn, and the permission of temptation;
The angelic worship of the Trinity,
By God's name uttered thrice; the joys and powers
Of souls o'erblest, and the sweet offices
Of warden-angel told; and the complete
Well-fixed necessity and end of all things.
From Heaven we come to earth, and so do souls.
For next succeeds a soft and sunset scene,
Wherein is shown the collapsed, empty state
In which all worldly pleasures leave us; youth's,
Though natural, fitful, unavailing, struggle
Against a great temptation come unlooked for:
And that to sin is to curse God in deed.
The soul long used to truth still keeps its strength,
Though plunged upon a sudden mid the false;
As hands, thrust into a dark room, retain
Their sunlent light a season. So with this.
The lines have under meanings, and the scene
Of self-forgetfulness and indecision
Breaks off, not ends. A starry, stirless night
Follows, which shadows out youth's barren longings
For goodness, greatness, marvels, mysteries.
Whence comes this dream of immortality,
And the resurgent essence? Let us think!
What mean we by the dead? The dead have life,
The changed; and, if they come, it is to show
Their change is for the better. The bait takes.
Man and his foe shake hands upon their bargain.

The youth sets out for joy, and 'neath the care
Of his good enemy, begins his course.
This they begin together, aiding each
The other, and abusing others.

HELEN. I
Was waiting for an eloquentia! pause
In this mysterious, allegorical,
Mythical, theological, odd story.
So now, then, I shall ask myself to sing ;
And granting I agree to my request,
I think you ought to thank me.

STUDENT. That we will.
But not just now.

HELEN. Oh! yes, now; yes, this moment.
I'm in the humour.

STUDENT. We are not.

FESTUS. Yes, let her!

HELEN. What shall I sing?

FESTUS. Sing something merry, love.

HELEN. I won't: I'll sing the dullest thing I know ;
One of thine own songs.

STUDENT. What a compliment!

FESTUS. Sing what thou lik'st, then.

HELEN. No; what thou lik'st.

STUDENT. Well,
Something about love, and it can't be wrong.

For love the sunny world supplies
With laughing lips and happy eyes.

FESTUS. And 'twill be sooner over.

STUDENT. And so better.

HELEN. Like an island in a river,
Art thou, my love, to me ;
And I journey by thee ever
With a gentle ecstasie.
I arise to fall before thee ;
I come to kiss thy feet ;

To adorn thee and adore thee,
 Mine only one! my sweet!

And thy love hath power upon me,
 Like a dream upon a brain ;
 For the loveliness which won me,
 With the love, too doth remain.
 And my life it beautifieth,
 Though love be but a shade,
 Known of only ere it dieth,
 By the darkness it hath made.

Was that addressed to me ?

STUDENT. Well, now resume.

FESTUS. Trial alone of ill and folly gives
 Clear proofs of the world's vanities ; but little
 Good comes of sermons, prophecies, or warnings,
 Though from the steps of an old grey market-cross,
 The devil is holding forth to the faithless. There
 A social prayer is offered up to God.
 The next scene seems to promise fair ; for sure
 If that there be one scene in life, wherefrom
 Evil is absent, it is pure early love.

HELEN. Alas! when beauty pleads the cause of virtue
 The chief temptation to embrace it's wanting.

FESTUS. A man in love sees wonders. But not love
 Makes the soul happy : so the youth gets hopeless.
 To this comes on a stern and stormy quarrel
 'Tween the two foe friends—Youth demanding what
 Cannot be ; and the other withholding safe
 And easy grants. They part and meet, as though
 Nothing had happened, in the next scene : none
 Know how we reconcile ourselves to evil.
 Follows a rapid bird's-eye view of earth,
 A stirring up of the dust of all the nations ;
 True travellers they through all the lands of life
 Moral, emotional, or love's sunny zone,

The palm-graced pilgrims of truth's holy land
 And universal season of the sun,
 Who taking pleasure in all reason find
 The science of supremest ultimates,
 And self-suggestive wisdom in themselves.
 So through all schools, the cold and gloomy porch,
 Massive, impassive—garden rose-embowered,
 And stately grove of lofty lore select,
 The truth sought soul progresses ; till we find
 Our home is where she leads, and we are guests
 But of our guide ; the shrine she shews, herself.
 Then comes a village feast ; a kind of home
 Unto the traveller—where, with the world,
 We mix in private, talking divers things ;
 A country merry-making, where all speak
 According to their sorts, and the occasion.
 Deeper than ever leadline went, behold
 We search the rayless central sun within.
 We penetrate all mysteries, but are
 Unfitted long to dwell in the recess
 Of our own nature, and we long for light.
 True aspiration riseth from research.
 Next by the o'erthrown altar of a fane,
 Foundation-shattered, like the ripened heart,
 We find ourselves in worship. Let us hope
 The spirit, form, and offering, grateful all.
 Stone, pyramid, tower, obelisk, fane, spire
 Temple and circular city, to one truth,
 Fountain and river and the sun-searched depths
 Of all accepting ocean, testify.
 In one of Earth's head cities, after this,
 We tower-like rise, and with an eminent eye
 Glance round society, insatiate ;—
 The high unknown as yet unrealized.
 In less time than the twinkling of a star,
 Insphered in air, the arch-fiend and the youth,
 Like twilight and midnight, discourse and rise.

Thence to another planet, for the book,
 Stream-like, doth steal the images of stars,
 And trembles at its boldness, where we meet
 The spirit of the first night of temptation;
 And mix with many of those lofty musings
 Which sow in us the seeds of higher kind,
 And brighter being. Heavenly poesie,
 Which shines among the powers of the mind,
 As that bright star she dwells in, mid the worlds
 Which make the system of the sun, is there too.
 Then to that sacred sphere, the Queen of Heaven,
 Whose shining but still silent prophesy
 Is of those times when all shall be fulfilled,
 And Time his sceptre and his crown resign,
 After his day's reign, to Eternity.
 But these high things are lost, and drowned, and dimmed,
 Like a blue eye in tears, that trickle from it
 Like angels leaving Heaven on their errands
 Of love, behind them, in the scene succeeding;—
 A scene of song, and dance, and mirth, and wine,
 And damsels, in whose lily skin the blue
 Veins branch themselves in hidden luxury,
 Hues of the heaven they seem to have vanished from.
 Mere joys; but saddened and sublimed at close
 By sweet remembrance of immortal ones
 Once loved, aye hallowed. Still, in scenes like this
 Youth lingers longest, drawing out his time
 As a gold-beater does his wire, until
 'Twould reach round earth.

STUDENT.

And be of no use then.

FESTUS. Blame not the bard for showing this, but mind
 He wrote of youth as passionate genius,
 Its flights and follies—both its sensual ends
 And common places. To behold an eagle
 Batting the sunny ceiling of the world
 With his dark wings, one well might deem his heart
 On heaven; but, no! it is fixed on flesh and blood,

And soon his talons tell it. Pass we on.
 A brief and solemn parley o'er a grave
 Follows, in which youth vows to trust in God,
 Be the end what it may. A prescient view
 Of what is true repentance to the soul,
 Spirit-informed, expands; and over all
 The spiritual harmonies of Heaven
 By the raised soul are heard, and God's great rule
 To creatures justified. And next we find
 Ourselves in Heaven. Even man's deadly life
 Can be there, by God's leave. Once brought to God,
 The soul's foredoom is set before it brightly,
 And Heaven's designs are seen to be brought to bear.
 In that bright state shall God's will be our own,
 And our will what we will, and faith be choice,
 The rule which reconciles all contraries,
 Sets free necessity, and sanctifies.
 Whereto let both prophetic past attest,
 And self-fulfilling future of all joy.
 A lightning revelation of the Heavens,
 And what is in them. Let it not be said
 He sought his God in the self-slayer's way,
 Whose highest aim was but to worship in
 All humbleness; for he was called thereto,
 To shew the holy God, in three scenes, first
 And last in Threelthood, and midst in One:
 Although less hard to shape the wide-winged wind
 O'er the bright heights of air. He will forgive:
 For we, this moment, and all living souls—
 All matter, are as much within His presence,
 And known through, like a glass film in the sun,
 As we can ever be. Another scene
 Of natural luxury, and joy, and love,
 Those secondary orblets of our life.

HELEN. Moonlight and music, and kisses and wine,
 And beauty which must be for rhyme-sake divine;
 Went it not so, I pray?

It was the land of shadows : yea, the land
 Itself was but a shadow, and the race
 Which seemed therein were voices, forms of forms,
 And echoes of themselves. And there was nought
 Of substance seemed, save one thing in the midst,
 A great red sepulchre—a granite grave ;
 And at the bottom lay a skeleton,
 From whose decaying jaws the shades were born ;
 Making its only sign of life, its dying
 Continually. Some were bright, some dark.
 Those that were bright went upwards heavenly.
 They which were dark grew darker and remained.
 A land of change, yet did the half things nothing
 That I could see ; but passed stilly on,
 Taking no note of other, mate or child ;
 For all had lost their love when they put off
 The beauty of the body. And as I
 Looked on, the grave before me backed away ;
 And I began to dream it was a dream ;
 And I rushed after it : when the earth quaked,
 Opened and shut, like the eye of one in fits ;
 It shut to with a shout. The grave was gone.
 And in the stead there stood a glee-like throne,
 Which all the shadows shook to see, and swooned ;
 For fiends were standing, loaded with long chains,
 The links whereof were fire, waiting the word
 To bind and cast the shadows into hell ;
 For death the second sat upon that throne,
 Which set on fire the air not to be breathed.
 And as he lifted up his arm to speak,
 Fear preyed upon all souls, like fire on paper,
 And mine among the rest, and I awoke.

STUDENT. By Hades, 'twas most awful. But I too
 Have dreamed strange things beyond the mind's clear grasp ;
 Beyond life's limits and the term of time,
 And star-lamped palace of eternal Night.
 I dreamed time's system ended, like a day

Of celebrant victory rounded with a roar
 Of jubilant thunder, which subsides at last,
 Into emphatic silence ; and the soul
 Which had outlived the great creative week,—
 Those seven fair days the Pleiades of time,
 Whereof if one be lost, 'tis lost in Heaven,—
 Was rising from the ashes of the sun
 Assured of its Divineness, to enjoy
 Birth upon birth of glory and delight,
 When lo ! a ship upon a sea of fire,
 Wearily ploughing, crossed my vision's disk
 And straight it changed for ever and was nought.
 And as I gazed upon the lucid void
 All things reframed themselves before mine eyes ;
 And looking up aloft I heard in Heaven
 Young fluent Time discoursing of the worlds,
 With starry diagrams on night's black board,
 Most learnedly to many a lovely Hour,
 Who fain would have delayed to hear him out ;
 While wise Eternity sat by and smiled,
 Waving them all away. Time now is old,
 And bald, and withered, yet still prates of them,
 And still his mighty mother, in serene
 Maturity of beauty, sits and smiles,
 The infant dotard's inexperience
 Sublimely pitying ; for well she knows,
 Though time and life are both of dual kind,
 And men and things now sacred and profane,
 Yet in the coming all shall holy be,
 And the calm world reflect the One Divine.
 Peace is the end of all things, tearless Peace,
 Who by the immoveable basis of God's throne,
 Takes her perpetual stand ; and, of herself
 Prophetic, lengthens age by age her sceptre.
 The world shall yet be subjugate to love,
 The final form religion must assume,
 Led like a lion, rid with wreathéd reins,

Put to his heart-burst speed, sobbing up hill,
 How Evil works his victim's death, to clear
 His way, and keep his name of murderer ;
 As he in other parts makes good his titles,
 Deceiver, liar, tempter, and accuser ;
 Hater of man, and, most of all, of God.
 In the next scene, we picture back our life,
 Contrasting the pure joys of earlier years,
 With the unsatedness of current sin ;
 And the sad feel that love's own heart turns sick
 Like a bad pearl ; but that the feeling still
 Is adamantine, though the splendid thing
 Whereon it writes its record, is of all
 Frailest ; and though earth shows to good and bad,
 The same blind kindness, beautiful to see,
 Wherewith our lovely mother loveth us,
 The world in vain unbosometh her beauty,
 We have no list to live ; for things may be
 Corrupted into beauty : and that love,
 Where all the passions blend, as hues in white,
 Tires at the last, as day would, if all day
 And no night. So despair of heart increases.
 The last lure—power—is proffered, taken. All
 Hangs on the last desire whatever it be.
 What follows is of earth, and setteth forth
 God's mercy, and the mystery of sin ;
 And a great gathering of the worlds round God,
 Told by the youth to his truthful, trustful, love ;
 Who, light and lowly as a little glow-worm,
 Sheddeth her beauty round her like a rose
 Sweet smelling dew upon the ground it grows on.
 The pure know evil by repulsion, both
 From surface and from centre ; the impure
 By likeness and attraction to themselves.
 There is instinctive wisdom and acquired.
 A scene of prescient solitude and soul
 Commune with Heaven, repentance, prayer, faith,

Which are all things inspired alone of God,
 Who signifies salvation, follows this.
 In the next scene, we feel the end draw nigh.
 Nor power nor knowledge, love nor pleasure make
 The Heaven-affianced spirit false to God ;
 Though doubt for long may triumph, and despair
 Leave the soul blindfold on the edge of hell.
 A change is wrought on earth as great as that
 In its first ages, when the elements
 Less gross and palpable than air, were changed
 To mountainous and adamantine mass,
 Now 'neath the feet of nations ;—figuring forth
 The fateful mind which is to govern all,
 Controlling the great evil ; for it is mind
 Which shall rule and be ruled, and not the body,
 In the last age of human sway on earth ;—
 Ambition ruined by its own success ;
 Aims lost, power useless : love pure love, the last
 Of mortal things that nestles in the heart.
 There is a love which acts to death, and through death,
 And may come white, and bright, and pure, like paper,
 From refuse, or from clearest things at first ;
 It is beyond the accidents of life.
 For things we make no compt of, have in them
 The seeds of life, use, beauty, like the cores
 Of apples that we fling away ;—nought now
 Is left but trust in God, who tries the heart
 And saves it, at the last, from its own ruin—
 The parting spirit fluttering like a flag,
 Half from its earthly staff. The death-change comes.
 Death is another life. We bow our heads
 At going out, we think, and enter straight
 Another golden chamber of the king's,
 Larger than this we leave, and lovelier.
 And then in shadowy glimpses, disconnect,
 The story, flowerlike, closes thus its leaves.
 The will of God is all in all. He makes,

Destroys, remakes, for His own pleasure, all.
 After inferior nature is subdued,
 The Evil is confined. All elements
 Conglobe themselves from chaos, purified.
 Angels and all the virtues of the skies
 Mingle with men, each orb a palace now
 Of the world blessing spirit, and narrate
 The holy legends of angelic spheres.
 To speak transpiciously of things Divine
 Pertaineth not to nature. Who would prove
 Divinity by works, works miracles ;
 By words, speaks mysteries, mixed with brightest truths.
 All revelation is a mystery.
 The rebegotten world is born again.
 The body and the soul cease ; spirit lives :
 And gloriously falsified are all
 Earth's caverned prophecies of bodyhood.
 Spirits rise up and rule and link with Heaven ;—
 The soul state is searched into ; dormant Death,
 Evil, and all the dark gods of the heart,
 And the idolatrous passions, ruined, chained,
 And worshipless, are seen ; and there, the Word
 Heard and obeyed ;—next comes the truth divine,
 Redintegrative ;—Evil's last and worst
 Endeavour vanquished by Almighty good.
 The last scene shews the final doom of earth,
 Souls' judgment, and salvation of the youth,
 As was fore-fixed on from and in the first :
 The universe expurgated of evil,
 And hell for aye abolished ; all create,
 Redeemed, their God all love, themselves all bliss.
 Heaven is the birth of spirit and the world
 Passed, embryotic only in its kind.
 We are but here the multiples of men,
 Like seeds of thought and passing words of chance
 Which buried in the mind for days and nights
 Live, to rerise and fructify in dreams

Of infinite significance and power.
 Yea the round world itself shall barely seem
 A passing reminiscence to the soul,
 Like a base thought across a cloudless prayer
 Which ruffles not, annuls it; and the great
 Artist, whose pictures live, expunges earth,
 And on his easel dawns another Heaven.
 We may say that the sun is dead and gone
 For ever; and may swear he will rise no more;
 The skies may put on mourning for their god,
 And earth heap ashes on her head: but who
 Shall keep the sun back, when he thinks to rise?
 Where is the chain shall bind him? Where the cell
 Shall hold him? Hell he would burn down to embers;
 And would lift up the world with a lever of light
 Out of his way; yet, know ye, 'twere thrice less
 To do thrice this, than keep the soul from God.
 O'er earth, and cloud, and sky, and star, and Heaven
 It dwells with God uprisen as a prayer.
 Now, the religion of the book is this,
 Followed out from the book God writ of old.
 All creatures being faulty by their nature,
 And by God made all liable to sin,
 God only could atone—and unto none
 Except Himself—for universal sin.
 It is thus that God did sacrifice to God,
 Himself unto Himself, in the great way
 Of Triune mystery. His death, as man,
 Was real as our own; and as, except
 In the destruction of all life, there could
 Be no atonement for its sin, while life
 Doth necessarily result from God,
 As thought and outward action from ourselves,
 So the atonement must be to and by Him;
 Which makes it justice equally with love;
 For all His powers and attributes are equal,
 And must make one in any act of His;

And every act of God is infinite.
 He acts through all in all ; the truth we know,
 He doth Himself inbreathe ; the ill we do,
 He hath atoned for ; and the scriptures shew
 That God doth suffer for the sins of those
 Whom He hath made, that are liable to sin.
 In all of us He hath His agony ;
 We are the cross, and death of God, and grave.
 Him love then all the more, and worship Him
 Who lived and died, and rose from death for us,
 And is and reigns for ever God in all.
 Let each man think himself an act of God,
 His mind a thought, his life a breath of God ;
 And let each try, by great thoughts and good deeds,
 To shew the most of Heaven he hath in him.
 Many who read the word of life, much doubt
 Whether salvation be of grace, or faith,
 Election, or repentance, or good works,
 Or God's high will : reconcile all of them.
 Each of the persons of the Triune God
 Hath had His dispensation, hath it now ;
 The Father by His prophets, and the Son
 In His own days, by His own deeds : and now
 The Spirit, by the ministry of Christ ;
 And thus by law, by gospel, and by grace,
 The scheme of God's salvation is complete.
 Salvation, then, is God-like, threefold ; so
 That under one or other, all may come :
 By will of God alone, by faith in Christ,
 And by repentance, and good works, and **grace**.
 So there is one salvation of the Father,
 One of the Son, another of the Spirit ;
 Each, the salvation of the Three in One.
 The mortal in this lay is saved of will,
 In manner as this hymn unfolds, which hath
 Just warrant for every word from God's.

O God! Thou wondrous One in Three,
 As mortals must Thee deem ;
 Thou only canst be said to be,
 We but at best to seem.
 For Thou dost save, and Thou may'st slay,
 Canst make a mortal soul
 In Thee eternal ; in a day
 Wilt bring to nought the whole.

Thou hardenest, and Thou openest hearts,
 As in Thy Word is shown ;
 Thou savest and destroyest parts,
 By Thy right will alone.
 Let down Thy grace then, Lord! on all
 Whom Thou wilt save to live ;
 Oh! if they stumble, stop their fall!
 Oh! if they fall forgive!

They are forgiven from the first,
 They are predestined Thine ;
 And though in sin they were the worst,
 In Thee they are divine.
 They are, and were, and will be, Lord!
 In one, in Heaven, in Thee,
 Yea with the Spirit, and the Word,
 One God in Trinity.

These principles and doctrines pending not
 Upon the action of the poem here,
 But over and above it, influencing
 Nevertheless the story, as the course
 Of stars enwoven with our system, earth,
 Vary the view of this life's hemisphere,
 And mingle it more palpably with Heaven,
 And with its changeless, ceaseless, boundless God.
 It is thus that by creating to and from
 Eternity, and multiplying ever

His own one Being though the universe,
 He doth eternize happiness, and make
 Good infinite by making all in Him.
 There is but one great right and good ; and ill
 And wrong are shades thereof, not substances.
 Nothing can be antagonist to God.
 The spirit speaks of God in Heaven's own tongue,
 No mystery to those who love, but learned
 As is our mother tongue, from Him, the parent ;
 By whom created, fashioned, flesh and spirit,
 All forms and feelings of all kinds of beauty
 Are burned into our heart-clay, pattern like.
 Much too is writ, elsewhere and here, not yet
 Made clear, nor can be till earth come of age ;
 Like the unfinished rudiments of light
 Which gather time by time into a star.
 Thus have I shown the meaning of the book,
 And the most truthful likeness of a mind,
 Which hath as yet been limned ; the mind of youth
 In strength and failings, in its overcomings,
 And in its short comings ; the kingly ends,
 The universalizing heart of youth ;
 Its love of power, heed not how had, although
 With surety of self-ruin at the end.
 Every thing urged against it proves its truth
 And faithfulness to nature. Some cried out
 'Twas inconsistent ; so 'twas meant to be.
 Such is the very stamp of youth and nature ;
 And the continual losing sight of its aims,
 And the desertion of its most expressed,
 And dearest rules and objects, this is youth.

STUDENT. I look on life as keeping me from God,
 Stars, Heaven, and angels' bosoms. I lay ill ;
 And the dark, hot blood throbbing through and through me
 They bled me and I swooned ; and as I died,
 Or seemed to die, a soft, sweet sadness fell
 With a voluptuous weakness, on my soul,

That made me feel all happy. But my heart
 Would live, and rose, and wrestled with the soul,
 Which stretched its wings and strained its strength in vain,
 Twining around it as a snake an eagle.
 Mine eyes unclosed again, and I looked up,
 And saw the sweet blue twilight, and one star,
 One only star in Heaven ; and then I wished
 That I had died and gone to it ; and straight
 Was glad I lived again, to love once more.
 And so our souls turn round upon themselves
 Like orbs upon their axles : what was night
 Is day ; what day, night. God will guide us on
 Body and soul, through life and death, to judgment.

FESTUS. Earth hath her deserts mixed with fruitful
 plains ;
 The word of God is barren in some parts ;
 A rose is not all flower, but hath much
 Which is of lower beauty, yet like needful ;
 And he who in great makings doth like these,
 Doth only that which is most natural.
 Like life too it is boundlessly unequal,
 Now soaring, and now grovelling : at one time
 All harmony, and then again all harshness,
 With an ever-changing style of thought and speech.
 The work is still consistent with itself ;
 As one part often bears upon another,
 Lifting it to the light, where most it needs.
 The thoughts we have of men are bold as men ;
 Our thoughts of God are thin and fleet as ghosts ;
 But it was not his meaning to draw men,
 Such as he heard they were in the old world
 And sometimes mixed with ; he blessed God he knew
 But little of the world, that little good ;
 While some sighed out that little was its all.
 So for the persons and the scenes he drew,
 Oft in a dim and dreamy imagery
 Shapen, half-shapen, mis-shapen, unshapen,

They are the shadowy creatures which youth dreams
 Live in the world embodied, but are not,
 Save in the mind's, which is the mightier one.
 They are the names of things which we believe in,
 Ideas not embodied, alas, not!
 And the sad fate which many of those meet
 Whom the youth loves and quits, from this to that
 Converted, as by faith, means nought so ill
 As the betrayer's sin, salvationless
 Almost: it is but desertion, not betrayal;
 And forced on him according to a promise
 Made at the first unto him, and to be
 Wrought out in brief time; and the same fair souls
 Saved, stand for our desires made pure in Heaven.
 Let us work out our natures; we can do
 No wrong in them, they are divine, eterne:
 I follow my attraction, and obey
 Nature, as earth does, circling round her source
 Of life and light, and keeping true in Heaven,
 Though not perfect in round, which nothing is.
 For earth is midway between love and war;
 And war hath played his part in poesie.
 'Twas the heart-book of love, well nigh all grief;
 For the heart leaves its likeness best in that
 O'erwhelming sorrow which burns up and buries,
 Like to the eloquent impression left
 In lava, of Pompeian maiden's bosom.
 All passions, and all pleasures, and all powers
 Of man's heart, are brought in, and mind and frame.
 He made this work the business of his life,
 It was his mission; and was laid on him.
 He was a labourer on the ways of God,
 And had his hire in peace and power to work.
 He wrote it not in the contempt of rule,
 And not in hate; but in the self made rule
 That there was none to him, but to himself
 He was his sole rule, and had right to be.

The faults are faults of nature, and prove art
 Man's nature, that a thing of art, like it,
 Should be so pure in kind.

HELEN. I do believe
 The world is a forged thing, and hath not got
 The die of God upon it. It will not pass
 In Heaven, I tell ye.

STUDENT. How shouldst thou know ought
 Of Heaven, unless by contrast ?

FESTUS. Pray now cease ;
 Ye two are jarring ever, though as with
 The bickering beauty of two swords, whose strife,
 Though deadly, maketh music, I could listen,
 Did not each stab, whichever way, pain me.

HELEN. Oh, I could stand and rend myself with rage
 To think I am so weak, that all are so ;
 Mere minims in the music made from us—
 While I would be a hand to sweep from end
 To end, from infinite to infinite,
 The world's great chord. The beautiful of old
 Had but to say some god had been with them,
 And their worst fault was hallowed to their best deed.
 That was to live. Could we uproot the past,
 Which grows and throws its chilling shade o'er us,
 Lengthening every hour and darkening it ;
 Or could we plant the future where we would,
 And make it flourish, that, too, were to live.
 But it is not more true that what is, is,
 Than that what is not, is not. It is enough
 To bear the ever present, as we do.
 The city of the past is laid in ruins ;
 Its echo-echoing walls at a whisper fall :
 The coming is not yet built ; nor as yet
 Its deep foundations laid ; but seems, at once,
 Like the air city goodly and well watered,
 Which the dry wind doth dream of on the sands
 Where he dies away with his wanderings :

While we enjoy the hope thereof, and perish ;
 Not seeing that the desert present is
 Our end.

FESTUS. The brightest natures oft have darkest
 End, as fire smoke.

STUDENT. I will read the book in the hope
 Of learning somewhat from it.

FESTUS. Thou may'st learn
 A hearty thanksgiving for blessings here,
 And proud prediction of a state to come,
 Of love, and life, and power unlimited ;
 And uttered in a sound and homely tongue,
 Fit to be used by all who think while speaking.
 With here and there some old, hard uncouth words
 Which have withal a quaint and meaning richness,
 As stones make more the power of the soil.
 The works of genius are first criticized,
 Then studied, next expounded, last adored.
 The world hath said its say for and against ;
 And after praise and blame cometh the truth.
 Living men look on all who live askance.
 Were he a cold grey ghost, he would have honour ;
 And though as man he must have mixed with men,
 Yet the true bard doth make himself ghost-like ;
 He lives apart from men ; he wakes and walks
 By nights ; he puts himself into the world
 Above him ; and he is what but few see.
 He knows, too, to the old hid treasure, truth :
 And the world wonders, shortly, how some one
 Hath come so rich of soul ; it little dreams
 Of the poor ghost that made him. Yet he comes
 To none save of his own blood, and lets pass
 Many a generation till his like
 Turns up ; moreover, this same genius
 Comes, ghost-like, to those only who are lonely
 In life and in desire ; never to crowds :
 And it can make its way through every thing,

And is never happy till it tells its secret ;
 But pale and pressed down with the inward weight
 Of unborn works, it sickens nigh to death,
 Often ; but who like happy at a birth ?

STUDENT. Say what a poet ought to do and be.

FESTUS. Though it may scarce become me, knowing
 little,

Yet what I have thought out upon that theme,
 And deem true, I will tell thee.

HELEN. Now I know

You two will talk of nothing else all night ;
 So I will to my music. Sweet ! I come.
 Art thou not glad to see me ? What a time
 Since I have touched thine eloquent white fingers.
 Hast thou forgot me ? Mind, now ! Knowest thou not
 My greeting ? Ah ! I love thee. Talk away !
 Never mind me ; I shall not you.

STUDENT. Agreed !

HELEN. By the sweet muse of music, I could swear
 I do believe it smiles upon me ; see it
 Full of unuttered music, like a bird ;
 Rich in invisible treasures, like a bud
 Of unborn sweets, and thick about the heart
 With ripe and rosy beauty—full to trembling.
 I love it like a sister. Hark !—its tones ;
 They melt the soul within one like a sword,
 Albeit sheathed, by lightning. Talk to me,
 Lovely one ! Answer me, thou beauty !

STUDENT. Hear her !

HELEN. What said ye, sing again ? Your kindness well
 Merits the raptures you are doomed to enjoy.

The rose is weeping for her love,
 The Nightingale ;
 And he is flying fast above,
 To her he will not fail.
 Already golden eve appears,

He wings his way along ;
 Ah! look, he comes to kiss her tears,
 And soothe her with his song.

The moon in pearly light may steep
 The still blue air ;
 The rose hath ceased to droop and weep,
 For lo! her love is there.
 He sings to her, and o'er the trees
 She hears his sweet notes swim ;
 The world may weary ; she but sees
 Her love, and hears but him.

FESTUS. So to the flower of perfect life the world
 Sings the eternal spirit ; drinks its divine
 Perfume, and comforts it with fluttering wings.

STUDENT. That roses weep is a botanic fact ;
 A zoologic truth, that birds woo flowers.

HELEN. 'Tween truth and fact a world wide difference
 lies ;
 Earth is a fact, but Heaven, O Heaven! is truth.

FESTUS. Experience and imagination are
 Mother and sire of song—the harp and hand.
 The poet in his work reflects his soul,
 As some lone nymph, beside a woodland well,
 Whose clear white limbs, like animated light,
 Make glad the heart and sanctify the sight,
 The soft and shadowy miracle of her form.
 The bard's aim is to give us thoughts : his art
 Lieth in giving them as bright as may be.
 And even when their looks are earthy, still
 If opened, like geoids, they may be found
 Full of all sparkling sparry loveliness.
 They should be wrought, not cast ; like tempered steel,
 Burned and cooled, burned again, and cooled again.
 A thought is like a ray of light—complex
 In nature, simple only in effect.

Words are the notes of thought, and nothing more.
 Words are like sea-shells on the shore ; they shew
 Where the mind ends, and not how far it has been.
 Let every thought, too, soldier-like, be stripped,
 And roughly looked over. The dress of words,
 Like to the Roman girl's enticing garb,
 Should let the play of limb be seen through it,
 And the round rising form. A mist of words,
 Like halos round the moon, though they enlarge
 The seeming size of thoughts, make the light less
 Doubly. It is the thought writ down we want,
 Not its effect—not likenesses of likenesses.
 And such descriptions are not, more than gloves
 Instead of hands to shake, enough for us.
 As in the good the fair ; simplicity
 Is nature's first step and the last of art.

STUDENT. But is the power—is poesie inborn,
 Or is it to be gained by art or toil ?

FESTUS. It is underived, except from God ; but where
 Strongest, asks most of human care and aid.
 As lauds attract the largesses of Heaven,
 As gifts God's bounties, purity His saints,
 So genius inspiration ; like to like.
 Great bards toil much and most ; but most at first,
 Ere they can learn to concentrate the soul
 For hours upon a thought to carry it.

STUDENT. Why I have sat for hours and never moved,
 Saving my hands, clock-like, in writing round
 Day after day of thought, and lapse of life.

FESTUS. Many make books, few poems, which may do
 Well for their gains, but they do nought for truth,
 Nor man, true bard's main aim. Perish the books,
 But the creations live. Some steal a thought,
 And clip it round the edge, and challenge him
 Whose 'twas to swear to it. To serve things thus
 Is as foul witches to cut up old moons
 Into new stars. Some never rise above

A pretty fault, like faulty dahlias ;
 And of whose best things it is kindly said,
 The thought is fair ; but, to be perfect, wants
 A little heightening, like a pretty face
 With a low forehead. Do thou more than such,
 Or else do nothing. And in poetry,
 There is a poet-worship, one of other
 Which is idolatry, and not the true
 Love-service of the soul to God, which hath
 Alone of His inbreathing, and is rendered
 Unto Him, from the first, without man's mean,
 By those whom He makes worthy of His worship ;
 Who kneel at once to Him, and at no shrine,
 Save in the world's wide ear, do they confess them
 Of faults which are all truths ; and thorough which
 As the world says them over to itself,
 He heareth and absolveth ; for the bard
 Speaks but what all feel more or less within
 The heart's heart, and the sin confessed is done
 Away with and for ever. They confess
 To God, the Almighty Poet of the world.
 And they to whom 'tis given to believe,
 An individual life with Him enjoy,
 Uplifted o'er the vast and markless mass ;
 Yet not into a sphere of selfish thought,
 But of innate and infinite commune
 With all creation ; for, as distance rules,
 Behold the stars are suns, the sun a star ;
 So they who near God boundless hold His love ;
 Who far off lie, misdoubt it almost nought.
 And I who hold the clear and flawless faith,
 Ancient and universal in the spheres,
 Know earth was ta'en out of the side of Heaven
 And all their starry seed made blest for aye.
 It is therefore I am joyful. In the far
 To be, our heirdom glitters.

STUDENT.

What of style ?

FESTUS. There is no style is good but nature's style.
 And the great ancients' writings, beside ours,
 Look like illuminated manuscripts
 Before plain press print ; all had different minds,
 And followed only their own bents : for this
 Nor copied that, nor that the other ; each
 Is finished in his writing, each is best
 For his own mind, and that it was upon ;
 And all have lived, are living, and shall live ;
 But these have died, are dying, and shall die ;
 Yea, copyists shall die, spark out and out.
 Minds which combine and make alone can tell
 The bearings and the workings of all things
 In and upon each other. All the parts
 Of nature meet and fit : wit, wisdom, worth,
 Goodness and greatness ; to sublimity
 Beauty arises, like a planet world,
 Labouring slowly, seemingly, up Heaven ;
 But with an infinite pace to some immortal eyes.
 And he who means to be a great bard, must
 Measure himself against pure mind, and fling
 His soul into a stream of thought, as will
 A swimmer hurl himself into the water.
 But never swimmer on the stream, nor bird
 On wind, feels half so strong, or swift, or glad,
 As bard borne high on his mind above himself ;
 As though he should begin a lay like this,
 Where spiritual element is all ;
 Thought chafing thought, as bough bough, till all burn,
 Like the star-written prophecies of Heaven.
 The shattered shadow of eternity
 Upon the troubled world, even as the sun
 Shows brokenly on wavy waters, time ;
 All time is but a second to the dead,
 The smoke of the great burning of the world
 Had trailed across the skies for many an age,
 And was fast wearing into air away,

When a saint stood before the throne, and cried—
 Blesséd be Thou, Lord God of all the worlds
 That have been, and that are, and are to be !
 For Thy destruction is like infinite
 With Thy creation, just and wise in both :
 Give me a world ; and God said, Be it so :
 And the world was : and then go on to shew
 How this new orb was made, and where it shone ;
 Who ruled, abode, worshipped, and loved therein ;
 Their natures, duties, hopes : let it be pure,
 Wise, holy, beautiful ; if not to be
 Without it, made so by constraint of God—
 Kindly forced good : we have had enough of sin
 And folly here to wish for and love change.
 Let him shew God as going thither mildly,
 Father-like, blessing all and cursing none ;
 And that there never will be need for them
 That He shall come in glory new to Himself,
 With light to which the lightning shall be shadow,
 And the sun sadness ; borne upon a car
 With wheels of burning worlds, within whose rims
 Whole hells burn, and beneath whose course the stars
 Dry up like dew-drops. But of this enough ;
 I mean that he must weigh himself as he
 Will be weighed after by posterity ;
 After us all are critics, to a man.
 Write to the mind and heart, and let the ear
 Glean after what it can. The voice of great
 Or graceful thoughts is sweeter far than all
 Word-music ; and great thoughts, like great deeds, need
 No trumpet. Never be in haste in writing.
 Let that thou utterest be of nature's flow,
 Not art's ; a fountain's, not a pump's. But once
 Begun, work thou all things into thy work ;
 And set thyself about it, as the sea
 About earth, lashing at it day and night.
 And leave the stamp of thine own soul in it

As thorough as the fossil flower in clay.
 The theme shall start and struggle in thy breast,
 Like to a spirit in its tomb at rising,
 Rending the stones, and crying, Resurrection!

STUDENT. What theme remains ?

FESTUS. Thyself, thy race, thy love,
 The faithless and the full of faith in God ;
 Thy race's destiny, thy sacred love.
 Every believer is God's miracle.
 Nothing will stand whose staple is not love ;
 The love of God, or man, or lovely woman ;
 The first is scarcely touched, the next scarce felt,
 The third is desecrated ; lift it up ;
 Redeem it, hallow it, blend the three in one
 Great holy work. It shall be read in Heaven
 By all the saved of sinners of all time.
 Preachers shall point to it, and tell their wards
 It is a handful of eternal truth ;
 Make ye a heartful of it : men shall will
 That it be buried with them in their hands :
 The young, the gay, the innocent, the brave,
 The fair, with soul and body both all love,
 Shall run to it with joy ; and the old man
 Still hearty in decline, whose happy life
 Hath blossomed downwards, like the purple bell-flower,
 Closing the book, shall utter lowlily—
 Death, thou art infinite, it is life is little.
 Believe thou art inspired, and thou art.
 Look at the bard and others ; never heed
 The petty hints of envy. If a fault
 It be in bard, to deem himself inspired,
 'Tis one which hath had many followers
 Before him. He is wont to make, unite,
 Believe ; the world to part, and doubt, and narrow.
 That he believes, he utters. What the world
 Utters, it trusts not. But the time may come
 When all, along with those who seek to raise

Men's minds, and have enough of pain, without
 Suffering from envy, may be God-inspired
 To utter truth, and feel like love for men.
 Poets are henceforth the world's teachers. Still
 The world is all in sects, which makes one loathe it.

STUDENT. The men of mind are mountains, and their
 heads
 Are sunned long ere the rest of earth. I would
 Be one such.

FESTUS. It is well. Burn to be great.
 Each mountain stands inspired as touching Heaven.
 Pay not thy praise to lofty things alone.
 The plains are everlasting as the hills.
 The bard cannot have two pursuits : aught else
 Comes on the mind with the like shock as though
 Two worlds had gone to war and met in air.
 Hope never greed from poesie ; as well
 Search for the fairy gold at the rainbow's foot.
 And now that thou hast heard thus much from one
 Not wont to seek, nor give, nor take advice,
 Remember, whatso'er thou art as man,
 Suffer the world, entreat it and forgive.
 They who forgive most shall be most forgiven.
 Dear Helen, I will tell thee what I love
 Next to thee—poesie.

HELEN. Can any thing
 Be even second to me in thy love ?
 Doth it not distance all things ?

FESTUS. To say sooth,
 I once loved many things ere I met with thee,
 My one blue break of beauty in the clouds ;
 Bending thyself to me as Heaven to earth.

HELEN. My love is like the moon, seems now to grow,
 And now to lessen ; but it is only so
 Because thou canst not see it all at once.
 It knows nor day, nor morrow, like the sun :
 Unchangeable as space it still shall be

When yon bright suns, which are themselves but sands
In the great glass of Time, shall be run out.

FESTUS. Man is but half man without woman ; and
As do idolators their heavenless gods,
We deify the things which we adore.

HELEN. Our life is comely as a whole ; nay, more ;
Like rich brown ringlets, with odd hairs all gold.
We women have four seasons, like the year.
Our spring is in our lightsome girlish days,
When the heart laughs within us for sheer joy ;
Ere yet we know what love is, or the ill
Of being loved by those whom we love not.
Summer is when we love and are beloved,
And seems short ; from its very splendour seems
To pass the quickest ; crowned with flowers it flies.
Autumn, when some young thing with tiny hands,
And rosy cheeks, and flossy tendrilled locks,
It wantoning about us day and night.
And winter is when these we love have perished ;
For the heart ices then. And the next spring
Is in another world, if one there be.
Some miss one season, some another ; this
Shall have them early, and that late ; and yet
The year wear round with all as best it may.
There is no rule for it ; but in the main
It is as I have said.

FESTUS. My life with thee
Is like a song, and the sweet music thou,
Which doth accompany it.

STUDENT. Say, did thy friend
Write aught beside the work thou tell'st of ?

FESTUS. Nothing.
After that, like the burning peak, he fell
Into himself, and was missing ever after.

STUDENT. If not a secret, pray who was he ?

FESTUS. I.

SCENE—*Garden and Bower by the Sea.*

LUCIFER and ELISSA.

LUCIFER. Night comes, world-jewelled, as my bride
should be.

The stars rush forth in myriads as to wage
War with the lines of Darkness ; and the moon,
Pale ghost of Night, comes haunting the cold earth
After the sun's red sea-death—quietless.
Immortal Night ! I love thee. Thou and I
Are of one seed—the eldest blood of God.
He makes ; we mar together all things—all
But our own selves. Love makes thee cold and tremble,
And me all fire. Do off that starry robe ;
Catch me up to thee. Let us love, and die,
And weld our souls together, Night ! But here
Cometh mine earthly. My Elissa ! welcome.

ELISSA. Is't not a lovely, nay, a heavenly eve ?

LUCIFER. Thy presence only makes it so to me.
The moments thou art with me are like stars
Peering through my dark life.

ELISSA. Nay, speak not so,
Or I shall weep, and thou wilt turn away
From woman's tears : yet are they woman's wealth.

LUCIFER. Then keep thy treasures, lady ! I would not
have

The world, if prized at one sad tear of thine.
One tear of beauty can outweigh a world
Even of sin and sorrow, heavy as this ;
But beauty cannot sin, and should not weep,
For she is mortal. Oh ! let deathless things
Alone weep. Why should aught that dies be sad ?

ELISSA. The noble mind is oft too generous,
And, by protecting, weakens lesser ones ;
And tears must come of feeling, though they quench
As oft the light which love lit in the eye.

LUCIFER. And thy love ever hangs about my heart
 Like the pure pearl-wreath which enrings thy brow.
 I meant not to be mournful. Tell me, now,
 How hast thou passed the hours since last we met ?

ELISSA. I have stayed the livelong day within this bower ;
 It was here that thou didst promise me to come—
 Watching from wanton morn to repentant eve,
 The self-same roses ope and close ; untired,
 Listening the same birds' first and latest songs—
 And still thou camest not. To the mind which waits
 Upon one hour, the others are but slaves.
 The week hath but one day—the day one hour—
 That hour of the heart—that lord of time.

LUCIFER. Sweet one ! I raced with light and passed the
 laggard
 To meet thee—or, I mean I could have done—
 Yea, have outsped the very dart of Death—
 So much I sought ; and were I living light
 From God, with leave to range the world, and choose
 Another brow than His whereon to beam—
 To mark what even an angel could but covet—
 A something lovelier than Heaven's loveliness—
 To thee I straight would dart, unheeding all
 The lives of other worlds, even those who name
 Themselves thy kind ; for oft my mind o'ersoars
 The stars ; and, pondering upon what may be
 Of their chief lording natures, man's seems worst—
 The darkest, meanest, which, through all these worlds,
 Drags what is deathless, may be, down to dust.

ELISSA. Speak not so bitterly of human kind ;
 I know that thou dost love it. Hast not heard
 Of those great spirits, who the greater grow
 The better we are able them to prize ?
 Great minds can never cease ; yet have they not
 A separate estate of deathlessness :
 The future is a remnant of their life :
 Our time is part of theirs, not theirs of ours ;

They know the thoughts of ages long before.
 It is not the weak mind feels the great mind's might ;
 None but the great can test it. Does the oak
 Or reed feel the strong storm most ? Oh, unsay
 What thou hast said of man ; nor deem me wrong.
 Mind cannot mind despise—it is itself.
 Mind must love mind : the great and good are friends ;
 And he is but half great who is not good.
 And, oh ! humanity is the fairest flower
 Blooming in earthly breasts ; so sweet and pure,
 That it might freshen even the fadeless wreaths
 Twined round the golden harps of those in Heaven.

LUCIFER. For thy sake I will love even man, or aught.
 Spirit were I, and a mere mortal thou,
 For thy sake I would even seek to die ;
 That, dead or living, I might still be with thee.
 But no ! I'll deem thee deathless—mind and make,
 And worthier of some spirit's love than mine ;
 Yea, of the first born of God's sons, could he,
 In that sweet shade thy beauty casts o'er all,
 One moment lay and cool his burning soul ;
 Or might the ark of his wide flood-like woe
 But rest upon that mount of peace and bliss—
 Thy heart imbosomed in all beauteousness.
 Nay, lady ! shrink not. Thinkest thou I am he ?

ELISSA. Thou art too noble, far. I oft have wished,
 Ere I knew thee, I had some spirit's love ;
 But thou art more like what I sought than man :
 And a forbidden quest, it seems ; for thou
 Hast more of awe than love about thee, like
 The mystery of dreams which we can feel,
 But cannot touch.

LUCIFER. Nay, think not so ! It is wrong.
 Come, let us sit in this thy favourite bower,
 And I will hear thee sing. I love that voice,
 Dipping more softly on the subject ear
 Than that calm kiss the willow gives the wave—

A soft rich tone, a rainbow of sweet sounds,
Just spanning the soothed sense. Come, nay me not.

ELISSA. Do thou lead out some lay; I'll follow thine.

LUCIFER. Well, I agree. It will spare me much of shame
In coming after thee. My song is said
Of Lucifer the star. See there he shines!

I am Lucifer, the star;
Oh! think on me,
As I lighten from afar
The Heavens and thee;
In town, or tower,
Or this fair bower,
Oh! think on me;
Though a wandering star,
As the loveliest are,
I love but thee.

Lady! when I brightest beam,
Love, look on me;
I am not what I may seem
To the world or thee;
But fain would love
With thee above,
Where thou wilt be.
But if love be a dream,
As the world doth deem,
What is't to me?

ELISSA. Could we but deem the stars had hearts, and
loved,

They would seem happier, holier, even than now;
And, ah! why not? they are so beautiful.
And love is part and union in itself
Of all that is in nature brilliant, pure—
Of all in feeling sacred and sublime.
Surely the stars are images of love:

The sunbeam and the starbeam both bring love.
 The sky, the sea, the rainbow, and the stream
 And dark blue hill, where all the loveliness
 Of earth and Heaven, in sweet extatic strife,
 Seem mingling hues which might immortal be,
 If length of life by height of beauty went :
 All seem but made for love—love made for all :
 We do become all heart with those we love :
 It is nature's self—it is everywhere—it is here.

LUCIFER. To me there is but one place in the world,
 And that where thou art ; for where'er I be,
 Thy love doth seek its way into my heart,
 As will a bird into her secret nest :
 Then sit and sing ; sweet wing of beauty, sing.

ELISSA. Bright one ! who dwellest in the happy skies,
 Rejoicing in thy light as does the brave,
 In his keen flashing sword, and his strong arm's
 Swift swoop, canst thou, from among the sons of men
 Single out those who love thee as do I
 Thee from thy fellow glories ? If so, star,
 Turn hither thy bright front ; I love thee, friend.
 Thou hast no deeds of darkness. All thou dost
 Is to us light and beauty : yea, thou art
 A globe all glory ; thou who at the first
 Didst answer to the angels which in Heaven
 Sang the bright birth of earth, and even now,
 As star by star is born, dost sing the same
 With countless hosts in infinite delight,
 Be unto me a moment ! Write thy bright
 Light on my heart before the sun shall rise
 And vanquish sight. Thou art the prophecy
 Of light which he fulfils. Speak, shining star,
 Drop from thy golden lips the truths of Heaven.
 First of all stars and favourite of the skies,
 Apostle of the sun—thou upon whom
 His mantle resteth—speak, prophetic beauty !
 Speak, shining star out of the heights of Heaven,

Beautiful being, speak to God for man !
 Is it because of beauty thou wast chosen
 To be the sign of sin ? For surely sin
 Must be surpassing lovely when for her
 Men forfeit God's reward of deathless bliss
 And life divine ; or, is it that such beauty,
 Sometimes before the truth, and sometimes after,
 As is a moral or a prophecy,
 Is ever warning ? Why wert thou accorded
 To the great Evil ? Is it because thou art
 Of all the sun's bright servants nearest earth ?
 And shall we then forget that Christ hath said
 He is thyself, the light-bringer of Heaven ?
 Star of the morning ! unto us thou art
 The presage of a day of power. Like thee
 Let us rejoice in life, then, and proclaim
 A glory coming greater than our own.
 All ages are but stars to that which comes,
 Sunlike. Oh ! speak, star ! Lift thou up thy voice
 Out of yon radiant ranks, and I on earth,
 As thou in Heaven will bless the Lord God ever.
 Hear, Lucifer, thou star ! I answer thee.

Oh ! ask me not to look and love,
 But bid me worship thee ;
 For thou art earthly things above,
 As far as angels be :
 Then whether in the eve or morn
 Thou dost the maiden skies adorn,
 Oh ! let me worship thee !

I am but as this drop of dew ;
 Oh ! let me worship thee !
 Thy light, thy strength, is ever new,
 Even as the angels' be :
 And as this dew drop, till it dies,

Bosoms the golden stars and skies,
Oh! let me worship thee!

But, dearest, why that dark look?

LUCIFER. Let it not
Cloud thine even with its shadow: but the ground
Of all great thoughts is sadness; and I mused
Upon past happiness. Well—be it past!
Did Lucifer, as I do, gaze on thee,
The flame of woe would flicker in his breast,
And straight die out—the brightness of thy beauty
Quenching it as the sun doth earthly fire.

ELISSA. Nay, look not on me so intensely sad.

LUCIFER. Forgive me: it was an agony of bliss.
I love thee, and am full of happiness.
My bosom bounds beneath thy smile as doth
The sea's unto the moon, his mighty mistress;
Lying and looking up to her, and saying—
Lovely! lovely! lovely! lady of the Heavens!
Oh! when the thoughts of other joyous days—
Perchance, if such may be, of happier times—
Are falling gently on the memory
Like autumn's leaves distained with dusky gold,
Yet softly as a snowflake; and the smile
Of kindness, like thine, is beaming on me—
Oh! pardon, if I lose myself, nor know
Whether I be with Heaven or thee.

ELISSA. Use not
Such ardent phrase, nor mix the claim of aught
On earth with thoughts more than with hopes of Heaven.

LUCIFER. Hopes, lady! I have none.

ELISSA. Thou must have. All
Have hopes, however wretched they may be,
Or blest. It is hope which lifts the lark so high—
Hope of a lighter air and bluer sky;
And the poor hack which drops down on the flints—
Upon whose eye the dust is settling—

He hopes to die. No being is which hath
Not love and hope.

LUCIFER. Yes—one! The ancient Ill,
Dwelling and damned through all which is: that spirit
Whose heart is hate—who is the foe of God—
The foe of all.

ELISSA. How knowest thou such doth live?
If one there be the spirit foe of man,
It is only that inferiors still must strive.
With God they cannot strive nor dare to deem.
What single star could in itself abide
The onset of the armies of the Heavens?
How then all armies His, who all hath made?
And made in love? Oh, trust me, never fell
By love, a spirit or earthly or of Heaven.
Rather by love thy are regenerate.
Love is the happy privilege of mind—
Love is the reason of all living things.
A Trinity there seems of principles,
Which represent and rule created life—
The love of self, our fellows, and our God.
In all throughout one common feeling reigns:
Each doth maintain and is maintained by the other:
All are compatible—all needful; one
To life—to virtue one—and one to bliss;
Which thus together make the power, the end,
And the perfection of created Being.
From these three principles doth every deed,
Desire, and will, and reasoning, good or bad, come;
To these they all determine—sum and scheme:
The three are one in centre and in round;
Wrapping the world of life as do the skies
Our world. Hail! air of love, by which we live;
How sweet, how fragrant! Spirit, though unseen—
Void of gross sign—is scarce a simple essence,
Immortal, immaterial, though it be.
One only simple essence liveth—God,—

Creator, uncreate. The brutes beneath,
 The angels high above us, with ourselves,
 Are but compounded things of mind and form.
 In all things animate is therefore cored
 An elemental sameness of existence ;
 For God, being Love, in love created all,
 As He contains the whole, and penetrates.
 Seraphs love God, and angels love the good :
 We love each other ; and these lower lives,
 Which walk the earth in thousand diverse shapes,
 According to their reason, love us too :
 The most intelligent affect us most.
 Nay, man's chief wisdom's love—the love of God.
 The new religion—final, perfect, pure—
 Was that of Christ and love. His great command—
 His all-sufficing precept—was't not love ?
 Truly to love ourselves we must love God—
 To love God we must all His creatures love—
 To love His creatures, both ourselves and Him.
 Thus love is all that's wise, fair, good, and happy.

LUCIFER. How knowest thou God doth live ? Why did

He not,

With that creating hand which sprinkled stars
 On space's bosom, bidding her breathe and wake
 From the long death-like trance in which she lay,—
 With that same hand which scattered o'er the sky,
 As this small dust I strew upon the wind,
 Yon countless orbs, aye fixing each on Him
 Its flaming eye, which winks and blenches oft
 Beneath His glance,—with the finger of that hand
 Which spangled o'er infinity with suns ;
 And wrapped it round about Him as a robe,
 Why did He not write out His own great name
 In spheres of fire, that Heaven might alway tell
 To every creature, God ? If not, then why
 Should I believe when I behold around me
 Nought scarce, save ill and woe ?

ELISSA.

God surely lives!

Without God all things are in tunnel darkness.
 Let there be God, and all are sun—all God.
 And to the just soul, in a future state,
 Defect's dark mist, thick-spreading o'er this vale,
 Shall dim the eye no more, nor bound survey;
 And evil, now which boweth Being down
 As dew the grass, shall only fit all life
 For fresher growth and for intenser day,
 Where God shall dry all tears as the sun dew.

LUCIFER. O lady! I am wretched.

ELISSA.

Say not so.

With thee I could not deem myself unhappy.
 Hark to the sea! It sounds like the near hum
 Of a great city.

LUCIFER.

Say, the city earth;

For such these orbs are in the realms of space.

ELISSA. I dreamed once that the night came down to me;
 In figure, oh! too like thine own for truth,
 And looked into me with his thousand eyes,
 And that made me unhappy; but it passed,
 And I half wished it back. Mind hath its earth
 And Heaven. The many petty common thoughts
 On which we daily tread, as it were, make one,
 And above which few look; the other is
 That high and welkin-like infinity—
 The brighter, upper half of the mind's world,
 Thick with great sun-like and constellate thoughts;
 And in the night of mind, which is our sleep,
 These thoughts shine out in dreams. Dreams double life;
 They are the heart's bright shadow on life's flood;
 And even the step from death to deathlessness—
 From this earth's gross existence unto Heaven—
 Can scarce be more than from the harsh hot day
 To sleep's soft scenes, the moonlight of the mind.
 The wave is never weary of the wind,
 But in mountainous playfulness leaps to it

Always ; but mind gets weary of the world,
 And glooms itself in sleep, like a sweet smile,
 Line by line, settling into proper sadness ;
 For sleep seems part of our immortality :
 And why should any thing that dies be sad ?
 Last night I dreamed I walked within a hall—
 The inside of the world. Long shroud-like lights
 Lit up its lift-like dome and pale wide walls,
 Horizon-like ; and every one was there ;
 It was the house of Death, and Death was there.
 We could not see him, but he was a feeling :
 We knew he was around us—heard us—eyed us ;
 But where wast thou ? I never met thee once.
 And all was still as nothing ; or as God,
 Deep judging, when the thought of making first
 Quicken'd and stirred within Him ; and He made
 All Heaven at one thought as at a glance.
 Noise was there none ; and yet there was a sound
 Which seemed to be half like silence, half like sound.
 All crept about still as the cold wet worms,
 Which slid among our feet, we could not 'scape from.
 Round me were ruined fragments of dead gods—
 Those shadows of the mystery of One—
 And the red worms, too, flourished over these,
 For marble is a shadow weighed with mind ;
 Each being, as men of old believed, distinct
 In form, and place, and power. But oh ! not all
 The gathered gods of Eld could shine like ours,
 No more than all yon stars could make a sun.
 But truly then men lived in moral night,
 'Neath a dim starlight of religious truth.
 I felt my spirit's spring gush out more clear,
 Gazing on these : they beautified my mind
 As rocks and flowers reflected do a well.
 Mind makes itself like that it lives amidst,
 And on ; and thus, among dreams, imaginings,
 And scenes of awe, and purity, and power,

Grows sternly sweet and calm—all beautiful
 With god-like coldness and unconsciousness
 Of mortal passion, mental toil; until,
 Like to the marble model of a god,
 It doth assume a firm and dazzling form,
 Scarcely less incorruptible than that
 It emblems: and so grew, methought, my mind.
 Matter hath many qualities; mind, one:
 It is irresistible: pure power—pure god.
 While wandering on I met what seemed myself:
 Was it not strange that we should meet, and there?
 But all is strange in dreaming, as in death,
 And waking, as in life: nought is not strange.
 Methought that I was happy, because dead.
 All hurried to and fro; and many cried
 To each other—Can I do thee any good?
 But no one heeded: nothing could avail:
 The world was one great grave. I looked, and saw
 Time on his two great wings—one, night—one, day—
 Fly, moth-like, right into the flickering sun;
 So that the sun went out, and they both perished.
 And one gat up and spake—a holy man—
 Exhorting them; but each and all cried out—
 Go to!—it helps not—means not: we are dead.
 Death spake no word methought, but me he made
 Speak for him; and I dreamed that I was Death;
 Then, that Death only lived: all things were mixed;
 Up and down shooting, like the brain's fierce dance
 In a delirium, when we are apt to die.
 Hell is my heir; what kin to me is Heaven?
 Bring out your hearts before me. Give your limbs
 To whom ye list or love. My son, Decay,
 Will take them: give them him. I want your hearts,
 That I may take them up to God. There came
 These words amongst us, but we knew not whence;
 It was as if the air spake. And there rose
 Out of the earth a giant thing, all earth;

His eye was earthy, and his arm was earthy :
 He had no heart. He but said, I am Decay ;
 And, as he spake, he crumbled into earth,
 And there was nothing of him. But we all
 Lifted our faces up at the word, God,
 And spied a dark star high above in the midst
 Of others, numberless as are the dead.
 And all plucked out their hearts, and held them in
 Their right hands. Many tried to pick out specks
 And stains, but could not : each gave up his heart.
 And something—all things—nothing—it was Death,
 Said, as before, from air—Let us to God !
 And straight we rose, leaving behind the raw
 Worms and dead gods, all of us—soared and soared
 Right upwards, till the star I told thee of
 Looked like a moon—the moon became a sun :
 The sun—there came a hand between the sun and us,
 And its five fingers made five nights in air.
 God tore the glory from the sun's broad brow,
 And flung the flaming scalp off flat to hell.
 I saw him do it ; and it passed close by us.
 And then I heard a long, cold, skeleton scream,
 Like a trumpet whining through a catacomb,
 Which made the sides of that great grave shake in.
 I saw the world and vision of the dead
 Dim itself off—and all was life. I woke,
 And felt the high sun blazoning on my brow,
 His own almighty mockery of woe,
 And fierce and infinite laugh at things which cease.
 Hell hath its light—and Heaven ; he burns with both.
 And my dream broke, like life from the last limb—
 Quivering ; so loth I felt to let it go,
 Just as I thought I had caught sight of Heaven.
 It came to nought, as dreams of Heaven on earth
 Do always.

LUCIFER. It is time we part again.

ELISSA. Farewell, then, gentle stars ! To-night, farewell !

For we all part at once. It is thus the bright
 Visions and joys of youth break up—but they
 For ever. When ye shine again I will
 Be with ye ; for I love ye next to him.
 To all, adieu ! When shall I see thee next ?

LUCIFER. Lady, I know not.

ELISSA. Say !

LUCIFER. Never, perchance.

ELISSA. There is but one immortal in the world
 Who need say—never !

LUCIFER. What if I were he ?

ELISSA. But thou art not he ; and thou shalt not say it.
 Stars rise and set—rise, set, and rise again
 In their sublime-like beauty through all time.
 Why should not we, too, ever meet, like them ?

LUCIFER. I see no beauty—feel no love—all things
 Are unlovely.

ELISSA. O earth ! be deaf ; and Heaven !
 Shut thy blue eye. He doth blaspheme the world.
 Dost not love me ?

LUCIFER. Love thee ? Ay ! earth and Heaven
 Together could not make a love like mine.

ELISSA. When wilt thou come again ? To-morrow ?

LUCIFER. Well.

And then I cross yon sea ere I return ;
 For I have matters in another land.
 Fear not.

ELISSA. When will our parting days be over ?

LUCIFER. Oh ! soon—soon ! Think of me, love, on the
 waters !

Be happy ! and, for me, I love few things more
 Than at night to ride upon the broad-backed billow,
 Seasing along and plunging on his precipitous path ;
 While the red moon is westering low away,
 And the mad waves are fighting for the stars,
 Like men for—what they know not.

ELISSA. Scornor

LUCIFER. Saint!

ELISSA. The world hath much that is great; and but
one sea,

Which is her spirit; and to her it stands
As the mad monarch passion to the heart—
Fathomless, overwhelming, which receives
The rivers of all feeling; in whose depths
Lie wrecked the riches of all nature. God,
When He did make thee, moved upon thee then,
And left His impress there, the same even now
As when thy last wave leapt from Chaos.—Hark!
Nay, there is some one coming.

FESTUS *entering*. It is I.

I said we should be sure to meet thee here:
For I have brought one who would speak with thee.

LUCIFER. Thanks! and where is he?

FESTUS. Yonder. He would not
Come up so far as this.

LUCIFER. Who is it?

FESTUS. I know not
Who he may be, or what; but I can guess.

LUCIFER. Remain a moment, love, till I return.

ELISSA. Nay—let me leave!

LUCIFER. Not yet: do not dislike him.
He is a friend, and more another time.

FESTUS. I am sorry, lady, to have caused this parting.
I fear I am unwelcome.

ELISSA. We were parting.

FESTUS. Then am I doubly sorry; for I know
It is the saddest and the sacredest
Moment of all with those who love.

ELISSA. He is coming!
So I forgive thee.

LUCIFER. I must leave thee, love:
I know not for how long; it rests with thee
If it seem long at all. Eternity
Might pass, and I not know it in thy love.

ELISSA. If to believe that I do love thee always
May make time fly the fleeter—

LUCIFER. I'll believe it—
Trust me. I leave this lady in thy charge,

FESTUS. Be kind—wait on her—may he, love ?

ELISSA. Thou knowest. I receive him as thy friend
Whenever he come.

FESTUS. I ask no higher title
Than friend of the lovely and the generous.

ELISSA. Farewell !

FESTUS. Lady ! I will not forget my trust.

(*Apart*) The breeze which curls the lake's bright lip but
lifts

A purer, deeper, water to the light ;
The ruffling of the wild bird's wing but wakes
A warmer beauty and a downier depth.
That startled shrink, that faintest blossom-blush
Of constancy alarmed !—Love ! if thou hast
One weapon in that shining armoury,
The quiver on thy shoulder, where thou keep'st
Each arrowy eye-beam feathered with a sigh ;—
If from that bow, shaped so like Beauty's lip,
Strung with its string of pearls, thou wilt twang forth
But one dart, fair into the mark I mean,—
Do it, and I will worship thee for ever :
Yea, I will give thee glory and a name
Known, sunlike, in all nations. Heart be still !

LUCIFER. This parting over—

ELISSA. Yes, this one—and then ?

LUCIFER. Why, then another, may be.

ELISSA. No—no more.

I'll be unhappy if thou tell'st me so.

LUCIFER. Well, then—no more.

ELISSA. But when wilt thou come back ?

LUCIFER. Almost before thou wishest. He will know.

ELISSA. I shall be always asking him. Farewell !

LUCIFER. Shine on, ye stars ! and light her to her rest ;

Scarce are ye worthy for her handmaidens.
 Why, Hell would laugh to learn I had been in love.
 I have affairs in hell. Wilt go with me?

FESTUS. Yes, in a month or two:—not just this minute.

LUCIFER. I shall be there and back again ere then.

FESTUS. Meanwhile I can amuse myself: so, go!
 But some time I would fain behold thy home,
 And pass the gates of fire.

LUCIFER. And so thou shalt.

My home is everywhere where spirit is.
 All things are as I meant them. Fare thee well.

FESTUS. The strongest passion which I have is honour:
 I would I had none: it is in my way.

SCENE—*Everywhere.*

FESTUS *and* LUCIFER.

FESTUS. Why, earth is in the very midst of Heaven!
 And space, though void of things, feels full of God.
 Hath space no limit?

LUCIFER. None to thee. Yet, if
 Infinite, it would equal God; and that
 To think of is most vain.

FESTUS. And yet if not
 Infinite how can God exist therein?

LUCIFER. I say not.

FESTUS. No. So soon when placed beside
 The infinite the poor immortal fails.

LUCIFER. Space is God's space: eternity is His
 Eternity; His, Heaven. He only holds
 Perfections, which are but the impossible
 To other beings.

FESTUS. We are things of time.

LUCIFER. With God time is not. Unto him all is
 Present eternity. Worlds, beings, years,

Will soon be gathered to its grave. These worlds,
Which bear its sky-pall, soon will follow thine.
I, both. All things must die.

FESTUS. What are ye orbs?
The words of God—the Scriptures of the skies?
For words with Him cannot be passing, nor
Less real, vast, or glorious than yourselves.
The world is a great poem, and the worlds
The words it is writ in, and we souls the thoughts.
Ye cannot die.

LUCIFER. Think not on death. Here all
Is life, light, beauty. Harp not so on death.

FESTUS. I cannot help me, spirit! Chide no more.
As who dare gaze the sun, doth after see
Betwixt him and else a dark sun in his eye;
So I, once having braved my burning doom,
See nought beside—or that in everything.
Hark, what is that I hear?

LUCIFER. An angel weeping—
Earth's guardian angel. She is ever weeping.

FESTUS. See where she flies, spirit-torn, round the
heavens,
Like a fore-feel of madness about the brain.

ANGEL OF EARTH.

Stars, stars!
Stop your bright cars!
Stint your breath—
Repent ere worse—
Think of the death
Of the universe.
Fear doom, and fear
The fate of your kin-sphere.
As a corse in the tomb,
Earth! thou art laid in doom:
The worm is at thy heart.
I see all things part:—
The bright air thicken,

Thunder-stricken :
 Birds from the sky
 Shower like leaves :
 Streamlets stop
 Like ice on eaves :
 The sun go blind :
 Swoon the wind
 On the high hill top—
 Swoon and die :
 Earth rear off her cities
 As a horse his rider ;
 And still, with each death-strain,
 Her heart-wound tear wider :
 The lion roar and die
 With his eyeballs on the sky :
 The eagle scream
 And drop like a beam :
 Men crowd and cry,
 Out on this deathful dream !
 A low dull sound—
 'Tis the march of many bones
 Under ground ;
 Up ! and they fling,
 Like a fly's wing,
 Off them the gray grave-stones
 They sit in their biers—
 Father and mother,
 Man and wife,
 Sister and brother,
 As in life ;
 Lady and lover—
 Love all over.
 Their flesh re-appears—
 Their hearts beat—
 Their eyes have tears :
 Woe ! woe !
 Do they speak ?



Stir? No!
 Tongues were too weak,
 Save to repeat
 Woe!
 But they smile
 In a while;
 For to wipe from His word
 The dust of years,
 He comes! he comes! the Lord,
 Man-God, re-appears;
 To bless, and to save
 From death and the grave—
 To redeem and deliver
 For ever and ever!
 The dead rise—
 Death dies.
 Go, Time, and sink
 Thy great thoughts in the sea!
 And quench thy red link!
 Let him flutter to rest
 On thy God-nursing breast,
 Eternity!
 Mother Eternity!
 What is for me?

FESTUS. Poor angel! Ah! it is the good who suffer.
 Look! like a cloud, she hath wept herself away.
 What of this world we view and all yon worlds?
 If God made not all things from nothing, how
 Is He creator? Something must exist
 If otherwise, eternal with Himself;
 And all things had not origin in Him.

LUCIFER. He made all things of Him. The visible world
 Is as the Christ of nature; God the maker
 In matter made self manifest through time.
 All things are formed of all things—all of God.
 The world is made of wonders. Every day

Is born a new creation. Every orb
 Hath its revealed word; and every race
 Of being hath its judgment, or shall have.

FESTUS. Are all these worlds, then, stocked with souls
 like man's—
 Free, fallible, and sinful?

LUCIFER. Ay, they are.
 All creature-minds, like man's, are fallible.
 The seraph who in Heaven highest stands
 May fall to ruin deepest. God is mind—
 Pure, perfect, sinless. Man imperfect is—
 Momently sinning. Evil then results
 From imperfection. The idea of good
 Is owned in imperfection's lowest form.
 God would not, could not, make aught wholly ill,
 Nor aught not like to err. Man never was
 Perfect nor pure, or he would be so now.
 Thy nature hath some excellencies—these
 Oft thwarted by low lusts and wicked wills.
 What then? They are necessitate in kind,
 As change in nature, or as shade to light.
 No darkness hath the sun—no weakness God :
 These only be the faulty qualities
 Of secondary natures—planets, men.
 God hath no attributes unless To Be
 Be one: 'twould mix Him with the things He hath made.
 God is all God, as life is that which lives.
 I am a mighty spirit, and yet I
 Am but to God what lightning is to light :
 Lightning slays one thing—light makes all things live.
 Bear, then, thy necessary ills with grace :
 No positive estate or principle
 Is Evil—debtor wholly for its form
 And measure to defect—defect to good.
 Good's the sole positive principle in the world ;
 It is only thus, that what God makes He loves—
 And must: the others are but off-shoots. Ill

Is limited. One cannot form a scheme
For universal evil ; not even I.

FESTUS. Can imperfection from perfection come ?
Can God make aught defective ?

LUCIFER. How aught else ?
There are but three proportions in all things—
The greater—equal—less. God could not make
A God above Himself, nor equal with—
By nature and necessity the Highest ;
So, if He make, it must be lesser minds—
Little and less from angels down to men,
Whose natures are imperfect, as His own
Must be all-perfect. These two states are not,
Except as whole unto its parts, opposed ;
And evil is itself no ill unless
Creation be.

FESTUS. Is God the cause of evil ?

LUCIFER. So far as evil comes from imperfection,
And imperfection from the things He hath made,
And what He hath made from His will to make.

FESTUS. Oh ! let me rest, be it but a moment's pause !
This endless light-like journey wearies me.
Remember still my spirit toils in dust—
A dark close cloud.

LUCIFER. Alight, then, on this orb.
I am not wearied : I will watch by thee.
He sleeps—he dreams. How far men see in dreams !
In dreams they can accomplish worlds of things :
The heart then suffers a fusion of all feeling
Back to its youthful hours of innocence,
And nakedness, and paradise ; ere yet
The world had wound a perishing garb around it ;
While yet its God came down and spake to it.
Such and so great are dreams. My might, my being
To him is but a dream's. And could a state
To come fill up their dream-stretched minds, they might
Be gods. And may it not be so ? Then man

Is worth my ruining. What does he dream ?
 With all the sway his spirit now exerts
 O'er time, space, thought, it is but a shadowy sway ;
 Light as a mountain shadow on a lake.
 Mine is the mountain's self. A touch would shake
 To nought whatever his soul now feels or acts ;
 But not a world-quake could touch aught of mine :
 Thus much we differ. I will not envy man.
 Power alone makes being bearable.

And yet this dream-power is mind-power—real :
 All things are real : fiction cannot be.
 A thought is real as the world—a dream
 True as all God doth know—with whom all is true.
 The deep dense sleep of half-dead exhaustedness !
 Would I could feel it. Ah ! he wakes at last.

FESTUS. Oh ! I have dreamed a dream so beautiful !
 Methought I lay as it were here ; and, lo !
 A spirit came and gave me wings of light,
 Which thrice I waved delighted. Up we flew
 Sheer through the shining air, far past the sun's
 Broad blazing disk,—past where the great great snake
 Binds in his bright coil half the host of Heaven,—
 Past thee, Orion ! who, with arm uplift,
 Like him the divine evil of the world,
 Threatening the throne of God, dost ever stand
 Sublimely impious ; and thy mighty mace
 Whirling on high, down from its glorious seat
 Drops, crushed and shattered, many a shining world.
 And so the brave and beautiful of old
 Believed thou wast a giant made of worlds :
 And they were right, if thus they bodied out
 The immortal mind ; for it hath starlike beauty,
 And worldlike might ; and is as high above
 The things it scorns, and will make war with God,
 Though He gave it earth and Heaven, and arms to win
 Them both ; and, spite of lust and pride, to earn them.
 And now thy soul informs yon hundred stars,

As mine my limbs—well, 'tis a noble end.
 What now to thee be mortal maid or goddess?
 Look! she who fled thee once, now loves and longs
 To clasp thee to her cold and beamy breast.
 Pine moon! thou art as far below him now,
 As once she was above thee, thou of the world-belt!
 And she who had thee, and who knew thee god,
 Died of her boast, and lies in her own dust.
 And she who loved thee, the young blushy Morning,
 Who caught thee in her arms, and bore thee off
 Far o'er the lashing seas to a lonely isle,
 Where she might pleasure longer and in secret—
 That love undid thee, and it is so now:
 Whether the beauty seek, or flee, or have,
 'Tis a like ill—this beauty doubly mortal.
 What though the moon with madness slew thee there,
 Let me believe it was within the arms
 That loved thee even in the arms of death,
 And that there snapped the lightning link of life.
 Kill, but not conquer, man nor mind may gods.
 Thou image of the Almighty error, man!
 Banished and banned to Heaven, by a weak world,
 Which makes the minds it cannot master gods.
 And thou, the first and greatest of half-gods,
 Which they in olden time did star together
 To an idolatrous immortality;
 Who nationalized the skies, and gave all stars
 Unto the spirits of the good and brave,
 Forestalling Heaven by ages—wondrous men!
 And if—beguiled by wine, and the low wiles
 Thou wouldst not creep to meet, and a drunken sleep,
 Like to high noon in the midst of all his might,
 Close by the brink of immortality—
 The deep dominions of thy sea-sire, thou
 Didst lose thy light by kings who hate the great,
 Thou only hadst to stand up to the sun,
 And gain again thine eyes. So the great king,

The world, the tyrant we elect, in vain
 Puts out the eyes of mind : it looks to God,
 And reaps its light again. Wherefore, revenge!
 Out with the sword! the world will run before thee,
 Orion! belted giant of the skies!
 Thou with the treble strain of godhood in thee!
 March! there is nought to hinder thee in Heaven:—
 Past that great sickle saved for one day's work,
 When He who sowed shall reap Creation's field;—
 Past those bright diademed orbs which show to man
 His crown to come;—up through the starry strings
 Of that high harp close by the feet of God,
 Which He, methought, took up and struck, till Heaven,
 In love's immortal madness, rang and reeled;
 The stars fell on their faces; and, far off,
 The wild world halted—shook his burning mane—
 Then, like a fresh-blown trumpet blast, went on,
 Or like a god gone mad. On, on we flew,
 I and the spirit, far beyond all things
 Of measure, motion, time and aught create;
 Where the stars stood on the edge of the first nothing,
 And looked each other in the face and fled,—
 Past even the last long starless void, to God;
 Whom straight I heard, methought, commanding thus:
 Immortal! I am God. Hie back to earth,
 And say to all, that God doth say—Love God!

LUCIFER. God visits men adreaming: I, awake.

FESTUS. And my dream changed to one of general doom.
 Wilt hear it?

LUCIFER. Ay, say on! It is but a dream.

FESTUS. God made all mind and motion cease; and lo!
 The whole was death and peace. An endless time
 Obtained, in which the power of all made failed.
 God bade the worlds to judgment, and they came—
 Pale, trembling, corpse-like. To the souls therein
 Then spake the Maker: Deathless spirits, rise!
 And straight they thronged around the throne. His arm

The Almighty then uplift, and smote the worlds
 Once, and they fell in fragments like to spray,
 And vanished in their native void. He shook
 The stars from Heaven like rain-drops from a bough ;
 Like tears they poured adown creation's face.
 Spirit and space were all things. Matter, death,
 And time, left even not a wake to tell
 Where once their track o'er Being. God's own light,
 Undarkened and unhindered by a sun,
 Glowed forth alone in glory. And through all
 A clear and tremulous sense of God prevailed,
 Like to the blush of love upon the cheek,
 Or the full feeling lightening through the eye,
 Or the quick music in the chords of harps.
 God judged all creatures unto bliss or woe,
 According to their deeds, and faith, and His
 Own will: and straight the saved upraised a voice
 Which seemed to emulate eternity
 In its triumphant overblessedness.
 The lost leaped up and cursed God to His face—
 A curse might make the sun turn cold to hear ;
 And thee, in all thy burning glory, tremble,
 In front of all thy angels, like a chord.
 Rage writhed each brow into a changeless scowl.
 Madly they mocked at God, and dared His eye,
 Safe in their curse of deathlessness. To Hell
 They hied like storms ; and, cursing all things, each
 Soul wrapped him in his shroud of fire for aye,
 With one long loud howl which seemed to deafen Heaven—
 And then I woke.

LUCIFER.

A wild fantastic dream !

A mere mirage of mind ! Come, let us leave ;
 We have seen enough of this world.

FESTUS.

Lift me up, then.

World upon world how they come rolling on !
 But none that I see are so fair as earth :
 There is so much to love that is purely earth.

Now I could wander all day in the wood,
 Where nature, like a sibyl, writes the fate
 Of all that live on her red forest leaves :
 And have no other aim than wandering
 Within that wood, and wind my arms around
 Its grey gaunt trunks, and think and feel to them ;
 While the wind, sinking, moans over the earth
 Like a giant over some dead captive dame,
 Whom death hath saved from madness and his love ;—
 Could tramp across the brown and springy moor,
 And over the purple ling, and never tire ;—
 Could look upon the ripple of a river,
 Or on a tree's long shadow down a hill,
 For a whole summer's day, wishing the sun
 Would drink my soul up to him as he draws
 Dew from the earth. These things are in my mind,
 And suns and systems cannot drive them out,
 Nor universal system of all suns.
 Dost ravage all these worlds ?

LUCIFER.

Aye, all mine own.

Where spirit is, there evil ; and the world
 Is full of me as ocean is of brine.

FESTUS. God is all perfect ; man imperfect. Thou ?

LUCIFER. I am the imperfection of the whole—

The pitch profoundest of the fallible.

Myself the all of evil which exists—

The ocean heaped into a single surge.

FESTUS. O God ! why wouldst Thou make the universe ?

LUCIFER. Child ! quench yon suns ; strip death of its
 decay ;

Men of their follies—hell of all its woe !

These if thou didst, thou couldst not banish me.

I am the shadow which Creation casts

From God's own light.—But here we are, at hell.

Hark to the thunderous roaring of its fires !

Yet ere we further pass—stop ! dost thou shrink ?

FESTUS. At nought—not I ! Come on, fiend ! follow me !

SCENE—*Hell.*LUCIFER and FESTUS *entering.*

LUCIFER. Behold my world! Man's science counts it not
 Upon the brightest sky. He never knows
 How near it comes to him: but, swathed in clouds
 As though in plumed and palléd state, it steals
 Hearselike and thieflike round the universe,
 For ever rolling and returning not—
 Robbing all worlds of many an angel soul—
 With its light hidden in its breast, which burns
 With all concentrate and superfluent woe.
 Nor sun nor moon illumine it, and to those
 Which dwell in it, not live, the starry skies
 Have told no time since first they entered there.
 Worlds have been built, and to their central base
 Ruined and rased to the last atom; they
 Of neither know nor can—unconscious save
 To agony—nought knowing even of God
 But His omnipotence to execute
 Torture on those He hath in wrath endowed
 With Heaven's own immortality, to make
 Them feel what woe the Almighty can inflict,
 And the all-feeble suffer, and not be
 Annihilated as they would. Be sure
 That this is hell. The blood which hath embrued
 Earth's breast, since first men met in war, may hope
 Yet to be formed again and reascend,
 Each drop its individual vein; the foam-bubble,
 Sun-drawn out of the sea into the clouds,
 To scale the cataract down which it fell,
 Or seek its primal source in earth's hot heart;
 But for the lost to rise to or regain
 Heaven, or to hope it is impossible.

FESTUS. Are all these angels then, or men, or both?
 Or mortals of all worlds?

LUCIFER.

Immortals all.

FESTUS. What numbers!

LUCIFER. All are spirits fallen through sin
 At various periods of eternity ;
 And not by one offence, to one same doom,
 And at one moment, did they down from Heaven
 Like to the rapid droppings of a shower ;—
 No! each distinct as thunderpeals, they fell.
 Save those that fell with me. With me began
 Sin even in Heaven ; with me but sin remains.
 Once I alone was Hell. Behold my fruits!

FESTUS. What do yon fiends? Some 'mong them look
 like mortals :
 Their hearts shine through them like live coals through ashes.
 They look like madmen gone delirious.
 Oh, horror ! Let me hence.

LUCIFER. Nay, hear.

FESTUS. I hear
 A strain incongruous as a merry dirge,
 Or sacramental bacchanal might be.

LUCIFER. Men are they not, but devils at the best ;
 And I would have thee mark them.

FESTUS. I attend.

FIENDS. Heap high the fires of hell ! let woe not languish.
 Heap up with everlasting flames, heap higher ;
 There let the man-fiend, consummate in anguish,
 Howl through the fathomless profound of fire.
 To tempt and ruin those that once were solely
 God's, and torment them when with us they dwell—
 This is our end, and their existence wholly
 Hid in the doom no demon dares to tell,
 But is shadowed in the harrowing eternity of hell.
 Deeper than the bowl the drunkard drained so gladly,
 Deadlier than the lie which scorched the liar's tongue,
 Keener than the blade the murderer plied so madly,
 Eats aye into the essence the worm that all hath stung.
 And for that they succumbed to the toils wherewith we
 bound them,

Their bread is burning brimstone, their drink is bubbling fire ;
 For they live upon the nature of the tortures that surround
 them,

And their life is in the death they shall never see expire ;
 Lo ! it floweth from the fountains of the ever seething ire.

FESTUS. Nay, let me quit ! now know I what hell is.
 What are they—drunkards, liars, murderers ?

LUCIFER. Can wine destroy the soul ? or hell's fierce
 flames

Feed upon holy water wherewith Priest
 Baptizeth sinless babe ? Can liar make
 God lie ? or cheat his neighbour of his soul ?
 No ! God's salvation waiteth not on man's
 Weak will or ministry ; nor man's perdition
 Upon his brother's hatred or neglect.
 Can murderer slay the soul ? or suicide
 Drug immortality ? Their sin is great,
 And is eternally condemned of God,
 But of their nature, the which death destroys,
 Their own as well as victim's recompense.
 When Time hath overcome the ruin wrought
 Upon their hearts who loved the dead, that they
 Who suffered most have most forgiven ill,
 Shall the dead slay the living ceaselessly ?
 Shall God, who is all Love, reverse, reserve,
 Here in hell, ages afterwards, those crimes ?
 And because man hath sinned a moment crown
 All crime in instituting punishment
 Unending for an instantaneous wrong ?
 Shall that be justice ? It were more than vengeance.
 Hath not Christ said, five hundred times forgive ?
 And shall God act by a less perfect law
 Than that He hath Himself enjoined on man ?
 Yet such the Deity men fable, such
 The hell whereto they doom themselves.

FESTUS. No more.
 The world is all sufficient for itself ;

And hell and Heaven are not the equivalents
Of earth's iniquities and righteousness.

LUCIFER. Can those who are idolators defraud
God of His worship? who adore the world,
Gold, or as savages, the stars and Heaven,
And elements of earth? None worship Him,
But with and in His spirit. Nought attains
His love but that proceedeth from it first.
His praise is everlasting in all worlds
And starry ages of eternity.

Can they who covet the world's worthiest goods,
Wealth, honour, power, knowledge, rank, or aught,
Merit eternal torment for a sin
Wherewith is bound the world's prosperity
And human glory? Nought eternal is
But that which is of God. All pain and woe
Are therefore finite. Can the robber steal
From God or Heaven a thing or from the soul?
Or the deflowerer desecrate and undo
The espousals of the spirit with its Lord?
How weak is virtue, then, and vice, how vain!
How wretched human righteousness—and sin,
How despicable to the soul assured,
Since neither hath a recompense. The one
By Him destroyed who can alone unmake
That he hath made; the other perfected,
United, Deified in God the Son
With His own nature. Infinite Universe!
Thou hast no like, no second favourite
To mortal man of God's.

FESTUS. What mean the words
Of yonder fiendish chant, then?

LUCIFER. Words and shapes
Are equally as soon assumed by spirits.
Sin, with deep draughts of fiery venom fed,
Drains to the latest dreg of murderous flame
Its self consuming fate, self punitive

In cyclical necessity of self,
 By pure destruction. If 'twas God's good will
 Brought all things into Being, then His hate
 Cannot do less than all annihilate.
 What is unholy He detests to death.
 Evil at last corrupts itself away,
 Left to itself; but His high will o'errides,
 O'errules indeed the child of His right hand.
 When therefore all is ended and at last
 Time's sun, declining down the eternal skies,
 Leaves his last shining shadow on the sea,
 And in the boundless abyss entombs his beams;
 When final evening folds the universe
 Heavily round, then hell shall drain the dread
 Cup of perdition to the last drop. Death
 Is of all things thou thinkest most like sleep:
 The dead think otherwise. But wherefore thus?
 What mean my words to thee?

FESTUS. In sooth, I know not.
 I am constrained to hear them.

LUCIFER. As for these!—
 It is a fire of soul in which they burn,
 And by which they are purified from sin—
 Rid of the grossness which had gathered round them,
 And burned again into their virgin brightness.
 All things work round like worlds. The orb of hell
 Hath yet its place in Heaven as thine and all.
 But, as a spiritual quality,
 As spirit is the substance of all matter—
 Hidden or open, heatlike doth inhere
 In all existence—or for good or ill.
 Look at yon spirit.

FESTUS. What was it brought thee hither?

SPIRIT. I was an angel once, ages ago;
 But doing good and glorifying not
 God, who empowered me, He sent me here
 To fire the proud spot from my heart.

FESTUS.

And when

Wilt thou do this, and own thou hast wronged God?

SPIRIT. I do repent me, and confess it now.

I will not ask God now to let me be

What once I was; but might I only sit

A footstool for some other worthier far

Who owneth now my throne, I should be happy;

Far happier than I was in my proud prayers,

That God would give me worlds on worlds to govern,

And in receiving all their prayers and blessings.

O God! remember me! O save me!

FESTUS.

See!

I do believe there is an angel coming

This way from Heaven.

SPIRIT.

He comes to me—to me!

ANGEL. Hail, sufferer!

SPIRIT.

Sinner.

ANGEL. God hath bade me bring thee

Away to Heaven; thy throne is kept for thee;

And all the hosts of Heaven are on the wing

To welcome thee again!

SPIRIT.

I dare not come:

I am not worthy Heaven.

ANGEL.

But God will make thee.

FESTUS. Spirit—farewell! and may we meet again

In better time and place.

SPIRIT.

Glory to God!

I go—farewell!—and I will speak of thee.

But oh repent! Be humble, and despair not.

[*Angel and Spirit rise.*]

LUCIFER. Oh! think when all are judged, what hosts of
souls

Will then be mine at last!—what wings of fire!

Deemest thou yet as mortal?

FESTUS.

This is not

As thou didst speak of hell, nor as I judged.

LUCIFER. Hell is the wrath of God—His hate of sin.

God hates man's nature ; be it said of his
As of all beings !

FESTUS. How hate that He hath made ?

LUCIFER. The infinite opposition of Perfection
To imperfection leaves nor choice nor mean.
Thus the demeanour of thy world grieved God,
Till its destruction pleased Him, and its name
Was struck out of the starry scroll ; thus all
Creation worketh infinite grief in Time.
When human nature is most perfect, then
Its fall is nearest, as of ripest fruit.
Man's pleasure in the world—to both of which
His nature is made fit—is not of God,
Save theirs on whom His spirit He bestows,
As in a twilight between earth and Heaven,
A promissory Being unfulfilled—
But still how glorious to the stone-blind world.
This is in time, but in eternity
He raises, remakes, adds to all He hath made
His own immortalizing love and grace,
Which keeps them ever pure as is the sea,
And incorruptible in godly will.
The bliss of God and man originates,
Unites, and ends in self, in Deity :
To whom is neither motive—good—nor end
Greater or less or other than Himself.

FESTUS. But how can the Creator glory find
In hell, or creature, good—if God be Love,
Or man a being salvable ? Oh say !
But who comes hither ?

LUCIFER. It is the Son of God !
Omnipotent ! before whose steadfast feet
The thrones of Heaven, which hoped to have o'erthrown
 Thine,
But now all strengthless, hopeless, Godless here,
Rose once and ebb'd for ever, even these
Deep in their fiery abyss of woe

Unbent, unbettered will again rush forth
 In all the might of madness and despair,
 To prove their hatred of Thee and Thy love.
 Salvation is the scorn of angels here.

What dost Thou here, not having sinned ?

SON OF GOD.

For men

I bore with death—for fiends I bear with sin ;
 And death and sin are each the pain I pay
 For the love which brought me down from Heaven to save
 Both men and devils ; and the Father makes
 And orders every instant what is best.

FESTUS. This is God's truth : Hell feels a moment cool.

SON OF GOD. Hell is His justice—Heaven is His love—
 Earth His long-suffering : all the world is but
 A quality of God ; therefore come I
 To temper these—to give to justice, mercy ;
 And to long-suffering, longer. Heaven is mine
 By birthright. Lo ! I am the heir of God ;
 He hath given all things to me. I have made
 The earth mine own, and all yon countless worlds,
 And all the souls therein ; yea, soul by soul,
 And world by world, have I redeemed them all—
 One by one through eternity, or given
 The means of their salvation : why not, then,
 Hell ?

FESTUS. Every spirit is to be redeemed.

SON OF GOD. Mortal ! it has : the best and worst need one
 And same salvation. There is nothing final
 In all this world but God ; therefore these souls
 Whom I see here, and pity for their woes—
 But for their evil more—these need not be
 Inhelled for ever ; for although once, twice, thrice,
 On earth or here they may have put God from them—
 Disowned His prophets—mocked His angels—slain
 His Son in His mortality—and stormed
 His curses back to Him ; yet God is such,
 That He can pity still ; and I can suffer

For them, and save them. Father! I fear not
 But by Thy might I can save hell from hell.
 See, here be they which fell of old, through pride.
 Created mind could ne'er the thought conceive
 Of equalness with God, unless by first
 Debasing the idea. They err who feign
 The devil by ambition fell from Heaven.
 He in the Godstate first with all his hosts
 By fate inhered; by fate with all his host,
 As cloud to cloud succeeds on the hill side,
 They darkened and declined and passed away.
 Through pride in what they were they fell, and not
 Ambition to be other. These while yet
 The dew lay of Creation's morn, and now,
 Glistens the dew of evening o'er the world.
 Mixed in one stormy ruin with the rest,
 Lo! mortal, those who lost by mortal love
 Their lot in the eternal.

FESTUS.

Save them, Lord!

SON OF GOD. Salvation is the will supreme of God,
 And final cause of all things. But to some
 He grants, as proof and earnest of the truth,
 Ere yet fate take the tangled skein of time
 And weave it into one surpassing web,
 Fit for the glorious garment of our God,
 Precedent bliss o'er others. Such be mine,
 While He, the Maker, sole omniscient, knows
 The boundless sum of Being and its end.
 Fiends! hear ye me. Why will ye burn for ever?
 Look! I am here all water: come and drink,
 And bathe in me; baptize your burning souls
 In the pure well of life—the spring of God.
 I come to save all souls who will be saved.
 Come, ye immortal fallen, rise again!
 There is a resurrection for the dead,
 And for the second dead. And though ye died,
 And fell, and fell again, and again died—

There is a life to come, a rise for all ;—
 A life to come for ever, and a rise
 Perpetual as the spring is in the year.

A FIEND. Thou Son of God ! what wilt thou here with us ?
 Have we not hell enough without Thy presence ?
 Remorse, and always strife, and hate of all,
 I see around me : is it not enough ?
 Why wilt Thou double it with Thy mild eyes ?

SON OF GOD. Spirit ! I come to save thee.

FIEND. How can that be ?

SON OF GOD. Repent ! God will forgive thee then ; and I
 Will save thee ! and the Holy One shall hallow.
 Repent thou, for thy judgment is at hand ;
 But if thou slurrest over these means and times,
 Which have been given thee for repentance here—
 Tremble ! This hell is nothing to thy next.
 Believest thou I can save thee ?

FIEND. Son of God !

I do believe it. Let me worship.

SON OF GOD. Come !

Come to me ! Lo ! I will but touch thy brow,
 And make thee bright as morning is in Heaven.

SPIRIT. Angel of light I am again ! Look here !
 This—this is to be saved !

LUCIFER. I like it not.

SON OF GOD. Hear, ye immortals dead ! this I can do.
 Repent ! and be all angels.

SPIRIT. Oh, believe !

He is God. Worship Him ! He comes to save us.

LUCIFER. Stand thou beside me : I will speak to them ;
 Or they will sure believe Him. Hell ! O hell !
 Powers of perdition ! thrones of darkness !—hear !
 Wrath, ruin, torment !—hear me ! It is I !
 Thanks, fiends ! I know ye hate me well, and may :
 I tempted, ruined, damned ye every one.
 Were ye not proud, now, to be conquered by me ?
 But wherefore so supine ? Am I, your lord ?

Me do ye doubt? or dare ye Him believe?
 What is an angel dressed in shiny white?
 Can I not make ye angels? Ah! and more:
 I cannot make ye less—nor ye yourselves—
 Nor God—nor son of God. But hark to me.
 Be still, ye thunderblasts and hills of fire!
 Hell doth out-din itself.—Hell-hearted slaves!
 What are ye that I thus should toil for ye?
 Who hardly earn the fire that burns ye up?
 Power I have proffered, but ye have refused:
 Nothing is for ye but your fiery fate.
 Kingdoms I have prepared, and ye have spurned.
 Slaves! slaves! ye are too much at ease. Ye leave
 Me single in the work of woe. I, sole,
 Go forth to sow destruction: I, alone,
 Reap ruin. Had ye been as I, ere now
 The universe had been all hell; and, for
 A pit, each fiend had had a world to rule.
 Rise! Yet we'll play all hell against all Heaven!
 Up! up! and then at once we will battle God;
 And hurling each his orb against the throne,
 Strange if we will not scatter it like sand.
 To reign is nothing half like to dethrone;
 Dethrone! and each is greater then than God.
 And will ye, then, give up your hopes of Heaven,
 And entrance as young conquerors fresh from spoil,
 And choice of thrones won by your death-red hands,
 For pitiful repentance, like him yonder?
 Forbid it, all the prowess, pride, and pain
 Of hell that we have borne with! do ye not?
 Meanwhile man's world is straight to be destroyed.
 Be glad! be glad! Earth's sons may soon be here.
 And here, as earnest of the truth I tell,
 Behold this earthling standing by my side!
 Speak to them, Festus.

FESTUS.

Nay, I dread them.

LUCIFER.

Speak!

Great spirits ! he scarce is worthy to address ye,
In that I cannot say he yet is damned.

FESTUS. But I am here ; what recks it how or why ?
Ye care not and I know not. It is fate :
The will of God and him who sets me here ;
And which I question not. It must be good ;
Whether decreed that I be saved or lost.
But I have poor pretensions for this place ;
And none, I hope, have worse that are to come.
For I have never mocked the word of God,
Nor torn it into fuel for my scorn :
Nor doubted, saving tremblingly, His being ;
His love to man—His right to be adored ;
Never have hated, never wronged my race,
Deluded nor rejoiced in their delusion ;
Never have beckoned off the good from good ;
Never have mocked nor scattered hopes—nor e'er
Have wasted hearts, nor desolated hearths ;
And if I have once, twice, as who hath not ?
Toyed with temptation, yet even he will say
Who standeth there, that I have never given
Up to his burning dalliance my soul.
And yet he is my friend, the Evil one.
And why is wondrous ; judge ye wherefore too.
I have no malice, envy, nor revenge ;
None of those petty passions which bad hearts
Scourge red into themselves—for passions are
Sufferings—and which to nourish is his want ;
Wherein doth lie his power : these I have not.
And, save enjoying earth, I have done never
Aught that he could take part in. But he came
From God, he said, to give ; and I believed ;—
Great spirits lie not—doubt not.

LUCIFER.

He says truth.

But it is not for him nor you to know
The reason of my doings : it is the thing
Unfeared and unforesight which tempts, betrays.

It is I who bait the world to do its will.
 As to this mortal, God hath sanctioned all
 That I have done, or may do to the end ;
 Which I have nought to do with. Son of God !
 Go on redeeming !—I will go on damning.
 God ! go on making !—I will go on marring.
 Go on believing, man !—I go on tempting.
 Saint ! angel ! cherub ! seraph ! and archangel !
 Go ye on blessing !—I will go on cursing.
 I now retrack my course to earth ; therein
 To work out what remaineth of the fate
 Of this man, and await his world's destruction.
 What next may hap I care not.

FESTUS. Let us hence !

LUCIFER. Where is He ?

FESTUS. There—see ! many do believe.
 Orb of perdition ! thou too shalt die out,
 And thy red sheeted flames shall fail for aye.
 Thy palpitating piles of ruin, hot
 With ever active agony, and quick
 With soul immortal, down whose midnight heights
 The wrath of God in cataracts of fire
 Precipitates itself unceasingly,
 Shall rush into destruction as a steed
 Rushes into the battle, there to die.
 Thy quivering hills of black and bloody hue,
 Death-breathing, shall collapse like lifeless lungs,
 And end in air and ashes. Thou shalt be
 Dashed from creation spark-like from a hand
 Scarless : pass like a rolléd syllable
 Of midnight thunder from the coming day.
 The river of all life, which flows through Heaven,
 Shall yet reach thee and overflow thy flames.
 Thou shalt no more vex God nor man ; nor all
 The seekings of the soul shall hunt thee out.
 Thy day is sometime over. Be it soon !
 And thou the lost world which the world hath lost !

SCENE—*A Drawing Room.*FESTUS *and* ELISSA.

FESTUS. Who says he loves and is not wretched, lies ;
Or that love is madness came mad from his mother.
It is the most reasonable thing in nature.
What can we do but love ? It is our cup.
Love is the cross and passion of the heart,
Its end—its errand. In the name of God,
What made us love, Elissa ?

ELISSA. I know not.

I am not happy. I have wept all day.

FESTUS. 'Twas thine own fault. What wouldst thou
have of me ?

I tell thee we must—no, I cannot tell thee.
Nor can I bear those tears. Thou know'st I love thee,
Worship thee ; oh ! it's a world more than worship,
The cold obedience which we give to God.
Elissa ! turn to me !

ELISSA. I cannot. Go !—

FESTUS. Thou hadst no need, no business to have loved me.
One loved thee well.

ELISSA. I could not help his loving
Me, nor my loving thee. It was our fate.

FESTUS. Then fate hath fee'd the passion for our death,
And we are sold.

ELISSA. Well ! Let us die together.
Together we will quit our bodies here.

FESTUS. Together will we go to God and judgment.

ELISSA. Festus ! I will, I can love none but thee.

FESTUS. Thou must not.

ELISSA. But I must. I cannot help it.
Look at me—heart and arms, I am thine own.
Thou knowest I am and have been. Wilt not love me ?

Festus! mine own and only! wilt thou not?
 Have I done nothing, suffered and abandoned
 Nothing for thee? Oh! I was happy once;
 Ere I knew thee. Why wast thou kind to me?
 Cruelly kind—or this had never been.
 But now thou mayst be cruel if thou wilt.
 Hate me! still I am thine: disown me, thine!
 Desert me! no—thou canst not. I am thine;
 I am—look at me, Festus! look at me;
 I am half blind with weeping; and mine eyes
 Have not a tear left in them. But I know
 How it will end. Thou wilt leave me as I am—
 Loveless and lonely.

FESTUS. Nay, not so; my love
 Shall aye be with thee, and my soul with both.
 But we must part! Think that I come again.

ELISSA. Not be again with thee—nor thou with me!
 It is too much. Let me go mad or die.

FESTUS. Live, mine Elissa! and thou shalt live with me,
 And I will love thee ever as I now love.
 Wilt thou?

ELISSA. Oh! make me happy! say I may
 Believe thee.

FESTUS. May? Thou must.

ELISSA. Say it again.
 I cannot know too often of my bliss.
 But dost thou love me? tell me—wilt thou love me?

FESTUS. Since I have known thee I have done nought
 else.

All hours not spent with thee are blanks between stars.
 I love thee! love thee! love thee! madly love thee!
 Oh! thou hast drank my heart dry of all love!
 It will be empty to aught after thee.
 Come, dry thine eyes. Blessings on those sweet eyes!
 By Heaven! they might a moment win the glance
 Of any seraph gazing not on God.

ELISSA. No wonder they drew thine. There is a tear!

FESTUS. Ay; strange and startling is the first hot tear
 That we have shed for years; and which hath lain
 Like to a water-fairy in the eye's
 Blue depths—spell-bound in the socket of the soul.
 Death brought it not—pain brought it not—nor shame;
 Nor penitence—nor pity—nor despair:
 Nothing but love could. For a fearful time
 We can keep down the floodgates of the heart,
 But we must draw them sometime; or it will burst
 Like sand this brave embankment of the breast,
 And drain itself to dry death. When pride thaws—
 Look for floods.

ELISSA. Now, thou wilt be very kind
 When next we meet? Our time will soon be gone.

FESTUS. I cannot think of time:—there is no time!
 Time! time! I hate thee—with the hate of hell
 For aught that's good—but thou art infamous.
 I will give thee half my immortality
 To keep back for one hour. Leave me, to-night;
 And wither me, to-morrow, like a weed.

ELISSA. Where is he now?

FESTUS. In hell,—I hope.

ELISSA. What mean'st thou?
 He wronged thee never. Say, when cometh he?

FESTUS. To-night.

ELISSA. He comes to sever us, like fate.
 But shall he part us?

FESTUS. Never! Let him part

The sun in two first.

ELISSA. It was ever thus:
 I am made to make unhappy all around me.

FESTUS. I will not hear of thy being wrong,—it is I.
 I am the false usurper. And since one
 Out of the three must be a sacrifice,
 Let it be me. It shall be.

ELISSA. Thou didst swear,
 Even now, to love me ever.

FESTUS. Be it so.

I have sworn—and now and then I keep my oath—
I will not give thee up, so save me, God!

ELISSA. Oh! we have been too happy, have we not?
But, now I think of it, we might have known
It could not last. Woe follows bliss as close
As death does life—as naturally, may be.
We might have thought—

FESTUS. I never thought about it.
My love—Elissa! ah, how cold thy hand is!
Here—warm it on my heart. Nay, let it be.
The hand that is on the heart is on the soul.
And it is thus some moments take the wheel,
And steer us through eternity. Believe me,
Could I but crowd life, love too, in one throb,
I would beat it out, this moment, in thy hand,
And would die blessing.

ELISSA. Give me back my hand!

FESTUS. My sweet one! if this heart hath warmed thy
hand,
It hath not beaten in vain—it but returns
A pleasure, and a passion, and a power:
For oft at touch of thine this bosom burns.
Speak to me! keep my name upon thy lips,
Steeped in their rosy star-dew, there where now
Dwells the sweet soul of silence unexpressed,
Possible music; hither turn those eyes,
Within whose glowing depths one streaming star,
Ascendant of the soul holds radiant rule
And full orb'd dominance, that mine may share
Their dear translated light; oh! let that cheek,
Just tinged as with the echo of a blush,
Pale as the sumptuous bosom of a rose,
Which else might vie with snow, that crescent-brow
Beaming with soul-light, oh! incline to mine!—
Nay, do not weep. We never trust your tears.
Tears, like the spirits in a magic glass,

Wait on the witchery of fair woman's will.

ELISSA. Wrong me not thus. The end of love is woe,
And of woe death, and of death, death alone.
And there is no redemption for the heart.

FESTUS. Love hath no end except itself. We only
Felt we loved and were happy.

ELISSA. Ah! It was so.
Our sole misfortune is, we have been happy :
We never shall be happy here again.

FESTUS. Nay, say not so. Let us be happy now.
Happy ? To fling aside thy wavy locks,
And feed mine eyes on thy white brow—to look
Deep in thine eyes till I feel mine have drank
Full of that soft wet fire which floats in thine—
Eyes which I ne'er would leave—yet when most near,
Then most astray I—oh ! to lay my cheek
Upon thy sweet and swelling bosom thus ;
Where midst upon the beauty of thy breast
Sits Love, like one between the cherubim—
To crop the red budding kisses from thy lips—
To name thee, make thee, but one moment, mine—
Delights me more than all that earth can lend
The good or bad—or Heaven can give the saved.
One long wild kiss of sunny sweets, till each
Lack breath, the lips half bleed, and, come—thou knowest !
I ask but one such—let it last for ever !

ELISSA. Now, Festus ! this is wrong.

FESTUS. What?—what is wrong ?
Shall my blood never bound beneath beauty's touch,
Heart throb, nor eye thaw with hers—when her tears
Drop, quick and bright, upon the glowing brow
Plunged in her bosom—because, forsooth, it is wrong ?
Let it be wrong ! it is wrong, it is wretchedness
That I would lose both sense and soul to suffer.

ELISSA. How dare we love each other as we do ?

FESTUS. Give me some wine ! more—more, love !

ELISSA. Drink and drain

The bowl! the vintage of a hundred years
 Would never slake the memory of shame;
 Nor quench the thirst of folly.

FESTUS. Fill again!
 My beauty! sing to me, and make me glad.
 Thy sweet words drop upon the ear as soft
 As rose-leaves on a well: and I could listen,
 As though the immortal melody of Heaven
 Were wrought into one word—that word a whisper,
 That whisper all I want from all I love.

ELISSA. I am not happy, and I cannot sing.
 Thou lookest happy. I wish I were so.

FESTUS. They tell us that the body of the sun
 Is dark, and hard, and hollow; and that light
 Is but a floating fluid veiling him.
 Ah! how oft, and how much, the heart is like him!
 Despite the electric light it lives and hides in.

SERVANT *entering*. A singer who was told to come is here.

FESTUS. Wilt hear him?

ELISSA. Yes, love, gladly.

FESTUS. Shew him in.

What have you there?

SINGER. Oh! I think, everything.

FESTUS. Well, anything will be enough this once.
 The last new song?

SINGER. Certainly; here it is. [*Sings.*

Oh! let not a lovely form
 With feeling fill thine eye;
 Oh! let not the bosom warm
 At love-lorn lady's sigh—
 For how false is the fairest breast;
 How little worth, if true;
 And who would wish possessed,
 What all must scorn or rue?
 Then pass by beauty with looks above;
 Oh! seek never—share never—woman's love!

Oh! let not a planet-like eye
 Imbeam its tale on thine;
 In truth 'tis a lie—though a lie
 Scarce less than truth divine.
 And the light of its look on the young
 Is wildfire with the soul;
 Ye follow and follow it long,
 But find nor good nor goal.
 Then pass by beauty with looks above;
 Oh! seek never—share never—woman's love!

ELISSA. Methinks I must have heard that voice before.

FESTUS. And I.

ELISSA. Where?

FESTUS. I forget.

ELISSA. And so do I.

SINGER. Oh! let not a wildering tongue
 Weave bright webs o'er thine ear;
 Nor thy spirit be said nor sung
 To the air of smile or tear.
 And say it hath melody far
 More than the spheres of Heaven,
 Though to man and the morning star
 They sang, Ye be forgiven!
 Yet pass by beauty with looks above;
 Oh! seek never—share never—woman's love!

Oh! let not a soft bosom pour
 Itself in thine! It is vain.
 Love cheateth the heart, oh! be sure,
 Worse even than wine the brain.
 Then snatch up thy lip from the brim,
 Nor drain its dreamlike death:
 For love loves to lie down and dim
 The bright soul with his breath.
 Then pass by beauty with looks above;
 Oh! seek never—share never—woman's love!

FESTUS. Come hither, man! I wish to look at thee,
A moment. No! it can't be. Yet I have seen
Some one much like thee.

ELISSA. It was a brother, may be?

SINGER. I have none, lady. Have ye done with me?

FESTUS. Yes—go! and we will take your song of you.

ELISSA. No! stay at present! sing again, I prithee.

FESTUS. Sing something burning, passionate, and sweet;
For I am in the mood to realize
All deep and dear enjoyment. Trill away!
The lilt perchance may dovetail with the time.

SINGER. Thou art for happiness with me:
Love, love me as thou wilt!
I care not, so I live with thee,
For goodness or for guilt.
I leave repentance to the weak,
And to the good all gladness:
I only feel, that while I speak,
Reason to me seems madness.

This heart at once went wild for thee,
While yet thou wert not mine;
And now thine eye is law to me—
Law human and divine.
I leave despair to all who fail,
Who love and lose thee, sadness;
For what 'gainst beauty can avail,
Which, moon-like, maketh madness?

Is this sufficient?

FESTUS. Ample; excellent.

SERVANT. Here, follow me!

[*They go.*]

FESTUS. Weeping again, my love?
Thou art, by turns, the proudest and the humblest
Creature I ever met with. The least thing

Dints thy soft heart. Come, cheer thee, sweet one—do!
 Oh! if to say, I love, laid all the sins
 Of all the worlds upon me, I would say it
 Till I were out of breath: and will, till I die.

ELISSA. If love be blind, it must be by his tears;
 For love and sorrow away come together—
 Love with his sister, sorrow, by the hand.

FESTUS. Nay, I will conquer thee again to smile,
 Or lose my right to love thee. Let me kneel!
 Come! I will have no other gods but thee;
 To none but thee will I bow down and worship;
 Thy bosom is mine altar—and thine eyes
 Are the Divinity that preys upon me.
 Oh! cruel as the week-day gods of old;
 Thou wilt have human victims; not content
 With tears and kisses—fire and water—thou
 Wilt have the subtler element of life;
 Thou needs must live on immortality!
 Here—take me then! I offer up myself
 A sacrifice to thee.

ELISSA. Thou foolish boy!
 Where will thy passionate folly end? I love thee.

FESTUS. Well then, let me conjure thee! let me swear
 By some sweet oath that shall to both be holy:—
 By arms which hold, by knees which worship thee!
 By that dark eye, the dark divine of beauty,
 Yet trembling o'er its lid all tears and light—
 Glory and eye of eyes which yet have shone!
 By this lone heart which longeth for a mate!
 By love's sweet will, and sweeter way! by all
 I love—by thyself, myself! let me, let me,
 Let me—but draw the lightning from thine eye:—
 Kisses are my conductors: do not frown:
 Nor look so temptingly angry. I was but trifling.
 The cold calm kiss which cometh as a gift,
 Not a necessity, is not for me,
 Whose bliss, whose woe, whose life, whose all is love.

ELISSA. We both wrong whom we love, love whom we
wrong.

FESTUS. But I am as a dog that fondles o'er
And licks the wound he dies of. Would I could
Suffer or feel enough of love to kill!

ELISSA. Thou lovest one whom thou oughtst not to love.

FESTUS. And what of that? Love hath its own belief—
Own worship—own morality—own laws :
And it were better that all love were sin
Than that love were not. It must have bye-laws—
Exceptions to the rules of earth and Heaven ;
For it means not the good it doth nor ill.

ELISSA. It is wrong—it is unjust—unkind.

FESTUS.

It is.

But I am half mad and half dead with it.
I have loved thee till I can love nought beside.
My heart is drenched with love as with a cloud.
I have too much of life that I scarce can live.
I hate all things but thee—shun men like snakes—
Women, like pits. To me thou art all woman—
All life—all love, and more than all my kind.
I love thee more than I shall love and look for
Death if he takes thee from me. But who dreams
Of death and thee together?

ELISSA.

I do oft :

And as oft wish dreams would, for once, come true.
The best of all things are dreams realized.

FESTUS. Dreams such as gods may dream thy soul
possess

For ever in the Hadeän Eden—Death :
But bless thy lover with reality!
Then, thou shalt live for ever, and with me.
I have gone round the compass of all life,
And can find nought worthy of thee. I but feel,
That were I—as I ought to be—a god,
I would just sacrifice the sun to thee,
In bright and burning honour of thy love.

Miracles are not miracles with gods.

ELISSA. Dearer thou canst not be to me, unless
I die in telling how dear.

FESTUS. My Elissa!

I—I am bewildered: open but thine arms!
And make me happy and all wise of thee.
My soul is stung with thy beauty to the quick.
Oh! but thou art too good, or else too bad:
Be colder or be warmer!

ELISSA. Leave me!

FESTUS. Well:

It is most cruel—first, to light the heart
With love completely—boundlessly; and then,
Moonlike, slowly to edge aside, and leave
One only little line of all so bright,
Once—teach and unteach—nay, to use more arts
Than would outdo the devil of his throne,
To make us ignorant of all we know:—
To take the heart to pieces carefully—
For it is love alone can build the heart—
To root the tree up 'neath whose shade we have lived,
And give us back a sliver. Let it die!

ELISSA. Hark! he is coming.

FESTUS. No! He cannot come;

For I have driven an oath into his heart,
And I have hung a curse about his neck
Might sink the prince of air into the centre.

ELISSA. All I have done, I have done to save ourselves.

FESTUS. Then let us perish! But unless we sin
We cannot perish. Have! Have! cries a voice,
As of a crowd within me. I would do aught
To throw this dark desire which wrestles with me.
It answers not to hold it at arms-length:
It must be hurled, dashed, trampled down.—I can't.
Lady! how long am I to love thee thus?
Never did angel love its Heaven—nor King
Crown, as I thee.

ELISSA. I feared how it would end.
 Can nothing less than sinning sate the soul?
 Can nothing but perdition serve to nest
 Our hearts after so sweet a flight of love?

FESTUS. The might and truth of hearts is never shown
 But in loving those whom we ought not to love—
 Or cannot have. The wrong, the suffering is
 Its own reward.

ELISSA. Let me not wrong thee, Festus.
 Let me not think I have thought too well of thee.
 Be as thou wast! What will become of us?

FESTUS. Be mine! be me! be aught but so far from me!
 Give me thyself! It is not enough for me
 That I have gazed and doted on thee till
 Mine eye is dazzled and my brain is dizzied:
 Thou must exhaust all senses; not enough
 That in long dreams my soul hath spread itself
 Like water over every living line
 Of this sweet make, dreaming thou wast all lips;
 Nor that it now sinks in the face of thee,
 Like a sea-sunset, hot and tired with the long,
 Long day of love;—it is not enough. I must
 Have more—have all! For I have sworn to fill
 Mine arms with bliss—thus—thus—thus!

ELISSA. Festus!

LUCIFER *entering*. Friend!
 Did ye not know me? It was I who sang.

ELISSA. It was he!

FESTUS. Thou—

LUCIFER. Hush! thou art not to utter what
 I am. Bethink thee; it was our covenant.
 I said that I would see thee once again.

ELISSA. Thou didst: and I must thank thee.

LUCIFER. Hear me now!
 Thou knowest well what once I was to thee:
 One who for love of one I loved—for thee—
 Would have done or borne the sins of all the world:

Who did thy bidding at thy lightest look ;
 And had it been to have snatched an angel's crown
 Off' her bright brow as she sat singing, throned,
 I would have cut these heartstrings that tie down,
 And let my soul have sailed to Heaven, and done it—
 Spite of the thunder and the sacrilege,
 And laid it at thy feet. I loved thee, lady !
 I am one whose love was greater than the world's,
 And might have vied with God's : a boundless ring,
 All pressing on one point—that point thy heart.
 And now—but shall I call on my revenge ?—
 It is at hand in armies. Thou art a woman ;
 And that is saying the best and worst of thee.
 I know that vengeance is the part of God :
 And can make myself almighty for the moment.
 For what ? for nothing. Thou art utter nothing.
 Thus it was always with me when with thee ;
 And I forget my purpose and my wrongs,
 In looking and in loving. But I hate thee.
 To say that thou didst love me ! Curse the air
 That bore the sound to me ! Forgive me, God !
 If I blaspheme, it is not at Thee, but her.
 I'd not believe her were she saved in Heaven !
 There is no blasphemy in love but doubt ;
 No sin, but to deceive.

FESTUS.

Then is she sinless.

She loved thee first—then me. What wouldst thou more ?
 Thy heart's embrace, though close, was snake-like cold ;
 And mine was warm, and what is more was welcome.

LUCIFER. Patience ! I spake not, cared not, thought
 not, of thee.—

Now I forgive thy having loved another ;
 And I forgive—but never mind it now ;
 I have forgiven so much, there is nothing left
 To make more words about : but for the future,
 I will as soon attempt to entice a star
 To perch upon my finger ; or the wind

To follow me like a dog, as think to keep
 A woman's heart again. Answer me not.
 Let me say what I have to say and go.
 Thou art all will and passion ; that is thine
 Excuse and condemnation.

ELISSA. While that will
 Was love to thee, I saw no harm, nor thou.
 And if my heart hath gained, it was not I
 Who put it on—nor could it help going wrong.

LUCIFER. Oh ! I have heard, what rather than have
 heard
 I would have stopped mine ears with thunder : words
 That have gone singing through my soul, like arrows
 Through the air.

ELISSA. I never will defend myself.
 For I despise defence like accusation—
 And now look down on them and thee together.

LUCIFER. Now let us part, or I shall die of wrath.
 Be my estrangement perfect as my love !

ELISSA. Part then !

LUCIFER. Thank God it is for eternity !

ELISSA. I do. Away !

LUCIFER. Festus ! I wait for thee,
 I have fulfilled the word between us passed,
 So far as is permitted me. Look back :
 There is little we accomplished.

FESTUS. One thing yet.

LUCIFER. And that mayhap anon. Wouldst rather power
 To sow in millions or in units reap ?

FESTUS. Spirit, beyond compute, beyond compare,
 Both I must have.

LUCIFER. So then this mutual love
 Must be put by, which is to neither gain,
 Honour nor need.

FESTUS. Well, I will think of it.

LUCIFER. It is thought and said ; and I will lead thee
 where

Out of the heart, and put its poison on
The tongue.

FESTUS. Yet it is luxury to feel
Inflamed—to glow within ourselves, like fire-opals.
Now, stay thy pretty little tuneful tongue,
Nor silver o'er thy syllables. They will not
Pass. No, not one more word. I must away ;
I have stayed too long already, for my word.
But say, what wilt thou ? what dost fear ?

ELISSA. I dread

But too long separation ; nothing else.

FESTUS. Would I could more assure thee than by words !

ELISSA. When Heaven and earth were first betrothed
they brake

The rainbow 'tween them as a ring, for each
A part, in token of their trothplight, till
Their sacred bridals, when both fragments oned,
It shall conclude the eternal covenant.

FESTUS. Here have I fixed my rest. It may not be
That one shall compass all the ends he hopes,
Which are in gift of hands Divine alone ;
But for the mightiest destiny which e'er
Awaited man, I spurn it for thy sake,
And would renounce the crown of earth ; for me,
The world may go a begging for a king.

ELISSA. I fear me that the love of power is more
Than all the power of love, and so might prove,
Wert thou, too, tried.

FESTUS. Till then 'twere well to trust.

But I have heard the call I must obey,
And seen the nod of all compelling fate.
It hastens me away.

ELISSA. And am I nothing ?

Who masters not his fate is weak indeed.

FESTUS. What if by serving thee I vanquish mine ?
We are the lords of our own destiny—
Our own fates, furies, graces. All the gods

Are we unto ourselves, because we love.

ELISSA. Tremble! thou utterest treasonable truth
Against the dead Divinities.

FESTUS. But who
Shall reconcile their powers, or who avenge
Their slighted worship?

ELISSA. God! for the Divine
Of old, though dimly, was as now adored.
The day of all negations now is closed,
The primal affirmation is confirmed.
What sins against the sense divine, and most
Of all things pride, God alway punisheth
With death or madness.

FESTUS. Nay, convert me quite.
Thou art at heart a Pagan.

ELISSA. I am one
In whose free faith the truth, whate'er, is holy,
And what is good is sacred.

FESTUS. I am too.

ELISSA. I cannot part with thee: nay, sit again!
Parted from thee I feel like one half riven,
And my soul acheth to spring to—as thus!

FESTUS. There! let me leave, love! let me loose these
arms.

Another time and, ah! well—never mind!
We shall be happier—I know we shall.
Thou hast been mine—thou art mine—and thou shalt be!
My parting gift thou will not, sweet, refuse,
Nor would I proffer aught which emblemed less
Than life celestial and the light Divine.
Expect me ere it wither; ere the scent,
Sweet effluence of its perfectness of leaf,
Hath fled its starry censer, look for me.
Let the death-destined perish. We shall live.

ELISSA. My life is one long loving thought of thee.
If any ask me what I do, I could say
I love, and that is all.

FESTUS. It is enough.

One kiss! another! one more—there! farewell!

ELISSA. And he is gone! and the world seems gone
with him.

Shine on, ye Heavens! why can ye not impart
Light to my heart? Have ye no feeling in ye?
Why are ye bright when I am so unhappy?
But oh! I would not change my woes for thrice
The bliss of others, since they are for thee, love.
Our very wretchedness grows dear to us
When suffering for one we love. Sweet stars!
I cannot look upon your loveliness
Without sadness, for ye are too beautiful;
And beauty makes unhappy: so men say.
Ye stars! it is true—we read our fate in ye.
Bright through all ages, are ye not happy there?
With years, many as your light-rays are ye not
Immortal? Space-pervading, oh! ye must be,
Spirit-like, infinite. All-being God!
Who art in all things, and in whom all are!—
And it is thus we worship Thee the most;
When heart to heart with one we love we are gods;—
Let us believe that if Thou gavest earth
For our bodies, then the stars were for our souls;
For perfect beauty and unbounded love!
Let us believe they look upon us here
As their inheritors, and save themselves
For us, as we for Thee, and Thou for all!

SCENE—*The Sun.*

FESTUS. Soul of the world, divine Necessity,
Servant of God, and master of all things!
Here, in the Heaven of Light's eternal noon,
First see I all things clear: from end to end
The divine cycle of the soul of man;

How spirit, soul, mind, life, flesh, feeling, mix,
 And how withal they each reciprocate,
 As ocean, earth, air, fire, and wind; how flow
 The streams of feeling, and the cataracts
 Of passion; mine and mountain, this of pride,
 And that of covetousness. Man I know;
 The human universe, and the divine
 And central fate; know all must be fulfilled
 Of nature that there is; of sin and strife,
 Peace, righteousness, change, self-delusion, self-
 Destruction, ere the earth can take new life,
 Or man become the minister of God.
 The world and man are just reciprocal,
 Yet contrary. Spirit invadeth sense
 And carries captive Nature. Be this true;
 All good is Heaven, and all ill is hell.
 All things are means for greater good. Thou, Sun!
 Art just a giant slave, a god in bonds.
 The summit-flower of all created life
 Is its union with Divinity,
 In essence, yet existence separate.
 High o'er my own existence, here then I
 Look down upon the nature and the earth,
 Yet mine, whose separate and combined ends
 Have still to be evolved. How wide men miss,
 While in the lower world of soul and sense,
 In aiming even at life-ruling Truth—
 Formless as air, simple and one as Death.
 If Heaven and all its stars depend on earth,
 Then may eternity on time;—not else.
 But since now earth is as a crumb of Heaven,
 And time an atom of eternity,
 Neither depends upon the other; both
 One essence being emanant from God,
 Whose flowings forth are aye and infinite,
 And radiant as the rivers of the skies.
 One only truth hath consequence, God's truth

Inspired in man. Mere human truth
 Or falsehood matters not. The world may act,
 Believe, or bless, or curse, as best it lists.
 Yet men expend life, solemnizing points
 Uncertain as the site of Paradise
 And area of Hades. Not the less,
 There is no disappointment we endure
 One half so great as that we are to ourselves.
 We make our hearts the centres of all hopes,
 All powers, all rewards, remembering not
 That centres are imaginary points.
 Imaginary circles only too
 Are perfect; therefore, draw life as we may,
 Round as a world or as an atom round,
 And pure as virgin visionary's dream,
 Or perfect faith's regenerative wave—
 It fails to match the true invisible
 Whereof we labour. It is come to this.
 One state of life with me hath passed away.
 Aught henceforth that may matter be of doubt
 To me is matter of indifference. I
 Love only that is certain. Me no more
 The spirits of the bright invisible
 Shall throng round as the winds some mountain-top;
 Nor watery lightfulness of ghostly eyes,
 Belonging heavenly forms informed with light,
 Impose their spell of record under pain.
 The inspiration quits me—it is gone—
 Like a retreating army from the land
 Which it hath wasted—the long gleaming mass
 Snakelike, at last hath wound itself away,
 And left me weak and wretched. None again
 Of all the starry tribes of shining mien—
 Swifter than undulations of the light,
 A million in a moment, multiform
 As atomies of air, shall visit me;
 Their word of leave is taken back—henceforth

Restricted to perfection, earth they quit.
 True, albeit, I loved them more than life ;
 I felt myself made sacred by their touch :—
 But they are gone, and there is nought on earth
 Left acceptable. Fiery shadows, hence !
 I have outbraved ye once. It matters not.
 I have left all for one ; Truth's countless rays
 For Truth itself ; the mean for the supreme,
 The dubitable for the thronéd power.
 Yet thus I cannot rest. The mightiest sphere
 Is not for man. The elements of mind
 And matter are proportioned in all worlds ;
 The father they and mother of all things.
 And earth hath favour over crowds of stars.
 I must reseek earth. Still what boots it now,
 To plunge in pleasure or to passion bow,
 The very lion-honey of the heart
 Which dwelleth in corruption ? Yet perchance,
 'Twere wisdom to extract it while we may.
 The oak, as lily, feels the lightest breeze.
 The ineradicable seed is sown
 Of love in life, and tide-like 'twill have way
 O'er the impalaced prisoner of the breast.
 The thirst for power and knowledge still exist,
 And meet with dizzy mixture in the brain.
 If suffering could expiate offence,
 They who have most enjoyed have most atoned,
 It may be, humanly ;—but it cannot.
 Earth-like, the heart must undergo all change
 Ere the superior life be formed therein,
 The chastity of heart which loves but God.
 Life's sensuous warmth, the spirit's holy chill,
 Time's week-day work, have yet to be gone through.
 The hortus siccus of a Paradise
 Is all earth now can boast. To God belongs
 The autumn of all nature. But, alas !
 Not yet can we o'ercome our nature here,

Would we. If therefore passion strike the heart,
 Let it have length of line and plenteous play.
 The safety of superior principles
 Lies in exhaustion of the lower ones,
 However vast or violent. Men and angels
 Obey the order of existence. Fate!
 Who seeks thee everywhere will find thee there.

SCENE—*Garden and Bower by the Sea.*

ELISSA *alone.* Come, Festus, let me think on thee, my
 love!

And fold the thought of thee unto my soul,
 Until it fills it, and is one with it.
 Ah! these poor arms are far from where they should be;
 And this heart farther still. Mine only love!
 Why art thou thus so long away from me?
 I have whispered it unto the southern wind
 And charged it with my love: why should it not
 Carry that love to thee as air bears light?
 And thou hast said I was all light to thee.
 The stars grow bright together, and for aye,
 Lover-like, watch each other; and though apart,
 Like us, they fill each other's eyes with love
 And beauty: and mine only fill with tears.
 Oh! life is less than nothing without love!
 And what is love without the embrace of love?
 I would give worlds for one more, ere I die.

One taste of thy dewy lips my love
 Would far more gladden me
 Than a draught of the waters in Heaven above,
 Of immortality.
 Then oh come hither to me, my love!
 Back to this bosom, dear;
 It is burning for thee, though thy love be dead,
 Widow-like, on her lord's death-bier.

One touch of thy gentle hand, sweet feere!
 One glance of thy glowing eye,
 One pitying word, oh, one pardoning tear,
 And I've nothing to do but to die;
 But to die in the bliss of thy breast, my love,
 Like a flower to the gods which is given;
 That was happy in life, and is holy in death,
 For it dies on an altar of Heaven.

Festus! come to me. I do think I am dying.
 Let me bequeath my life to thee, that so,
 In doubling thine, I may live alway with thee.
 I know that I am dying. It is my heart
 Which makes me live that kills me. But I want
 To see him ere I do die. Oh! he will come!
 He must know how I love him. It is long—
 Long since I saw him: I am ill with waiting.
 And I will fancy him coming to me now—
 Now he is thinking of me, loving me—
 He sees me—flies to me, half out of breath—
 His hand is on my arm—he looks on me—
 And puts my long locks backwards—God! Thy ban
 Lies upon waking dreams. To weep and sleep—
 Dream—wake, and find one's only one hope false,—
 Is what we can bear, for we do endure it,
 And bear with Heaven still. Just one year ago,
 I watched that large bright star where it is now:—
 Time hath not touched its everlasting lightning,
 Nor dimmed the glorious glances of its eye—
 Nor passion clouded it—nor any star
 Eclipsed—it is the leader still of Heaven.
 And I who loved it then can love it now;
 But am not what I was, in one degree.
 Calm star! who was it named thee Lucifer,
 From him who drew the third of Heaven down with him?
 Oh! it was but the tradition of thy beauty!
 For if the sun hath one part, and the moon one,

Thou hast the third part of the host of Heaven—
Which is its power—which power is its beauty!

LUCIFER. It was no tradition, lady, but of truth!

ELISSA. I thought we parted last to meet no more.

LUCIFER. It was so, lady; but it is not so.

ELISSA. Am I to leave, or thou, then?

LUCIFER. Neither, yet.

I mean that thou shouldst fear me and obey.

ELISSA. And who art thou that I should fear and serve?

LUCIFER. I am the morning and the evening star,
The star thou lovest and thy lover too;
I am that star! as once before I told thee,
Though thou wouldst not believe me, but I am
A spirit, and a star—a power—an ill
Which doth outbalance being. Look at me!
Am I not more than mortal in my form?
Millions of years have circled round my brow,
Like worlds upon their centres;—still I live;
And age but presses with a halo's weight.
This single arm hath dashed the light of Heaven;
This one hand dragged the angels from their thrones:—
Am I not worthy to have loved thee, lady?
Thou mortal model of all Heavenliness!
And yet I have abandoned all these spoils,
Cowered my powers, and becalmed my course,
And stooped from the high destruction of the skies
For thee, and for the youth who loveth thee—
And is lost with thee: ye are both, both—lost!
Thou hast but served the purpose of the Fiend.
And thou art but the vessel of the sin
Whose poison hath made drunk a soul to death;
And he hath drunk; and thou art useless now.
And it is for this I come; to bid thee die!

ELISSA. I said that I was dying. God is good.
The Heavens grow darker as they grow the purer;
And both, as we do near them; so, near death,
The soul grows darker and diviner, hourly.

Could I love less I should be happier!
 But it is always to that mad extreme,
 That death alone appears the fitting finish
 To bliss like that my spirit presses for.

LUCIFER. Thy death shall be as gentle as thy life.
 I will not hurt thee, for I loved thee once.
 And thy sweet love, upon my burning breast,
 Fell like a snowflake on a fevered lip.
 Thy soul shall pass out of thee like a dream.
 One moment more, and thou shalt wake in Heaven!

ELISSA. I ever thought thee to be more than mortal.
 And if thou art thus mighty, grant me this!—
 Since now we love no more—as friend to friend—
 Bring him I love, one moment, ere I die.

LUCIFER. Thou judgest well; I am all but almighty.
 And I have stretched my strength unto its limits
 To satisfy the heart of him who loves thee:
 In proof whereof, did I not give up thee,
 Because he loved thee? I have given him all things
 Body or spirit could desire or have.
 And even at this moment, now he reigns
 King of the sun, and monarch of the seven
 Orbs that surround him—leaving earth alone—
 The earth is in good keeping as it is.
 I know that he is hasting hither now;
 But may not see thee living.

ELISSA. It is not thou
 Who takest life: it is God, whose I shall be!—
 And his, with God, whom here my heart deifies.
 I glory in his power as in his love.
 But I will, will see him while I am alive.
 I hear him—he is come—it is he! it is he!

LUCIFER. Die! thou shalt never look on him again.

ELISSA. My love! haste, Festus! I am dying—

LUCIFER. Dead!

A word could kill her. She hath gone to Heaven.

FESTUS. Fiend! what is this? Elissa!—she is not dead.

LUCIFER. She is. I bade her die, as I had reason.

FESTUS. Now do I hate thee and renounce for ever.
Abhor thee—go!

LUCIFER. Who seeks the other first?

I am gone.

FESTUS. Away, Fiend! Leave me. My Elissa!—

SCENE—*A Library and Balcony—A Summer Night.*

FESTUS *alone*. The last high upwards slant of sun on
the trees,

Like a dead soldier's sword upon his pall,
Seems to console earth for the glory gone.

Oh! I could weep to see the day die thus:

The death-bed of a day, how beautiful!

Linger, ye clouds, one moment longer there;

Fan it to slumber with your golden wings!

Like pious prayers ye seem to soothe its end.

It will wake no more till the all-revealing day;

When, like a drop of water, greatened bright

Into a shadow, it shall shew itself

With all its little tyrannous things and deeds,

Unhomed and clear. The day hath gone to God,—

Straight, like an infant's spirit, or a mocked

And mourning messenger of grace to man.

Would it had taken me too on its wing!

My end is nigh. Would I might die outright!

And slip the coil without waiting it unwind.

So o'er the sunset clouds of red mortality

The emerald hues of deathlessness diffuse

Their glory, heightening to the starry blue

Of all embosoming eternity.

Who that hath lain lonely on a high hill,

In the imperious silence of full noon,

With nothing but the clear dark sky about him,

Like God's hand laid upon the head of earth—

But hath expected that some natural spirit
 Should start out of the universal air—
 And, gathering his cloudy robe around him,
 As one in act to teach mysterious things,
 Explain that he must die?—that having got
 As high as earth can lift him up—as far
 Above that thing, the world, as flesh can mount—
 Over the tyrant wind, and the clouded lightning,
 And the round rainbow—and that having gained
 A loftier and a more mysterious beauty
 Of feeling—something like a starry darkness
 Seizing the soul—say he must die—and vanish?
 Who hath not, at such moments, felt as now
 I feel, that to be happy we must die?
 And here I rest—above the world and its ways;
 The wind, opinion—and the rainbow, beauty—
 And the thunder, superstition—I am free
 Of all:—save death, what want I to be happy?
 And shall I leave no trace, then, of my life?
 The soul begetteth shadows of itself
 Which do outlive their author: and are more
 Substantial than all nature, and the red
 Realities of flesh and blood, as echo
 Is longer, louder, further than the voice
 Of man can thunder, or his ear report.
 And oft the world hath Deified its echoes.
 A year!—and who shall find them? Can it be
 The mind's works have been deathless—not the mind?
 Or will the world's immortals die with me?—
 The sages, and the heroes, and the bards,—
 Whose verse set to the thunder of the seas,
 Seems as immortal as their ceaseless music!
 O God! I fain would dream Thou livest not:
 And that this world hath sprung up from chance seed,
 Unknown to Thee; and is not reckoned on.
 Hell solves all doubts.—Come to me, Lucifer!

LUCIFER. Lo! I am here: and ever prompt when called for.

How speed thy general pleasures?

FESTUS.

Bravely! Joys

Are bubble-like—what makes them, bursts them, too.

And like the milky way, there! dim with stars,

The soul which numbers most will shine the less.

LUCIFER. No matter—mind it not!

FESTUS.

Yet, joys of earth!

That ye should ruin spirits is too hard.

Who can avoid ye? who can say ye nay?

Or take his eyes from off ye? who so chaste?

LUCIFER. They have well-nigh unimmortalized myself.

FESTUS. Yet have they nought to sate the pining spirit

Which doth enamour immortality.

No! they are all base, impure, ruinous—

The harlots of the heart. Forgive me, God!

I am getting too forlorn to live—too waste.

Aught that I can or do love, shoots by me,

Like a train upon an iron road. And yet

I need not now reproach mine arm or aim;

For I have winged each pleasure as it flew,

How swift or high soever in its flight.

We cannot live alone. The heart must have

A prop without, or it will fall and break.

But nature's common joys are common cheats.

As he who sails southwards, beholds, each night,

New constellations rise, all clear, and fair;

So, o'er the waters of the world, as we

Reach the mid zone of life, or go beyond,

Beauty and bounty still beset our course;

New beauties wait upon us everywhere;

New lights enlighten and new worlds attract.

But I have seen and I have done with all.

Friendship hath passed me like a ship at sea;

And I have seen no more of it. I had

A friend with whom, in boyhood, I was wont

To learn, think, laugh, weep, strive, and love, together ;
 For we were alway rivals in all things—
 Together up high springy hills, to trace
 A runnel to its birthplace—to pursue
 A river—to search, haunt old ruined towers,
 And muse in them—to scale the cloud-clad hills
 While thunders murmured in our very ear ;
 To leap the lair of the live cataract,
 And pray its foaming pardon for the insult ;
 To dare the broken tree-bridge across the stream ;
 To crouch behind the broad white waterfall,
 Tongue of the glen, like to a hidden thought—
 Dazzled, and deafened, yet the more delighted ;
 To reach the rock which makes the fall and pool ;
 There to feel safe or not to care if not ;
 To fling the free foot over my native hills,
 Which seemed to breathe the bracing breeze we loved
 The more it lifted up our loosened locks,
 That nought might be between us and the skies ;
 Or, hand in hand, leap, laughing, with closed eyes,
 In Trent's death-loving deeps ; yet was she kind
 Ever to us ; and bare us buoyant up,
 And followed our young strokes, and cheered us on—
 Even as an elder sister bending above
 A child, to teach it how to order its feet—
 As quick we dashed, in reckless rivalry,
 To reach, perchance, some long green floating flag—
 Just when the sun's hot lip first touched the stream,
 Reddening to be so kissed ; and we rejoiced,
 As breasting it on we went over depth and death,
 Strong in the naked strife of elements,
 Toying with danger in as little fear
 As with a maiden's ringlets. And oft, at night,
 Bewildered and bewitched by favourite stars,
 We would breathe ourselves amid unfooted snows,
 For there is poetry where aught is pure ;
 Or over the still dark heath, leap along, like harts,

Through the broad moonlight ; for we felt where'er
 We leapt the golden gorse, or lowly ling,
 We could not be from home.—That friend is gone.
 There's the whole universe before our souls.
 Where shall we meet next ? Shall we meet again ?
 Oh ! might it be in some far happy world,
 That I may light upon his lonely soul,
 Hard by some broad blue stream, where high the hills,
 Wood-bearded, sweep to its brink—musing, as wont,
 With love-like sadness, upon sacred things ;
 For much in youth we loved and mused on them.
 To say what ought to be to human wills,
 And measure morals sternly ; to explore
 The bearings of men's duties and desires ;
 To note the nature and the laws of mind ;
 To balance good with evil ; and compare
 The nature and necessity of each ;
 To long to see the ends and end of things ;
 Or if no end there be, the endless, then,
 As suns look into space ; these were our joys—
 Our hopes—our meditations—our attempts.
 And if I have enjoyed more love than others,
 It is but superior suffering, and is more
 Than balanced by the loss of one we love.
 And love, itself, hath passed. One fond fair girl
 Remains ; one only, and she loves me still.
 But it is not love I feel : it is pure kindness.
 How shall I find another like my last ?
 Even as I had for her relinquished all,
 Herself, that more than all, to me was lost ;
 And Death cast down the tower of my intent.
 Though thou and he o'erthrew, yet Heaven, I know,
 Received the soul, and the Eternal beauty
 Embayed within its arms the mortal fair.
 While o'er the bosom of the dead I swear,
 God's will and mine that moment harmonized,
 None other would I love while quick on earth.

The golden and the gorgeous loveliness—
 A sunset beauty! Ah! I saw it set.
 My heart, alas! set with it. I have drained
 Life of all love, as doth an iron rod
 The Heavens of lightning; I have done with it,
 And all its waking woes, and dreamed of joys.
 No more shall beauty star the air I live in;
 And no more will I wake at dead of night,
 And hearken to the roaring of the wind,
 As though it came to carry one away—
 Claiming for sin. Ah! I am lost for ever.
 To earn the world's delights by equal sins
 Seems the great aim of life—the aim succeeds.
 Here it is madness, and perdition there.
 And, but for thee, I had renounced these joys—
 These curséd joys my soul now writhes among,
 Like to a half-crushed reptile on a rose:—
 Ay, but for thee I might have now been happy!

LUCIFER. Why charge, why wrong me thus? When
 first I knew thee,

I deemed it thine ambition to be damned.
 Thine every thought, almost, had gone from good,
 As far as finite is from infinite;
 And then thou wast as near to me as now.
 Thou hadst declined in worship, and in wish
 To please thy God; nor wouldst thou e'er repent.
 What more need I to justify attempt?
 Have I shrunk back from granting ought I promised?
 Thy love of knowledge—is that satisfied?

FESTUS. It is. Yet knowledge is a doubtful boon—
 Root of all good and fruit of all that's bad.
 I have caused face to face with elements,
 Yea, learned the luminous language of the skies,
 And the angelic kindred of high Heaven;
 The bright articulations of all spheres,—
 Impetuous hearted orbs, and mountain-maned,
 Aye circling onwards breathless through the air—

And wisest stars which speak themselves in signs
 Too sacred to be explicable here ;
 And now what better am I ?—nearer God ?
 When the void finds a voice mine answer know.

LUCIFER. What better or what worse thou canst not tell.
 For, good and evil ! Wherein differ they ?
 Do they not both accrue from the same cause,—
 As ripeness and decay ? Light, light alone
 Of hues, how contrary soever, is
 The common cause.

FESTUS. Distracter of God's truth !
 Shall not His word suffice the living world ?

LUCIFER. Thou canst not have lacked joys ?

FESTUS. We seek them oft
 Among our own delusions, pains and follies.

LUCIFER. Hath not care perished from thy heart, as did
 The viper flung from the apostle's hand ?

FESTUS. Ay ; and, like that, all care will cease in fire.
 Dark wretched thoughts like ice-isles in a stream,
 Choke up my mind and clash ;—and to no end.
 In spite of all we suffer and enjoy,
 There comes this question, over and over again,
 Driven into the brain as a pile is driven—
 What shall become of us hereafter ? what
 Is it we shall do ? how feel, how be ?
 And there are times when burning memory flows
 In on the mind, that saving it would slay,
 As did the lava-floods which choked of yore
 The Cyclopean cities—brimming up
 Brasslike their mighty moulds. And shall the past
 Thus ruinously perfect aye remain ;
 Or present, past and coming all be one,
 In natural mystery ? Like snow which lies
 Down-wreathéd round the lips of some black pit,
 Thoughts which obscure the truth accumulate,
 And those which solve it in it lose themselves ;
 And there is no true knowledge till descent,

Nor then till after. What shall make the truth
 Visible ? Through the smoky glass of sense
 The blessed sun would never know himself.
 All truth is one. All error is alike.
 The shadow of a mountain hath no more
 Substance than hath a dead and moss-mailed pine's ;
 But only more gigantic impotence.
 Were act mind's mate, man had a firm hold now
 On the immortal future ; but we turn
 From either skiey end star garlanded,
 Teeming with light, and from the spirit truths,
 Which crown all worlds to gauds and lures of life
 All-formed, and beauty's eyes inspired with tears,
 Or fired with mirth conclusive ; and so lose
 Count of those heavenly spheres we meant at first,
 To reckon to the last atomic light.
 But how shall these the joys and cares of earth
 And life's vain schemes appear to the great soul,
 Which hath no friend, no equal save the world,
 When all these constellated systems known
 To the keen ken of science, space's depths,
 And the whole mighty Heavens that bind us in
 Hang like a pale speck, doubtful to the eye
 In unimagined distance ? Is it thus
 Ordered of God lest man's weak powers should fail,
 And the round wall of madness pound us in ?
 Yea, then the cares, toils, duties, needs of life
 Are blessings in the highest to the world.
 Eternity ! thou holdest in thy hand
 The casket of all secrets ; death the key.
 And now what seem I even to myself ?
 The impulse of life ceaseth and we live
 On the rebound of being ; less and less
 Till the minute momentum wholly ends.
 As some vain wind which having wasted life
 In rounding mountains, and their shadowy woods
 Made lyre-like vocal, dies at last at sea,

The sun sole witness, where deep brooding spreads
 The uttermost circumference of a calm :
 So the soul struggling through life's death-clouds, ends
 In the serene Eternal. May it be !

LUCIFER. No life is waste in the great worker's hand.
 The gem too poor to polish in itself
 Is ground to brighten others. Courage friend !
 Hast thou not had thine every quest ?

FESTUS. Save one.

LUCIFER. I proffer now the power which thou dost long
 for.
 Say but the word, and thou shalt press a throne
 But less than mine—the scarcely less than God's ;—
 A throne, at which earth's puny potentates
 May sue for slavedoms—and be satisfied.

FESTUS. I have had enough of the infinities :
 I am moderate now. I will have the throne of earth.

LUCIFER. Thou shalt. Yet, mind !—with that the world
 must end.

FESTUS. I can survive.

LUCIFER. Nay, die with it must thou.

FESTUS. Why should I die ? I am egg-full of life :
 The world is in its first young quarter yet ;
 I dare not, cannot credit it shall die.
 I will not have it, then.

LUCIFER. It matters not ;
 I know thou never wilt have ease at heart
 Until thou hast thy soul's whole, full desire ;
 Whenever that may happen, all is done.
 Once again therefore search the scroll of life ;
 Mark what is done, what undone. Lo ! in love,
 Already twice hath judgment passed upon thee.
 Say hath not evil wrought its own revenge,
 And death the only guerdon thou hast gained ?
 Let then mere self-life cease. The heart's career
 Is ended. With the world thy part is now.
 The depths of feeling, passion, pleasure, woe,

The mysteries and dread delights of spirit,
 All thou hast sounded. Now behoves to live
 The worldlife of the future—last the same
 One instant or for ever. Bury love.
 The steedlike world stands ready. Mount for life.

FESTUS. Well, then—be it now! I live but for myself—
 The whole world but for me. Friends, loves, and all
 I sought, abandon me. It is time to die.
 I am yet young; yet have I been deserted,
 And wronged, by those whom most I have loved and served.
 Sun, moon, and stars! may they all fall on me
 When next I trust another—man or woman.
 Earth rivals hell too often, at the best.
 All hearts are stronger for the being hollow.
 And that was why mine was no match for theirs.
 The pith is out of it now.—Lord of the world!
 It will not directly perish?

LUCIFER. Not, perhaps.
 Thou wilt have all fame, while thou livest, now.

FESTUS. I care not; fame is folly: for, it is, sure,
 Far more to be well known of God than man.
 With all my sins I feel that I am God's.

LUCIFER. Farewell, then, for a time.

FESTUS. I am alone.
 Alone? He clings around me like the clouds
 Upon a hill. When will the clouds roll off?
 When will sun visit me? O Thou great God!
 In whose right hand the elements are atoms;
 In whose eye, light and darkness but a wink;
 Who, in Thine anger, like a blast of cold,
 Dost make the mountains shake like chattering teeth;
 Have mercy! Pity me! For it is Thou
 Who hast fixed me to this test. Wilt Thou not save?
 Forgive me, Father! but I long to die:
 I long to live to Thee, a pure, free mind.
 Take again, God! and thou, fair Earth, the form
 And spirit which, at first, ye lent to me.

Such as they were, I have used them. Let them part.
 I weary of this world ; and like the dove,
 Urged o'er life's barren flood, sweep, tired, back
 To Thee who sent'st me forth. Bear with me, God !
 I am not worthy of Thy wrath, nor love !—
 Oh ! that the things which have been were not now
 In memory's resurrection ! But the past
 Bears in her arms the present and the future :
 And what can perish while perdition is ?
 From the hot, angry, crowding courts of doubt
 Within the breast, it is sweet to escape, and soothe
 The soul in looking upon natural beauty.
 Oh ! earth, like man her son, is half divine.
 There is not a leaf within this quiet spot,
 But which I seem to know ; should miss, if gone.
 I could run over its features, hour by hour.
 The quaintly figured beds—the various flowers—
 The mazy paths all cunningly converged—
 The black yew hedge, like a beleaguering host,
 Round some fair garden province—here and there,
 The cloud-like laurel clumps sleep, soft and fast,
 Pillowed by their own shadows—and beyond,
 The ripe and ruddy fruitage—the sharp firs'
 Fringe, like an eyelash, on the faint blue west—
 The white owl, wheeling from the grey old church,—
 Its age-peeled pinnacles, and tufted top—
 The oaks, which spread their broad arms in the blast,
 And bid storms come, and welcome ; there they stand,
 To whom a summer passes like a smile :
 And the proud peacock towers himself there, and screams,
 Ruffling the imperial purples of his neck.
 O'er all, the giant poplars, which maintain
 Equality with clouds half way up Heaven ;
 Which whisper with the winds none else can see,
 And bow to angels as they wing by them ;
 The lonely, bowery, woodland view before—
 And, making all more beautiful, thou, sweet moon,

Leading slow pomp, as triumphing o'er Heaven!
 High riding in thy loveless, deathless brightness,
 And in thy cold, unconquerable beauty,
 As though there were nothing worthy in the world
 Even to lie below thee, face to God.
 And Night, in her own name, and God's again,
 Hath dipped the earth in dew;—and there she lies,
 Even like a heart all trembling with delight,
 Till passion murder power to speak—so mute.
 Young maiden moon! just looming into light—
 I would that aspect never might be changed;
 Nor that fine form, so spirit-like, be spoiled
 With fuller light. Oh! keep that brilliant shape;
 Keep the delicious honour of thy youth,
 Sweet sister of the sun, more beauteous thou
 Than he sublime. Shine on, nor dread decay.
 It may take meaner things: but thy bright look,
 Smiling away an immortality,
 Assures it us—nay, it seems, half, to give.
 Earth may de cease. God will not part with thee,
 Fair ark of light, and every blessedness!
 Yes, earth, this earth, may foul the face of life,
 Like some swart mole on beauty's breast—or dead
 Stiff, mangled reptile some clear well—while thou
 Shalt shine, aye brilliant, on creation's corse;
 Whence God shall pluck thee to His breast, or bid
 Beam mid His lightning locks. What are earth's joys
 To watching thee, tending thy bright flock over
 The fields of Heaven? Thy light misleadeth not,
 Though eyes which image Heaven oft lure to hell:
 Thy smile betrayeth not—though sweet as that
 Which wins and damns. Mother, and maid of light!
 That, like a God, redeems the world to Heaven—
 Making us one with thee, and with the sun,
 And with the stars in glory—lovely moon!
 I am immortal as thyself; and we
 Shall look upon each other yet, in Heaven

Often—but never, never more on earth.
 Am I to die so soon? This death!—the thought
 Comes on my heart as through a burning glass.
 I cannot bend mine eyes to earth, but thence
 It riseth, spectre-like, to mock—nor towards
 The west, where sunset is, whose long bright pomp
 Makes men in love with change—but there it lowers
 Eve's last still lingering, darkening, cloud; and on
 The escutcheon of the morn, it is there—it is there!
 But fears will come upon the bravest mind,
 Like the white moon upon the crimson west.
 I have attractions for all miseries:
 And every course of thought, within my heart
 Leaves a new layer of woe. But it must end.
 It will all be one, hereafter. Let it be;
 My bosom, like the grave, holds all quenched passions.
 It is not that I have not found what I sought—
 But, that the world—tush! I shall see it die.
 I hate, and shall outlive the hypocrite.
 Stealthily, slowly, like the polar sun,
 Who peeps by fits above the air-walled world—
 The heavenly fief, he knows and feels his own,
 My heart o'erlooks the Paradise of life
 Which it hath lost, in cold, reluctant joy.
 I live and see all beauteous things about me,
 But feel no nature prompting from within
 To meet and profit by them. I am like
 That fabled forest of the Appennine,
 Which leafless lives; whereto the spring's bright showers,
 Summer's heat breathless, autumn's fruitful juice,
 Nothing avail;—nor winter's killing cold.
 Yet have I done, said, thought, in time now past,
 What, rather than remember, I would die,
 Or do again. It is the thinking on't,
 And the repentance, maddens. I have thought
 Upon such things so long and grievously,
 My lips have grown like to a cliff-chafed sea,

Pale with a tidal passion ; and my soul,
 Once high and bright and self-sustained as Heaven,
 Unsettled now for life or death, feels like
 The gray gull balanced on her bow-like wings,
 Between two black waves seeking where to dive.
 Long we live thinking nothing of our fate ;
 For in the morn of life we mark it not—
 It falls behind : but as our day goes down
 We catch it lengthening with a giant's stride,
 And ushering us unto the feet of night.
 Dark thoughts, like spots upon the sun, revolve
 In troops for days together round my soul,
 Disfiguring and dimming. Death ! O death !
 The past, the present, and the future, like
 The dog three-headed, by the gates of woe
 Sitting, seem ready to devour me each.
 I dare not look on them. I dare not think.
 The very best deeds I have ever done
 Seem worthy reprobation, have to be
 Repented of. But have I done aught good ?
 Oh that my soul were calmer ! Grant me, God !
 Thy peace ; that added, I can smile and die.
 Thy Spirit only is reality :
 All things beside are folly, falsehood, shame.

SCENE—*Colonnade and Lawn.*

FESTUS *and* CLARA.

CLARA. At thy desire I come, though hard to me.
 We have lived separate lives, unlike, unsought
 Each by the other. Wherefore meet we now ?
 Time was it was not thus. But others came
 Whose tyrant beauty and more soaring souls
 Thee dazzled, me eclipsed. Already years

Have passed since first we were what now we are,
Strangers.

FESTUS. Nay, by the sun! I swear it—never so;
However distant. Oftentimes it is
The irresistible weakness of ourselves
Which overcometh more than other's strength.
Oft hath this heart allured by glittering rites
And sacred titles, and celestial names,
Offered at others' altars, and decreed
Wildly, profanely, negligence of thine.
True I have worshipped idols and forsworn
The loving faith I owed to thee alone;
Canst thou forgive? reconsecrate the heart,
Rededicate the temple? Do not all
Beliefs how far soever from God's truth,
Circle around the same in mode prescribed,
As round Heaven's secret and all-central sun
The constellated skies? And shall then love
Lack like justification, or in vain
Plead the necessity of liberty?—
For truly I was destined for this end,
And in myself believed the most at first.
Faith first and last, immortal love and hope,
Which in the breast dies of reality,
Be each the gracious tenant of this heart.
The love which with the spiritual starts
Weakening and darkening, strained though gloom and gleam,
Sets oft enough in sense but ever ends
In its original heavenly purity.
And mortal knowledge, which is error, dies,
And spiritual truth alone outlasts
All nature; love insensibly with Heaven
Here blending, thither wending, thence derived.

CLARA. Wert thou as I such need had never been;
But we had lived serene and sinless here,
Aimless, save loving God and bettering man.
Nay, let it be so still, with thee, I pray.

As in a round wide view from some tall hill,
 Central and isolate, it happeneth oft,
 The furthest things on all sides eyeable
 Are village temples tapering to the skies,
 Be such, too, the horizon of the soul ;
 And every ultimate object, unto Heaven
 Calmly aspiring, indicate its end,
 And sanctify the limits of our life.
 For as in gentlest exhalations earth
 Breathes forth the glistening steams which, high in air,
 Glow, sunlipped, into clouds of rosy gold,
 Or seek again her breast in fruitful dew ;
 So of our aspirations and desires,
 Might we endow the skiey calm of life
 With retributive blessings, and a clime
 Of love create about us bright and boon ;
 An everlasting spring of holy good,
 And venerable beauty. But, alas !
 Men breathe forth passions which fall back in blights,
 And stormy desolations, that defile
 The sky-born streams, and flood life's fields with woe.

FESTUS. The evil in our nature we can act
 Always and utter ; but the inner good
 Hath inexpressive boundlessness. Earthlike,
 Each carries with him his own atmosphere,
 Or pure or foul, where'er we orbitate.
 Who knows himself in spirit, all things knows,
 Above, beneath, around, within himself ;
 The orb of life owned space, from pole to pole
 The horizon of existence. Yea so far
 As nature means, the atom and the all
 Commune and know each other, as the slant
 Invisible axis of the earth too fine
 For fairy to find footing tiptoe, bears
 All superincumbent continents and seas,
 Mountains and air-realms. Said I not my soul
 Had taken up its freedom, and assumed

The birthright of creation ?

CLARA. Truly so.

FESTUS. And holding in itself the omnitude
Of Being, God endowed, it doth become
World-representative ?

CLARA. Well, be it thus.

FESTUS. Thus versant with an absolute life the spirit
Makes towards its end and great reward, in peace,
O'erpassing all earth's lesser joys.

CLARA. Say on !

I would not have thy soul abase itself
By one thought about me.

FESTUS. Nay, speak not so.

But love's career is over in my heart.
A vaster sphere expands before me. Power
And knowledge I can give thee for thy love,
But scarce repay in kind.

CLARA. I hear thy words.

The fragrance of the flower of life is fled ;—
Sill let it linger where thou laidst it, here !

FESTUS. It is I who suffer. Suffer therefore me
While I am with thee. The sole love, I feel
That might have blessed me—but why now ? what eye
Can see the circuit of an orb at once ?
The orb of life, alas ! is on the wane.
And much must yet be said, much yet be done.

I cannot tell thee all I know nor dare ;
For wisdom seals the lips which wonder opes.
The dread initiation into light
Saddens the soul it hallows and expands.
But thou because thou knowest much of truth—

CLARA. What is it thou wilt tell me ?

FESTUS. I have seen

What ne'er again may be, nor e'er till now hath been.

CLARA. Where didst thou see—and what ?

FESTUS. In space. He took me there,

Of whom I oft have told thee. Midst in air

Was God. I'll thee that He told the spheres ;
 For the great family of the universe
 Round Him were gathered as a fire : but we
 Held back ; and, saving God, none did us see ;
 Though round His throne in sunny halo rolls
 A ceaseless, countless throng of sainted souls.

CLARA. Say on, love ! Let me hear.

FESTUS. A sound, then, first
 I heard as of a pent-up flood just burst :
 It was the rush of God's world-winnowing wing ;
 Which bowed the orbs as flowers are bowed by breath of
 spring.

And then a voice I heard, a voice sublime—
 To which the hoarded thunders of all time
 Pealing earth's death-knell shall a whisper be—
 Saying these words—Where will ye worship me ?
 Ay, where shall be your Maker's holy place ?
 The Heaven of Heavens is poor before His face.
 How shall ye mete my temple, ye who die ?
 Look ! can ye span your God's infinity ?
 Hear, mighty universe, thy Maker's voice !
 Let all thy myriad, myriad worlds rejoice !
 Lo ! I, your Maker, do amid ye come,
 To choose my worship and to name my home.
 This heard each sphere ; and all throughout the sky
 Came crowding round. Our earth was rolling by,
 When God said to it—Rest ! And fast it stood.
 With voice like winds through some wide olden wood,
 Thus spake the One again : Behold, O Earth !
 Thy parent, God ! it is I who gave thee birth.
 With all my love I did thee once endow ;
 With all my mercy—and thou hast them now.
 But hear my words ! thou never lovedst me well,
 Nor fearedst my wrath : dreadst thou no longer Hell ?
 Dream'st thou that guilt shall alway mock those fires ?
 That deathless death which Hell for aye expires ?
 Should all creation its rebellion raise,

I speak, and this broad universe doth blaze—
 Pass like a dew-drop 'neath mine angry rays—
 Blaze like the fat in sacrificial flame :
 And that burned offering, when I come to claim,
 Its scorching, quenchless mass, all, I will pour
 Upon thy naked soul :—canst thou endure ?
 He spake ; and, as the fear-fraught words flew past,
 Earth fluttered like a dead leaf in their blast.
 Am not I God ? Answer me ! Hope not thou,
 Impenitent, to ward my righteous blow.
 Yet, come again ! my proffered mercy hear !
 Rejoice and sing ! sweet music in thine ear
 And peace I speak : seek but to be forgiven :
 Repent ! and thou shalt meet thy God in Heaven.
 Go ! cleanse thy brow from blood, thy heart from crime,
 And on thy Saviour call while yet is time !
 Now to this universe of pride and sin
 I speak, ere yet I call mine angels in.
 Draw nigh, ye worlds !—and, lo ! their light did seem
 Before His eye paled to a pearl's dull beam.
 Attend ! said God—o'er all He lifts His hand.—
 Where will ye set my tent ? where shall my temple stand ?
 And all were dumb. Distracting silence spread
 Throughout that host as each were stricken dead.
 I made ye. I endowed ye. Ye are mine.
 Then trembled out each orb : Thine, God ! for ever Thine !
 All that ye have, within myself have I ;
 God, am complete ; full inexhaustibly.
 I dwell within myself, and ye in me,
 Not in yourselves ; I have infinity.
 The everything in all things is my throne ;
 Your might is my might, and your wealth mine own :
 'Tis by my power and sufferance that ye shine :
 I live in light and all your light is mine.
 Be dark ! said God. Night was. Each glowing sphere
 Dulled. Night seemed everything and everywhere,
 Save that in utter space a feeble flare
 Told that the pits of hell were sunken there.

Shuddered in fear the universe the while,
 Till God again embraced it with a smile.
 Divine delight responsive spread through space ;
 Till like a serious smile, whose gradual grace
 Expands its soul-born sunshine o'er the face,
 Lo, all things made were glad. Come now and hear,
 Ye worlds ! said God, the truth I thus make clear :
 My words are mercy, wherefore should ye fear ?
 And straight, obedient to his sacred will,
 One great concentrate globe they crowd to fill ;
 Systems and sums pour forth their glowing urns.
 Full in the face of God the glory burns.
 Hearken, thou host ! thy trembling hope to raise,
 I to all Being thus make plain my ways :—
 God, the creator, bade creation rise,
 And matter came in void like clouds in skies ;
 Lifeless and cold it spread throughout all space,
 And darkness dwelt and frowned upon its face :
 Chaos I bade depart this work of mine,
 And straight the mighty elements disjoin.
 Then light I lit ; then order I ordained,
 And put the dance of atoms to an end.
 Matter I brake, and scattered into globes,
 And clad ye each in green and growing robes :
 Your sizes, places, forms, I fixed with laws,
 And wrought the link between effect and cause.
 Then formed I lives for each, which might inherit
 Will, reason, form, and power—not deathless spirit.
 Then I made spirits, things of Heavenly worth
 Deathless, divine. Round these from every earth,
 I gathered forms and features fit for love,
 Trust, pleasure, power, and all I could approve.
 One universal nature spread through space
 Free, faulty, human, born for better place.
 To every spirit I disclosed my name,
 My love, my might, and whence all Being came :
 To deathless souls I righteously decreed

Accountability for thought, word, deed.
 Then every orb complete, along the sky,
 In glory, beauty, order, harmony,
 I launched. Souls, worlds did every thing possess
 Which could a mortal and immortal bless.
 To all the hope of happier state was given—
 For all I keep one common boundless Heaven.
 Ye all have freedom, and ye all do sin,
 For ye are creatures : but ye all may win
 Life everlasting—everlasting joy,
 If ye do but the love of sin destroy :
 This only is offence ; for sin ye must
 Not by my will ; but weakness dwells with dust.
 Unless ye have sinned ye cannot enter Heaven.
 How shall a sinless creature be forgiven ?
 And by forgiveness only can ye claim
 Hope in my mercy, trust upon my name.
 I knew that ye would all to sin be given ;
 But I, even God, have paid your price to Heaven :
 And if ye will not journey on that way—
 The truth—the life—what do ye merit ? say !
 Death is the gate of life, and sin, of bliss :
 Mark the dread truth ! but mourn your deeds amiss.
 Cast off your guilt ! abandon folly's path !
 Turn to the Lord your God ere hell His wrath !
 Turn from your madness, wicked ones, and live !
 Take, take the bliss which God alone can give.
 God, the Creator, me all beings own—
 God, the Redeemer, I will still be known—
 God, too, the Judge—the each—the three—the one.
 Again the Everlasting cried—Repent !
 To bless or curse I am Omnipotent.
 And what art thou, created Being ? Round
 That world of worlds His arm the Almighty wound ;
 The bright immensity He raised, and pressed,
 All trembling like a babe, unto His breast.
 There, in the Father's bosom rose again,

Of filial love, the universal strain ;
 Strong and exultant—blissful, pure, sublime,
 It rolled, and thrilled, and swelled, in notes unknown to
 time.

Think ye that I, who thus do ye maintain ;
 Thus always cherish ye, or all were vain—
 Ye all would drop into your native void,
 If by my hand ye were not held and buoyed :
 Think ye that I cannot uphold in Heaven,
 In righteous state, the souls I have forgiven ?
 Be this a weightier task ? with God, 'tis one
 To guide a sunbeam or create a sun—
 To rule ten thousand thousand worlds or none.
 Art thou not with Thy Lord, O host of Heaven ?
 Answered all spirits, Yea,—then first forgiven ;
 The primal covenant, Lord ! Thou mad'st with us
 Is sealed and sanctified and fulfilled thus.
 Go, worlds ! said God, but learn, ere ye depart,
 My favoured temple is an humble heart ;
 Therein to dwell I leave my loftiest skies—
 There shall my holy of all holies rise !
 He spake ; and swiftly reverent to His will,
 Sprang each bright orb on high its sphere to fill.
 Glory to God ! they chanted as they soared—
 Father Almighty ! be Thou all-adored.
 Thou art the glory—we, Thine universe,
 Serve but abroad Thy lustre to disperse.
 Unsearchable, and yet to all made known !
 The world at once Thy kingdom and Thy throne—
 Pity us, God ! nor chase us quite away
 Before Thy wrath, as night before the day.
 In Thee, our God, we live ; from Thee we came—
 The feeble sparks of Thine eternal flame.
 Thy breath from nothing filled us all at first,
 And could again as soon the bubble burst.
 In Thee, like motes in the sunbeam, we move ;
 Glow in Thy light, and gladden in Thy love.

Earth only, like a spot upon the sun,
Sullen remained in that grand union
Of joy, praise, harmony. Word spake she none.

CLARA. Earth only had been chidden.

FESTUS.

Not alone.

High o'er all height, God gat upon His throne.
Downwards He bent: and, as a grain of sand,
He lifted up our globe. Then from His hand,
As 'twere in pity, bowled the ingrate sphere,
Which rushed like ruin down its dark career.
And high the air's blue billows rolled and swelled
On many an island world mine eye beheld.

CLARA. And where and what is he, this mighty friend,
Who to thee, human, thus his might doth lend?
Who bore thee harmless, as thou sayest, through space,
And brought thee front before thy Maker's face?

FESTUS. I know not where he is. It is but at times
That he is with me; but he aye sublimes
His visits thus, by lending me his might
O'er things more bright than day, more deep than night.
And he obeys me—whether good or ill
His or my object he obeys me still.

CLARA. O Festus! I conjure thee to beware
Lest thus the Evil one thy soul ensnare.

FESTUS. What! may not a free spirit have preferred
A mortal to his heart—as thou thy bird
Lovest, because it singeth of the sky,
Although it is as far below thy soul
As I 'neath an archangel's majesty?
God will protect the atom as the whole.

CLARA. Him, then, I pray: the spirit full must share
The truths it feels with God Himself in prayer.
So guide us, God! in all our works and ways,
That heart may feel, hand act, mouth shew Thy praise;
That when they meet, who love, and when they part,
Each may be high in hope, and pure in heart:
That they who have seen, and they who have but heard

Of Thy great deeds, may both obey Thy word !

FESTUS. Unto the wise belongs the sphere of light,
 And to the spirit world-compelling might.
 Yon sun, now setting in the golden main,
 Shall count me his ere next he rise again.
 One farewell round I long to make above,
 As now with thee this leavetaking of love ;
 Once more to circle round the central skies,
 And sound the silent infinite, where rise
 Creation's outflows, and the new-born light
 Smiles babe-like on the lap of ancient nursing night ;
 Would that the earth had nothing fair to lure,
 Nor being more to answer or endure !
 But I foresee, fore-suffer. Bound to earth,
 Wrecked in the deeps of Heaven, in Death's expiring birth !

CLARA. Is all then over ? I ask not what hath come
 Of those who once were thine, but fear nor speak.
 Fate brooks not to be questioned in the light.
 But shall we part ? Is this ordained or not ?
 Or is the earth-star struggling still with death ?

FESTUS. Being of beauty, whose yet unfilled arms
 Form an incarnate Eden, and whose eyes
 The angel watchers o'er it—mine exiled
 And gazing on thee gainless—smile no more.
 For if life's feelings flow not now as erst,
 It is not that they are vanished like a stream
 Sun dwindled or earth drained, but that their face
 Is frozen 'neath the world's wide winter. No !
 The liquid lightning of thine eye no more,
 Nor flowery light which blooms upon thy cheek,
 Nor delicate perfection of pure form,
 A breathing revelation incarnate—
 Illumes for me the dusk of life. Night reigns.
 My heart's poles now are fixed like earth's in Heaven,
 Shining in solid silence to the moon,
 Starry and icy silence ; and all ceased
 Their torrid oscillances. Once it rolled

In tropic splendour. Now experience treads
 Deep in the snow of blossoms. Maid of love!
 Were thy heart now free as a zoneless nymph,
 And on life's race of rapture mad to start,
 Like her of old, ere dropped the golden pome,
 'Twere vain to me; immoveable is mine;
 Still as a statue studying stony tome.
 Unite we may not. In this fatal life
 There is no real union. All things here
 Seem of monadic nature; and with God,
 All oneness and sole allness lives alone.
 Still even in this—Time's age penultimate—
 And in my heart's exhausted mine, I feel—
 But I for ever have forsworn it—both
 The magic might of beauty and the fierce
 Deliciousness of love. Yes! I must be
 Alone in sacrifice, alone in soul.
 Thoughts which were once my masters, now I hold
 In retributive bondage, Titanlike,
 Round my soul's unseen centre. Yea, I feel
 Like to a liberated god of old,
 Who eyes at length the unbounded calm of Heaven,
 Rejoicing the Eternals to rejoin.
 I hold life's feast, death's fast indifferent.
 There is divorce between my heart and me;
 And I have neither bride nor brethren—I;
 But I achieve my end—the end of all.
 From this is no appeal to death nor fate,
 Nor the just Gods; herein are all at one.
 Love me not therefore now; but when with me
 The great cessation happens, when the poles
 Are icing, and this tyrant of life's realm
 Totters to execution, and well-earned
 Ruin—attend me; whether in the flesh
 Or in the spirit be with me; and, mark;
 One birdlike thought through death's white void shall fly
 Right to thy bosom home, the thought of thee.

Cherish it there as mine, and royally
 In its snow palace. It will bear the gaze
 Of all the star souls and the spirit stars
 Which will the living land of light indwell.
 I feel earth slacken in rotation. Time
 Lays down his weary length as though the work
 Wherefore he had his hire were finished. Go!
 Now there is nothing left for us on earth
 Save separation.

CLARA. Still I love thee, still.
 Hast thou no further word ?

FESTUS. No, death alone
 Is that I live for, ever in mine eye,
 The white-robed doorkeeper of Heaven. For one,
 In wisdom reinstated, and brought back
 Into the sovereign presence, the golden soul
 Which sees things as they are, and not alone
 E'en as they are, but as they shall be known
 Through wide Eternity, is thenceforth still,
 As he who in the mystic cauldron bathed
 Immortal grew, but dumb. Henceforth am I
 Death-mute ; for all things else with me consent.

CLARA. But this is not the end.

FESTUS. Go ! I have said it.
 I am henceforth alone. My thought of thee
 Above all passionate fire-peaks and above
 The sacred snowline of my heart where soul
 And spirit in extatic stillness join
 Bides in perpetual purity. Farewell.

SCENE—*Elsewhere.*

FESTUS *alone.* I feel as if I could devour the days
 Till the time came when I shall gain mine end ;
 God shall have made me ruler, and all worlds
 Signed the sublime recognizance. Till then,

Even as a boat lies rocking on the beach,
 Waiting the one white wave to float it free,
 Wait I the great event ;—too great it seems.
 Yet, Lord ! Thou knowest that the power I seek
 Is but for others' good and Thine own glory,
 And the desire for it inspired by Thee.
 So use me as I use it. Thou hast passed
 Thy word that such I shall enjoy, and then
 My mission is accomplished in this world.
 I go unto another, where all souls
 Begin again, or take up life from where
 Death broke it at. I cannot think there will be
 Like disproportion there between our powers
 And will, as here ; if not, I shall be happy.
 I feel no bounds. I cannot think but thought
 On thought springs up, illimitably, round,
 As a great forest sows itself ; but here
 There is nor ground nor light enough to live.
 Could I, I would be every where at once,
 Like the sea, for I feel as if I could
 Spread out my spirit o'er the endless world,
 And act at all points : I am bound to one.
 I must be here and there and everywhere,
 Or I am nowhere. Sense, flesh, feeling, fail
 Before the feet of the imperious mind,
 To which they are but as the dust she treads,—
 Windlike treads o'er, uplifts and leaves behind.
 How mind will act with body glorified
 And spiritualized, and senses fined,
 And pointed brilliantwise, we know not. Here
 Even, it may be wrong in us to deem
 The senses degradations, otherwise
 Than as fine steps, whereby the Queenly soul
 Comes down from her bright throne to view the mass
 She hath dominion over, and the things
 Of her inheritance ; and reascends,
 With an indignant fiery purity,

Not to be touched, her seat. The visible world,
 Whereby God maketh Nature known to us,
 Is not derogatory to Himself
 As the pure Spirit Infinite. A world
 Is but, perhaps, a sense of God's by which
 He may explain His nature, and receive
 Fit pleasure. But the hour is hard at hand,
 When Time's gray wing shall winnow all away,
 The atoms of the earth, the stars of Heaven ;
 When the created and Creator mind
 Shall know each other, worlds and bodies both
 Put off for aye ; man and his Maker meet
 Where all, who through the universe do well,
 Embrace their hearts' desire ; what things they will
 And whom remember ; live, too, where they list ;
 And with the beings they love best, and God,
 Inherit and inhabit boundless bliss.
 Hear me, all-favouring God ! my latest prayer ;
 Thou unto whom all nations of the world
 Lift up their hearts, like grass-blades to the sun ;
 Thou who hast all things and hast need of nought ;
 Thou who hast given me earth and all it holds,
 Give me, from out Thy garner stored with good,
 Some sign, Lord ! while I live in proof to earth
 My prayers are with Thee ; that they rend the clouds,
 And, rising through the sightless dark of space,
 Reach to Thy central throne. Oh ! let me feel,
 What was my constant dream in my young years,
 And is in all my better moments now,—
 My hope, my faith, my nature's sum and end,
 Oneness with Thee and Heaven. Lord ! make me sure
 My soul already is in unison
 With the triumphant. Ah ! I surely hear
 The voices of the spirits of saints,
 And witnesses to the Redeeming Truth ;
 Not, as of old, in scanty scattered strains,
 Breathed from the caves of earth and cells of cities,—

Nor as the voice of martyr choked with fire—
 But in one solemn Heaven-pervading hymn
 Of happiness impregnable, as when
 From the bright walls of the Son's city they
 Looked on the war of hell, host upon host,
 Foiled by God's single sword before their gates
 Of perfect pearl ;—nearer and nearer now !
 This is the sign, O God ! which Thou hast given,
 And I will praise Thee through eternity.

THE SAINTS *from Heaven.*

Call all who love Thee, Lord ! to Thee ;
 Thou knowest how they long
 To leave these broken lays, and aid
 In Heaven's unceasing song ;
 How they long, Lord ! to go to Thee,
 And hail Thee with their eyes,—
 Thee in Thy blessedness, and all
 The nations of the skies ;

All who have loved Thee and done well,
 Of every age, creed, clime ;
 The host of saved ones from the ends
 And all the worlds of time :
 The wise in matter and in mind,
 The soldier, sage, and priest,
 King, prophet, hero, saint, and bard,
 The greatest soul and least ;

The old and young and very babe,
 The maiden and the youth,
 All re-born angels of one age—
 The age of Heaven and truth ;
 The rich, the poor, the good, the bad,
 Redeemed alike from sin ;
 Lord ! close the book of time, and let
 Eternity begin.

FESTUS. Will ye away, ye blessed ones? To God
 I then commend ye, and my soul with yours.
 And midst the light in which ye live, oh! mind
 Of all the sunless days and starless nights
 Which myriads pass on earth, and pray for them!
 Oh! pray for those who in the world's dark womb
 Are bound, who know not yet their Father, God!—
 Lord of all earth, all worlds, all Heaven! lift up
 My spirit to Thy glory! Let me share
 The comfort of Thy love, and while ordained
 To the great task I have to go through, let
 No more misgivings, fears, nor mortal doubts,
 With the cold dew of darkness chill the soul
 Which Thou hast hallowed with Thy love, and which,
 Like molten gold within its mould, hath made
 The thing that holds it precious;—or if, Lord!
 For Thine own purpose Thou wilt suffer such,
 May they pass quick and perish tracelessly;
 So, too, all thoughts of earth and pangs of death
 May I o'ercome at last, and with Thy chosen,
 Seraphs and saints, and all-possessing souls,
 Which minister unto the universe,
 Enthroned in spirit and intensest bliss,
 Succeed to Heaven for ever.

GUARDIAN ANGEL. Mortal, hear!
 The soul once saved shall never cease from bliss,
 Nor God lose that He buyeth with His blood.
 She doth not sin. The deeds which look like sin,
 The flesh and the false world, are all to her
 Hallowed and glorified. The world is changed.
 She hath a resurrection unto God,
 While in the flesh, before the final one,
 And is with God. Her state shall never fail.
 Even the molten granite which hath split
 Mountains, and lieth now like curdled blood
 In marble veins, shall flow again when comes
 The heat which is to end all; when the air

Is as a ravening fire, and what at first
 Produced, at last consumeth ; but the soul
 Redeemed is dear to God as His own throne,
 And shall no sooner perish. Harken, man !
 Wilt thou distrust God ? Doubt on doubt no more.
 Prepare thee for the power and lot sublime
 Whereto the Lord hath called thee. He hath heard
 The prayers with which thou hast entreated Him,
 And bids me tell thee, shrink not, doubt not. He
 Will comfort and uphold thee at the end ;
 For after God the Chooser, God the slain,
 Cometh the God of Comfort to the heart,
 Whose action and effect is ministrant
 For ever after—consummating all.

FESTUS. Thou art mine Angel guard ! I recognize,
 In every holy feature of thy face,
 The instigated thoughts of Heaven which oft
 In my world wanderings blessed me ; in thy touch
 The virtuous resolution ; in thy voice
 The warning and foreknowledge unexplained,
 Not unesteemed, prompting to do or shun ;
 And in Thy smile joy total and supreme.

ANGEL. But death's eternal secret all must hear.

FESTUS. I fear, I fear this miracle of Death
 Is something terrible. But go to God,
 Thou angel, and declare that I repent
 Of all misdeeds ; that but for His own grace
 I should repent of my whole life ; that on
 That grace, which now hath sanctified the whole,
 I trust for all the rest of it, and then
 For ever ; that I am prepared to act
 And suffer as He bids, and in all things
 To do His will rejoicing.

ANGEL. It is done.

FESTUS. Oh ! I repent me of a thousand sins,
 In number as the breaths which I have breathed.
 Am I forgiven ?

ANGEL. Child of God, thou art.
 It is God prompts, inspires, and answers prayer ;
 Not sin, nor yet repentance, which avails :
 And none can truly worship but who have
 The earnest of their glory from on high—
 God's nature in them. The world cannot worship.
 And whether the lip speak, or in inspired
 Silence we clasp our hearts as a shut book
 Of song unsung, the silence and the speech
 Is each His ; and as coming from and going
 To Him, is worthy of Him and His love.
 Prayer is the spirit speaking truth to Truth ;
 The expiration of the thing inspired.
 Above the battling rock storm of this world
 Lies Heaven's great calm, through which as through a bell
 Tolleth the tongue of God eternally
 Calling to worship. Whoso hears that tongue
 Worships. The Spirit enters with the sound,
 Preaching the one and universal word,
 The God-word, which is spirit, life, and light ;
 The written word to one race, the unwrit
 Revealmment to the thousand peopled world.
 The ear which hears is preattuned in Heaven,
 The eye which sees prevision hath ere birth.
 But the just future shall to many give,
 Gifts which the partial present doles to few ;
 To all the glory of obeying God.

FESTUS. The knowledge of God is the wisdom of man—
 This is the end of being, wisdom ; this
 Of wisdom, action ; and of action, rest ;
 And of rest, bliss ; that by experience sage
 Of good and ill, the diametric powers
 Which thwart the world, the thrice-born might discern
 That death divine alone can perfect both,
 The mediate and initiate ; that between
 The Deity and nothing, nothing is.
 The Atlantean axis of the world

And all the undescribed circumference,
 Where earth's thick breath thins off to blankest space
 Uniting with inanity, this truth
 Confess, the sun-sire and the death-world too,
 And undeflected spirit pure from Heaven,
 That He who makes, destroying, saves the whole
 The Former and Re-Former of the world
 In Wisdom's holy spirit all renew.
 To know this, is to read the runes of old,
 Wrought in the time-outlasting rock ; to see
 Unblinded in the heart of light ; to feel
 Keen through the soul, the same essential strain,
 Which vivifies the clear and fire-eyed stars,
 Still harping their serene and silvery spell
 In the perpetual presence of the skies,
 And of the world-cored calm, where silence sits
 In secret light all hidden ; this to know—
 Brings down the fiery unction from on high,
 The spiritual chrism of the sun,
 Which hallows and ordains the regnant soul—
 Transmutes the splendid fluid of the frame
 Into a fountain of divine delight,
 And renovative nature ;—shows us earth,
 One with the great galactic line of life
 Which parts the hemispherical palm of Heaven ;
 This with all spheres of Being makes concord
 As at the first creation, in that peace,
 Premotional, preelemental, prime,
 Which is the hope of earth, the joy of Heaven,
 The choice of the elect, the grace of life,
 The blessing and the glory of our God.
 And—as the vesper hymn of time precedes
 The starry matins of Eternity,
 And daybreak of existence in the Heavens,—
 To know this, is to know we shall depart
 Into the storm-surrounding calm on high,
 The sacred cirque, the all-central infinite



Of that self blessedness wherein abides
 Our God, all kind, all loving, all beloved ;—
 To feel life one great ritual, and its laws,
 Writ in the vital rubric of the blood,
 Flow in obedience and flow out command,
 In sealike circulation ; and be here
 Accepted as a gift by Him who gives
 An empire as an alms, nor counts it aught,
 So long as all His creatures joy in Him,
 The great Rejoicer of the Universe,
 Whom all the boundless spheres of Being bless.

ANGEL. I go. Thy God is with thee. We shall meet
 Again in Heaven, no more to part.

FESTUS. Thou art gone !

'Tis sweet to feel we are encircled here
 By breath of angels as the stars by Heaven ;
 And the soul's own relations, all divine,
 As kind as even those of blood ;—and thus
 While friends and kin, like Saturn's double rings,
 Cheer us along our orbit, we may feel
 We are not lone in life, but that earth's part
 Of Heaven and all things. Praise we, therefore, God !
 O all ye angels, pray and praise with us !—

SCENE—*A Gathering of Kings and Peoples.*

FESTUS *throned*, LUCIFER, CLARA.

FESTUS. Princes and Peoples ! Powers once of earth !
 It suits not that I point to ye the path
 By which I reached this sole supreme domain—
 This mountain of all mortal might. Enough,
 That I am monarch of the world—the world.
 Let all acknowledge loyally my laws,
 And love me as I them love. It will be best.
 No rise against me can stand. I rule of God ;

And am God's sceptre here. Think not the world
 Is greater than my might—less than my love—
 Or that it stretcheth further than mine arm.
 Kings! ye are kings no longer. Cast your crowns
 Here—for my footstool. Every power is mine.
 Nobles! be first in honour. Ye, too, lose
 Your place, in place: retrieve yourselves in good.
 Peoples! be mighty in obedience.
 Let each one labour for the common weal.
 Be every man a people in his mind.
 Kings—nobles—nations! love me and obey.
 I need no aid—no arms. Burn books—break swords!
 The world shall rest, and moss itself with peace.

KINGS. Tyrant, we love thee not; and we as one
 Man will resist thee.

FESTUS. Well I know it. Mark!
 Ye are all nations, I a single soul.
 Yet shall this new world order outlast all.
 Behold in me the doomsman of your race.
 Will, reason, passions, all shall serve and aid,
 Yea your most secret qualities and powers.

NOBLES. Reason rebels against thee, and condemns
 Tyrant and slave alike; exalting this,
 Deposing that, adjusting all; as yet
 Hope we and mean to do with thee and these.

FESTUS. And seek ye to gainstand the faith in God?
 O blindest rulers! will ye never learn
 Your proper region and due dominance?
 Whatever ye rule I rule over you.
 All unobstructed power is sanctified.
 Divine rule is a tyranny of good.
 Mine shall be like it. Tyrant! Well; I am.
 I glory in the title; reverence
 Myself for that it is accorded me.
 What is above this soul of mine but Heaven?

PEOPLES. The opposite of rule divine is best
 For man. Power gives temptation, which in turn

Sets aside honour, social duty, law,
 And right ; creates abuse, and abuse strife,
 Confusion, retribution, bloodshed, sin.
 Though for a season cloud and meteor
 Usurp the heights of air, yet soon the stars
 Their peaceful reign resume : and now at last,
 Since earth hath wiser waxed, the people theirs.
 Therefore descend thou and make room for us ;
 Or else thy powers submit to perfect proof,
 And our approval, ratified by all.

FESTUS. Man's conscience is an angel or a fiend,
 According to his deeds. What have I done ?
 I was the youngest born of Destiny,
 The favourite of Fate, and Fortune's heir ;
 My word for once was law and prophesy.
 Speak, spirit ! have I forfeited my star ?

LUCIFER. Storms give to dust a privilege to rise
 And fly in all men's faces—even kings'.

FESTUS. What if a million molehills were to league
 Their meannesses together, with due pomp,
 And to some mountain say,—In the name of God !
 Whither dost thou aspire ? Does any deem
 That great imperial creature would descend
 From those sublimest solitudes of Heaven,
 Where it had dwelt in snowy sanctity,
 For ages, ere the mud-made world below
 Was more than half conceived, to parley there
 At its own footstool, and lay down its crown,
 And elemental commune with the skies,
 Because its height was so intolerable,
 And its supremacy termed tyranny ?
 Why look ye all amort ? Is doomsday come ?
 Stand forth, and speak, sole servant of my throne !
 If aught thou hast to settle and explain—
 Or straightway send these nations to their homes.

LUCIFER. Ye mighty once—ye many weak, give ear !
 I and my god—for god he sure he must be,

In human form, who sitteth there enthroned—
 For readier rule, and for the good of all,
 Have cast again the dynasties of earth
 According to the courses of the air :—
 Therefore, from east, and west, and north, and south,
 Four element-like ministers shall bend
 Before his feet. Harken, thou unkinged crowd !
 Ye have not sought the good of those ye governed.
 The people only for the people care.
 Ye seem to have thought earth but a ball for kings
 To play with : rolling the royal bauble, empire,
 Now east—now west. Your hour and power is past.
 Ye are the very vainest of mankind,
 As loftiest things weigh lightest. Ye are gone !
 Nations, away with them ! Nor do ye boast !
 Ye find that power means not good, not bliss.
 But ye would wed delusion :—now, ye know her.
 And she is yours for life—and death—and judgment.
 There is no power, nor majesty, save his :
 His is the kingdom of the world and glory.
 His throne is founded centre-deep by Heaven ;
 And the whole earth doth bless him. Unto all
 He hath laid out one perfect level law—
 His will. For as the people cannot rule
 Themselves, so neither may a crowd of kings :
 And hence hath been the evil of the earth—
 Now ceased for ever. War will be no more.
 His is the sway of social sovereign peace :
 His tyranny is love and good to all :—
 His is the vice-royed, vouchedsafe, sway of God :—
 And he will turn the world, at will ; as light
 Turneth the world round. Greet your Lord, and go !—
 Depart, ye nations !—

FESTUS. Hark ! thou fiend ! dost hear ?

LUCIFER. Ay ! it is the death groan of the sons of men—
 Thy subjects—King !

FESTUS. Why hadst thou this so soon ?

LUCIFER. It is God who brings it all about—not I.

FESTUS. I am not ready—and—it shall not be!

LUCIFER. I cannot help it, monarch! and—it is!
Hast not had time for good?

FESTUS. One day—perchance.

LUCIFER. Then hold that day as an eternity.

FESTUS. All around me die. The earth is one great
death-bed.

LUCIFER. Time's tide is nearly out, and sick folk die.

CLARA. Oh! save me, Festus! I have fled to thee,
Through all the countless nations of yon dead—
For well I knew it was thou who sittest there,
To die with thee, if that thou art not death:
And if thou wert, I would not shrink from thee.
I am thine own, own Clara!

FESTUS. Thou art safe!

Here in the holy chancel of my heart—
The heavenly end of this our fleshly fane,
I hold thee to communion. Rest thee safe.

CLARA. Men thought I was an angel, as I passed;
And caught up at my feet—but I 'scaped all.
I knew—I was sure, that I should die by thee.
The heart is a true oracle—I knew it!

FESTUS. Then there is faith among these mortals yet.
Thy beauty cometh first, and goeth last—
Willow-like. Welcome!

CLARA. Oh! I am so happy!

FESTUS. I speak of thee as of the dead;—the dead
Are always faithful.

CLARA. I will stay with thee—
Though angels beckon—may I? Let me, love!
I dare not—cannot, take mine eyes from thee,
For fear of looking on the dead. Dear Festus!

FESTUS. Thou art the only one hast answered me,
Love to love—life to life.

CLARA. Oh! I am dying!
Give me one kiss—the kiss of life and death—

The only taste of earth I will take to Heaven.
Here! let me die, die in it!

FESTUS.

Last and best!

Now am I one, again. Oh! memory runs
To madness, like a river to the sea.
Happy as Heaven have I been with thee, love!
Thine innocent heart hath passed through a pure life,
Like a white dove, wing-sunned through the blue sky.
A better heart God never saved in Heaven,
She died as all the good die—blessing—hoping.
There are some hearts, aloe-like, flower once, and die;—
And hers was of them.—Thralldom art thou and free:
Free of immortal life though bound of death.
Not the emotional surface of the sea,
Whose form from things without is ta'en, but more
The deep essential quiet of its bed
Thy soul resembled in the pure profound.
Thy love to me was as the morning dew,
Earth's liquid jewellery, wrought of air,
Young nature's christening; whose every bead
Round as the globular genesis of things,
And bright as Heaven's own gems in diamond set,
Emblemed its pure perfection o'er this heart,
Now sun parched, thunder scorched; yet stricken thus,
Feeling myself each hour, each pulse I live
More mightily drawn to join and glory in
All Being's everlasting sense of God.
I see the universe made clear with light,
Holy with spirit, pure with Deity;
Man the dear son of God to God returned,
And earth's renescent nature throned in Heaven.
The voice of ages syllabled in suns
Pronounces God's unceasing benison
Upon His bright creation. Time is touched
On all hands by the Eternal, and the world
Is bounded, rounded, ended but by Heaven.
Therefore the soul, in death resilient,

Looks back to whence its impulse came, to God ;
 And all things lovely and divine that here
 It loved in spirit, are with it conjoined,
 And mingled with the future of the stars,
 And blissful occupation of all space.
 As, pending time, the past and future cause
 Chief reasons, and the present but a point,
 So in eternity all's presentness.
 Hence therefore from me now all thoughts of earth ;
 Be they as in a lake of lightning quenched ;
 In lone annihilation lie entombed ;
 And memory's pall be buried with the bier.
 There lies my soul's love. Ah ! all life hath ceased.
 And silence reads the dead world's burial tale.
 And Death sits quivering, there, and watering
 His great gaunt jaw at me. When must I die ?

LUCIFER. Say ! dost thou feel to be mortal, or immortal ?

FESTUS. Away !—and let me die alone.

LUCIFER.

I go :—

And I will come again : but spare thee, now,
 One hour, to think—

FESTUS. On all things. God, my God !
 One hour to sum a life's iniquities !—
 One hour to fit me for eternity—
 To make me up for judgment and for God !—
 Only one hour to curse thee ! Nay, for that,
 There may be endless hours. God ! I despair,—
 And I am dying. Let me hold my breath !
 I know not if I ever may draw another.
 I feel Death blowing hard at the lamp of life.
 My heart feels filling like a sinking boat ;
 It will soon be down—down. What will come of me ?
 It is as I always wished it ;—I shall die
 In darkness, and in silence, and alone.
 Even my last wish is petted. God ! I thank Thee ;
 It is the earnest of Thy coming—what ?
 Forgiveness ? Let it be so : for I know not

What I have done to merit endless pain.
 Is pleasure crime? Forbid it, God of bliss!
 Who spurn at this world's pleasures, lie to God;
 And shew they are not worthy of the next.
 What are Thy joys we know not—nor can we
 Come near Thee, in Thy power, nor truth, nor justice;
 The nearest point wherein we come towards Thee,
 Is loving—making love—and being happy.
 Thou wilt not chronicle our sandlike sins;
 For sin is small, and mean, and barren. Good,
 Only, is great, and generous, and fruitful.
 Number the mountains, not the sands, O God!
 God will not look as we do on our deeds;
 Nor yet as others. If He more condemn,
 Shall He not more approve? A few fair deeds
 Bedeck my life, like gilded cherubs on
 A tomb, beneath which lies dust, decay, and darkness.
 But each is better than the other thinks.
 Thank God! man is not to be judged by man;—
 Or, man by man the world would damn itself.
 What do I see? It is the dead. They rise
 In clouds! and clouds come sweeping from all sides,
 Upwards to God: and now they all are gone—
 Gone, in a moment, to eternity.
 But there is something near me.

SPIRIT.

It is I.

FESTUS. Go on! I follow, when it is my time.
 Not perfect yet the complement of Heaven.
 There is no shadow on the face of life:
 It is the noon of fate. Why may not I die?
 Methinks I shall have yet to slay myself.
 I am calm now. Can this be the same heart
 Which, when it did sleep, slept from dizziness,
 And pure rapidity of passion, like
 The centre circlet of the whirlpool's wheel?
 The earth is breaking up; all things are thawing.
 River and mountain melt into their atoms;

A little time, and atoms will be all.
 The sea boils ; and the mountains rise and sink
 Like marble bubbles, bursting into death.
 O thou Hereafter ! on whose shore I stand—
 Waiting each toppling moment to engulf me—
 What am I ? Say, thou Present !—say, thou Past !
 Ye three wise children of Eternity !
 A life ?—a death ?—and an immortal ?—all ?
 Is this the threefold mystery of man ?
 The lower, darker Trinity of earth ?
 It is vain to ask. Nought answers me—not God.
 The air grows thick and dark. The sky comes down.
 The sun draws round him streaky clouds, like God
 Gleaning up wrath. Hope hath leapt off my heart
 And overturned it. I am bound to die.
 God ! why wilt Thou not save ? The great round world
 Hath wasted to a column beneath my feet.
 I will hurl me off it, then ; and search the depth
 Of space, in this one infinite plunge ! Farewell
 To earth, and Heaven, and God ! Doom ! spread thy lap ;
 I come—I come ! But no ! may God forbear,
 To judge the tempted purpose of my heart !
 Me hath He 'stablished here, and He will save ;
 And I can smile destruction in the face.
 Let His strong hand compress the marble world,
 And wring the starry fire-blood from its heart ;
 Still on this earth-core I rejoice in God ;
 I know Him and believe in Him as Love,
 And this divinest truth He hath inspired,
 Mercy to man is justice to Himself.
 He His hand opened and the world was born.
 He shuts it and the essential nothingness
 Embodied, dies its everlasting death,
 The infinite conclusion of all things.
 Open thine arms, O death ! thou fine of woe
 And warranty of bliss ! I feel the last
 Red mountainous remnant of the earth give way.

The stars are rushing upwards to the light ;
 My limbs are light, and liberty is mine.
 The spirit's infinite purity consumes
 The sullied soul. Eternal destiny
 Opens its bright abyss. I am God's !
 GOD. Man, die !

SCENE—*The Skies.*

ANGELS, ANGEL OF EARTH, LUCIFER.

GOD.

The age of matter consummates itself.
 All things that are shall end, save that is mine.
 As with one world, so shall it be with all ;
 For all are human, fallible, and false,—
 As creature towards Creator must be aye.
 But for the whole prepare ye, not the less
 Grade upon grade of glory, sons of God !
 The world begins and ends with Paradise,
 The garden and the City of the blest ;
 Begins with Paradise and ends with Heaven.
 And earth shall live again, and like her sons
 Have resurrection to a brighter being ;
 And waken like a bride, or like a morning,
 With a long blush of love to a new life.
 Another race of souls shall rule in her,
 Creatures all loving, beautiful, and holy.
 Go, angel ! guide her as before through Heaven.

ANGEL OF EARTH. On ! on ! my world again !

Away we fly
 Through Heaven's blue plain,
 Like thought through the eye.
 Ye angels, keep your Heaven !
 I earth. For that with God I have striven,

And have prevailed. I come once more,
I come to thee, earth!
Like a ship to shore.

LUCIFER. Have not I triumphed o'er the earth that was?
GOD.

Prince of the powers of air! thy doom is nigh.
The prison place of spirits is for thee—
As for all others thou hast wronged, for a time—
But those who by my favour die not. Him
Conduct, ye angels, into Hades; there
To wait my will while the world's Sabbath lasts.

SCENE.—*Angel World.*

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL OF EARTH, LUNIEL, ANGELS,
SAINTS.

GUARDIAN ANGEL. God and the world one Holy family;
The houses of the Heavens and Earth allied;
That was the prophecy, and this the proof;
Love the beginning of the great return.

LUNIEL. I had a happy vision yesternight.
Methought I saw the gathering of all tribes
Of men returning out of dateless death,
Unto the Holy land, the land of life.

SAINTS. We saw it likewise; we, yea, all of us,
And heard the Angels sing: far up mid Heaven
Their blesséd words resounded, of our thoughts
The pure celestial echoes; this their hymn.

They come from the ends of the earth,
White with its aged snows;
From the bounding breast of the tropic tide,
Where the day-beam ever glows;
From the east where first they dwelt,

From the north, and the south, and the west,
 Where the sun puts on his robe of light,
 And lays down his crown to rest.

Out of every land they come ;
 Where the palm triumphant grows,
 Where the vine overshadows the roofs and the hills,
 And the gold orb'd orange glows ;
 Where the olive and fig-tree thrive,
 And the rich pomegranates red,
 Where the citron blooms, and the apple of ill
 Bows down its fragrant head.

From the lands where the gems are born ;
 Opal and emerald bright ;
 From shores where the ruddy corals grow,
 And pearls with their mellow light ;
 Where silver and gold are dug,
 And the diamond rivers roll,
 And the marble white as the still moonlight
 Is quarried, and jetty coal ;—

They come—with a gladdening shout ;
 They come—with a tear of joy ;
 Father and daughter, youth and maid,
 Mother and blooming boy.
 A thousand dwellings they leave,
 Dwellings—but not a home ;
 To them there is none but the sacred soil,
 And the land whereto they come.

And the Temple again shall be built,
 And filled as it was of yore ;
 And the burden be lift from the heart of the world,
 And the nations all adore ;
 Prayers to the throne of Heaven

Morning and eve shall rise,
 And unto and not of the Lamb
 Shall be the sacrifice.

GUARDIAN ANGEL. As isles, disjoined by superficial deeps,
 Yet rooted stand in unity with worlds ;
 So with the interior continent of Heaven,
 Earth and its own.

SAINTS. Now know we the whole world
 The land of Heavenly commerce, where both kinds
 Of men and angels mix with mutual gain ;
 With knowledge, and with wisdom, and with joy
 Flowing ; the final festival of Time.

LUNIEL. The final form which perfect faith shall wear,
 Is worship of, and in, the Holy spirit,
 The Everlasting Wisdom throned with God ;
 With whom is all Salvation of all kinds,
 Sinner and Saint, one world completing plan.

SAINTS. O holy Angel, warden of the world,
 Who guidedst its first footsteps o'er the path,
 Untried of newest space, well trodden now,
 Which round the sun it circleth ; and thou, too,
 Serenest of all angels, fairest, first,
 Of those here culled, the flower of Heaven's bright hosts,
 Who knowest the heart of truth, and well may'st smile
 At legends of the birth of sun and stars,
 The atomic ancestries of elements,
 And infantile antiquity of Time,—
 We in this sphere rejoice that with ye we
 The truth possess and glory in. Do thou
 Speak then, who canst, whose long experience tends,
 Far past the immediate parentage of Time,
 Into eternal æons, what to us
 The Godblessed words may prove of living light.
 Instruct us in the wisdom of the Heavens,
 At once the gate and goal of the true life
 The empyrean shadows, so that we,

Like self obedient elements, which contain
 Their total laws and partial liberties,
 The reign of God may honour in all spheres,
 And act therewith concordantly, as here.

LUNIEL. The issue of all ages is at hand ;
 But hearken, all ye blessed of our Lord,
 And ye shall know the wondrous deeds He hath done,
 In highest, happiest worlds, as now in this.
 For infinitely various are the ways
 Wherein God conquers evil ; at one time
 Slowly eradicating, line by line,
 Its fatal features, and again, by one
 Annihilative word, destroying it,
 For ever and for ever and for aye.
 It was a holy festival in Heaven,
 A joy of satisfaction at the close
 Of some divinest epoch of the world.
 Far round the infinite extremes of space
 Star unto star spake gladness, as they sped
 On their resplendent courses, and a smile,
 Enkindling on the countenances of the suns,
 Thrilled to the heart of nature, while there rose,
 Expressive of divine felicity,
 A clear bright strain of music, like a braid
 Of silver round a maiden's raiment, all
 Imbounding and adorning. There, in one
 Of those most pure and happy stars which claim
 Identity with Heaven, high raised in bliss,
 Each lofty spirit luminous with delight,
 Sat God's selectest angels, gathered round
 The golden board of that palatial orb,
 In spherul order. All the fruitage there
 Of the immortal Eden, and the land
 Of everlasting Light to please the sense
 And satisfy the soul, the Tree of Life
 In all its bright varieties could yield,
 Was lavished ; and its fragrance filled the skies.

The bright blue wine as though exprest from Heaven
 Glittering with life went, moonlike, round and round
 Times sacredly repeated 'mong the gods
 And spirits who had each one earned his star,
 In that divinest conclave, as they held
 Deep commune on the wondrous end imposed
 By the Eternal Saviour of the world
 Upon his infinite work ;—and all the harps,
 Intwined about with nectar-dropping flowers,
 Which wither not though culled, but on the brow
 Or in the bosom bloom as in their fields—
 Were trembling into silence, when there stepped,
 Unseen before, into the joyous midst
 Of that bright throng, surprised in holy ease,
 A young and shining Angel. In his air
 Sat kingly sweetness, kind and calm command,
 Yet with long suffering blended ; for the soil
 Of dust was on his garb and sandalled sole ;
 Dust on the locks of fertile gold which flowed
 From his fair forehead rippling round his neck ;
 Bedropped, defiled, with cold and cave-like dew.
 One hand a staff of virent emerald held
 As 'twere a sapling of the tree of life,
 And one smoothed in his breast a radiant dove
 Fluttering its wings in lightnings thousand-hued,
 The sole companion of his pilgrimage.
 Silent he stood and gazed. The angels straight
 Rose from their pearly seats inwreathed with gems
 And priceless azure from the morning's mine,
 And bowed the head and stretched the hand, ere yet
 One welcoming word were uttered. Wine and bread—
 Bread made of golden wheat—and wine of life—
 Such only as immortal virtues use,
 Before the guest were set ; and cool white robes
 The angels gave him, floating halo-like
 With fleecy glistening round his fainting limbs.
 Twain of the Thrones at once their seats resigned ;

Ministrant Princedoms sang again the strain
 Which fills the halls of hospitable Heaven,
 When that the holy enter, or the sons
 Of Light hold high and hallowed festival.
 Then spake the cherub chiefest of them all—
 Bright Angel! from whatever sphere arrived,
 Supernal and celestial, or some orb
 Far off, of starry nature,—for the toil
 Meseems, of travel, weighed upon ye erst,—
 Now cheerily relieved,—instruct us, pray,
 Who here assembled sit to celebrate,
 By kind commission of our Lord, His love,
 If we in aught thine ends can further aid
 Or serve in thine intents, as fain we would.
 For all, we know, is holy enters here,
 By virtue of our King; and we, prepared
 Again for sacred action, instant are.
 Thus he his seat resuming, while a glance
 Of bland approof beamed forth from every eye,
 Wise reticence still reining-in each tongue.
 Answered the stranger angel, rising slow,
 Sunlike, from out his seat of clouded gold;
 O kind! O noble natures! well ye work
 Your ministry of love, who thus pour forth
 Unmeasured, unconditioned, your divine
 Riches of works and words, that all who come,
 Whether by invitation or by need,
 May of the Sovereign's bounty, whom ye serve,
 Like honour with His chosen friends, receive;
 Accept these thanks, this blessing!—As he ceased,
 The air became all incense, and the skies,
 As though endowed with native sunlife, showered
 Around on all their iridescent smiles.
 Oh not to us, rejoined the cherub host,
 Be gratitude for duty barely done;
 All honour is our Lord's. To Him we owe
 This gracious exaltation o'er the world,

Wherein His love sustains us; His, who first
 By one Omnipotent Fiat breathed us forth;
 Who, out of awful non-existence, us
 Translated into life, and turned our souls
 To angel constellations, ranging free
 Through all the eternal liberties of Light.
 But if thou wilt, oh say, most holy guest!
 Whom we account us blessed to receive,
 While yet the day doth solemnize the skies,
 Wherefore thou hither comest,—how treated else
 In other worlds, and whither now; so we,
 Haply, may wisdom gather from thy words,
 Or help afford by deeds. Then once again
 That radiant youth, immortal as the morn,
 Rose from the Crown of Heaven, and bending low
 Spake with a soft, bright utterance, like the voice
 Of very silence musing;—so serene
 His parlance, and his audience so attent.
 O happy angels, heavenly and divine,
 To whom nor sin, nor sigh, nor tear, nor woe,
 Not even in imagination, come;
 And whose free lives in blest obedience pass
 To one law pure, and sole—the law of love—
 How shall ye hear, or I relate, the griefs
 Of orbs disrupted and of spirits dyed
 In blackest sin—of God's high rule reject—
 His own deputed, exiled—rudely thrust
 From ancient throne and old dynastic calm
 Thought steadfast and eterne—and through the blank
 Of lifeless night compelled to wander; where
 But that afar he caught the friendly glance
 Of your extreme and most felicitous star,
 He might perchance have wandered still; but since
 A gracious ear to stranger's plaint be yours,
 Let me, in briefest wise, recount the deeds
 Of worlds far distant, wherewithal mine own
 Be somewhat, and not wholly dimly blent;

That ye in joy thus fortified, may thanks
 Give for your peaceful lot, and further bless
 God, who hath put it in your hearts to share
 Those bounties with the stranger, ye enjoy.
 To Him be praise and worship in all worlds!—
 Beyond the ken of angels, in the midst
 Of a bright ring of worlds, an orb there is—
 There is—ah me! there was—an orb of light,
 Once all mine own. In Heaven mine Angel-sire—
 Such blest relations are, ye know, in Heaven—
 Abode, and ruled in glory many a tribe
 Elect of choicest virtues, He Himself
 Sovereign and head of all cherubic thrones,
 Abiel his name, mine Beniel, known on high,
 His sole Son, and ye all are sons of God.
 This orb, I, trusted with supremest powers,
 Paternal love could lend, myself had framed,
 Myself with life endowed and loving things.
 All life is sacred in its kind to Heaven,
 And all things holy, beautiful, and good.
 There angels dwelt as in the bosom of bliss;
 Peace, piety, and innocence, and joy
 Made up the square of Being. Worship was
 The very air they lived in, righteousness
 The ground they trode and builded on. A land
 It shewed of fountains, flowers, and honeyed fruits,
 Of cool green umbrage, and incessant sun;—
 The rainbow there in permanent splendour spanned
 The skies by ne'er a cloud deformed, of hue
 Sterner than amber; while on every hand
 The clear blue streams singing and sparkling ran
 The bloomy meads to fertilize; while some
 With honey, nectar, manna, milk and wine,
 Fit for angelic sustenance slow flowed.
 Here palaces and cities, midst of groves,
 Like giant jewels set in emerald rings;
 There, too, the bowery coverture of woods,

Ancient and dense, laced with all-tinted flowers,
 Wherein were wont to sojourn in all peace,
 Lamb, lion, eagle, ox, dove, serpent, goat,
 And snow-white hart, each sacred animal
 Cleansed from all evil quality, sin-instilled,
 Speaking one common tongue, and gathered oft
 In wisest parley, 'neath the sacred tree
 Centring each mazy pleasance, intersect
 With an invisible bound ; so sweet the force
 Of nature, heavenly sanctioned. All went well
 For many a sunny cycle. Year by year
 The souls of all things there were ripening fast
 To spirit-like perfection ; day by day
 Grew spirithood to deathless angel kind ;
 Angelic nature to Divine estate.
 It seemed a happy contest which of all
 Should happiest be. Among that heavenly race
 There dwelt two angel-sisters, nymphs divine,
 The daughters of the Lord of gods and men,
 Star-dowered, light-portioned, forms full realized
 Of the Eternal Beauty. Yet how unlike
 Their nature, and their loveliness ; in one
 A soul of lofty clearness, like a night
 Of stars, wherein the memory of the day
 Seems trembling through the meditative air—
 In whose proud eye one fixed and arklike thought
 Held only sway ; that thought a mystery ;
 In one, a golden aspect like the dawn,
 Beaming perennial in the Heavenly east,
 Of paly light ; she ever brightening looked,
 As with the boundless promise unfulfilled
 Of some supreme perfection ; in her heart
 That promise aye predestinate, always sure,
 Her breast with joy suffusing ; and so wrought,
 Her sigh seemed happier than her sister's smile :
 Yet patient she and humble. Of these twain
 The elder my betrothéd was, to me

In antemundane ages, by my sire,
 As of like royal issue with myself,
 And seed divine reserved; yet so disposed
 Of this bright orb the triple herison,
 That ere the elder entered on the whole,
 The younger should the fair domain enjoy
 Of her own chosen portion and delight.
 Such the decree forestablished from of old.
 Who shall gainsay the will supreme of God?
 For both He loved right well, but for my sake
 The first the best, with whom was most secured
 The bliss of all. The younger now had reigned
 In meekest wise for many a moonlike age
 O'er her select dominion; and delight
 Leapt up its highest, when the news made known
 By Wisdom, their high governante, spread abroad
 Of nuptials nearing celebration. Vast
 And rich in festive splendour were commenced
 The sacred preparations: every heart
 Impatient for the high propitious hour
 When the Bride Queen of their own angel race
 With me enthroned should sit, and rule with me.
 Midst all this, suddenly a stranger star,
 Swordlike in shape, as waved by hand unseen,
 Far off in space appeared; eclipsing swift
 All lesser, nearer lights which nature shewed.
 So rapidly from end to end it flew
 Of Heaven's horizon—even as though it scorned
 The quiet skies of that extatic sphere
 I spake of—that the third night it had vanished
 Into the unknown infinite below;
 When to their wondering eyes the morrow morn,
 Waked out of darkness into daily light,
 A marvel mightier than the sworded star—
 Which I alone perceived the Evil one
 Had there unsheathed in Heaven, where late it flamed—
 Behold, was present. Bands of angels—whence

Was known not—thronged the groves and palaces,
 Which decked our paradisaical world, in air
 And aspect, fair yet foreign, and distinct
 Their every action with a shining grace
 Which like a lodestar chained, unfelt, the eye ;
 And made their loveliness, exceeding far
 The holy beauty of the original tribes—
 Erstwhile so happy—fatal. For these first
 The heart divided, once entirely God's,
 Whole and without a flaw ! first tuned their lyres
 To angel-love alone, but half divine ;
 First taught to separate self from Deity.
 Yet seemed they not to teach but rather fled
 All serious converse and instruction, soon
 Curtailing worship and prolonging rest :
 As though true worship were not union high
 With the Great Lord and universal Good,
 Worthy of worship ceaseless and by all.
 These after mingling, as by chance or choice
 In holy celebrations, when first asked
 Their rank to name, and order, made reply
 They were the youngest offspring of the Heavens,
 Children of bliss and knowledge, richly dowered
 With singular joys and rare immunities ;—
 That they were spirits of freedom, and their suit
 And servage voluntary, whence alone
 Budded what little merit they possessed ;
 As otherwise their gracious Lord, they said,
 Were mocked with forced compliance ; that all good
 Sprang from the natural impulse of their souls,
 And the proud pleasure of pure liberty ;
 That they the measure of the skies fulfilled ;
 The complement of all extremes of light ;
 Of all celestial essence they the sum ;
 And after them was nothing ;—which to preach
 Of their own selves was their sole business there,
 Wandering where'er to wander pleased them best.

Like, but unequal, as the eye to Heaven,
 Errors the shape of truths put on ; as clouds
 The forms of isles and continents assume,
 From whence they sprang, suspended in the skies.
 With such like words, so falsely seeming true,
 And ofttimes urged, were many led aside
 To question—doubt—deny—at last, cast off
 The holy law, ordained of Deity,
 Which makes His love sustaining Spirit alone
 The cause and reason of all righteousness,
 All peace, all bliss ; freewill the synonyme
 Of selfish nature as opposed to God,
 Blown up with self conceived deserts, and proud
 To prove its own an independent power,
 Held, in duality, with Him on high.
 Vain, foolish, impious thought for aye begone ;
 With all things false and foul for ever cease !—
 These, by divine permission, to myself
 Such secretly confided, to the end
 Which ye ere long shall wot of, presently
 Seceded,—yet remained on outward terms
 With their unshaken brethren as before.
 But oh ! the absolute excellence was gone,
 The plane of pure perfection broken through ;
 It was as though some galaxy of stars
 Had sunk and left a horrid rent in Heaven,
 A ragged flaw athwart the sapphire floor,
 A foul chaotic chasm. Still further spread
 As from some central and impulsive point
 In ceaseless radiation, day and night,
 Fresh errors, and reiterate wrongs and jars.
 In vain I throned myself in judgment hall,
 Uttering decrees predestined as of yore ;
 In vain I walked among them, beckoning back
 Such as in false society had strayed :
 In vain I warned of evil ; shewed them all
 How God's exterminating judgments fell

Ever on sin, with woe to whom they came.
 The testimony came to all in vain.
 The disaffection spread. Oh! still I weep
 Recalling that declension, sad and wide!—
 By unsuspected frankness, having gained
 Free access soon to the imperial Bride,
 The strangers next their machinations plied
 Against the holy guide and nurse divine,
 Immortal Wisdom, 'neath whose bounteous care
 Had grown those angel sisters, since their birth
 In the arcanest Heavens. Her, soon, alas!
 The wily wanderers whispered first away,
 From wonted inculcation of deep lore
 And holy truths, as narrowing down the souls
 And marring the free actions and intents
 Of the angelic pair; to which base cheat
 The elder—not the wiser—won too well
 By much and false persuasion, at the last,
 Gave in nor rued till after; so mistaught
 To gladden at the lack of all restraint
 Upon the natural world-commanding will.
 Not so the younger, who, with tears profuse,
 Grieved at the doom of parting from her guide,
 The severance from her holy tutelage,
 And losing of the golden words of life
 Which her instructress taught her, who instilled
 Into her soul the sacred elements
 Of universal truth; and gave to taste,
 In prelibation of supremest bliss,
 The essence of all knowledge. God, she taught
 Himself was truth and justice, good and love,
 The infinite reality, the one;
 Out of the unknown darkness of the depths
 Of His great Being all existence sprang,
 In various forms and multitudinous spheres,
 Innumerable as the atoms of the light,
 Or as the sands Time's mighty year-glass holds,

Though it comprise all deserts ; that with Him
 All nature's vast and elemental limbs
 Are but the organs of His will, Himself
 Above all bound, above all infinite ;
 Whose action is all freedom—whose repose
 Necessity—whose only word is Fate ;
 With Him alone, she taught, was peace and bliss ;
 The bliss of Being is the love of God—
 And primal beauty and eternal joy,
 Whereof the vital music of all orbs
 Forms but the faintest echo ; and the sign
 Minutest of His high celestial will
 To harmonize creation, and reduce
 The pure perennial war of good and ill,
 Into the musical peace which rules in Heaven—
 Peace, victress of all war. For so, in Time,
 The one and many make themselves the all ;—
 Beauty the boundless medium, Love the end
 Immutable, which renders all things one ;—
 And though in outer worlds an outward war
 There is, yet in the spiritual world,
 The secret harmony of good and ill,
 Which Being with existence reconciles
 In the mid axis of necessity—
 Prevails and hallows finally the whole.
 So Wisdom made her favourite wise of heart,
 And led the loved one through all holy spheres
 And dwellings of seraphic bliss, and homes
 Of perfect pleasure—even as the sun
 Wades through the golden waters of the world
 Up to the top point of the tower of Time,
 Then steep descends—down to the lowest nook
 Of furthest space, where earth spins round like clay
 Upon the potter's wheel, the orb where bode
 The last of happy beings, and the first
 Of wretched creatures—semimortal man—
 Whose clay was tempered with a lymph divine,

The ante-natal wave of Paradise,
 And fourfold fount of nature's heavenly flow ;
 Yet so self-hidden in the cloud of sin—
 So misadvised by those whose souls perfused
 With earth-pent vapours and the reek of time,
 Falsely oracular sit and agonize,
 Preaching perdition—that though high in Heaven
 The sunsmile of Salvation beamed, it beamed
 Unrecognized—unrecked of—undivined.
 Still after all these wanderings, knowing well
 One single soul more wondrous than all worlds
 Which mass the skies with miracles of light,
 They rapture most and sweet contentment found,
 Coolly triumphant, like the restful stars
 Glowing in Heaven when Time's hot day is done,
 Each in their proper orb and common sphere ;
 To meditative converse most devote,
 And strict collation of the Spirit-book
 With the pretemporal volume, writ of God ;
 High in the archives of eternity
 Treasured, the pure original of Life.
 The elder Excellence, meanwhile, who longed
 For pure and mere autocracy, unchecked—
 Unled—uneyed—ruled with a random hand,
 And an occasional sovereignty the all
 But full totality, allotted her,
 Of the original myriads of her race.
 These loved her well ; and, willingly, themselves
 Ascribed to her for ever, for that she
 Gave them all freedom, wherefore in return
 They were her slaves in gratitude : and ripe
 Any desire to grant or scheme abet,
 Which pleased herself, or those intent to please.
 Counsel, however sage, and precept fair,
 Which seemed to savour of superior will,
 Or tendency to better ends than theirs,
 Were treason held at last, and Wisdom's words,

Bewrayed by guile, into a net were wrought,
 For her own shining feet ;—alas, the day !
 Long was a pretext sought, and baffled oft ;
 But never failure followed ill intent,
 And base success still sealed each fatal plot.
 The hour of parting came and Wisdom wrung
 Her high uplifted hands—nor breathed—unless
 To her she loved, that youthful saint—farewell ;—
 Which well she wist were but a mock to make
 Of valediction. How could that she left,
 By any chance, farewell ? Yet still she stayed
 Lingered around that once supremest sphere
 Where, with the sister angels of her care,
 In days of holy innocence and love,
 She was of Eld so happy. Oft she made
 For flight, but pausing, dropped ; and thus consumed
 Her last night there, till every star had waned
 Into the coming light ; and then her way
 Upon her own bright wings she took to Heaven.
 The vanishing flash of her æonian wing
 Called forth a burst of triumph from the train
 Of those insinuant tempters, as they marked—
 What close in deep divan they long had hoped ;
 And toward the elder of the angel twain,
 Those regal nymphs, inheritors of Heaven,
 Laden with crown, and robe, and sceptre, rushed
 Tumultuous—and applausive, hailed her thus.
 Be thou our Queen, O lofty angel fair !
 Worthy the sole and unobstructed rule
 Of every sphere and every spirit race ;
 Heart-honoured—Heaven-ordained—predestined heir
 Of the bright line of ages numberless !
 Since God, creating atoms, first began,
 And ended with this universal world,
 Thou hast beheld no equal, nay no like.
 Thee only we acknowledge, and for this,
 Hold our arrival blesséd. Empress, hail !—

Then she elate, and with pride-blinded soul
 The towering seat, prepared for her, assumed—
 And sat a sceptred monarch. Far and wide
 The tidings flew that I and all my rule
 Were thrust aside ; and in the judgment seat
 I sat and none attended ; or but came,
 With false fictitious cause, to scoff and jeer.
 Then came an edict of perpetual ban
 And forcible exile 'gainst myself, and all
 Who dared the fallen fortunes to support,
 Or but to name as lawful. Thus the sword,
 Whose fiery emblem glared at first in air,
 Reigned, and divided all things. Every gate
 Of every temple straight was closed—and lo !
 Each high and heaven-allusive dome was filled
 With hollow sounding emptiness alone.
 Once—in the midst of their assembly high,
 And in the palace hall, where erst were held
 The courts of joy and audiences of love,—
 Once I essayed to speak and hearing hoped.
 But, ere a word, they bound me by the hands,
 And drave me out with curses, taunts, and gibes.
 Passing, thus manacled, the new made throne
 Where sat the crownéd traitress, of her crime
 Conscious, and trembling 'mid the array of state
 That girt her in, brightly, I spake ;—but not
 In anger nor revenge ; for I foresaw
 The wretched end of all such mortal sin,
 And knew the holy purposes of Heaven
 Alone eternal and essential good ;—
 Behold me thus ; I quit thee ; 'tis thy will.
 Me thou forswearst, who had loved thee more
 Than all the tribes of angels, love thee still,
 Despite the flatteries wherewith now thy soul
 Is darkened and degraded. Know me true.
 The hour will come when thou shalt hold me yet
 Dearer than now detested ; but 'tis thou

Shalt change, not I. Watch, for I come again.
 She answered with a smile, but trembled whilst ;
 And I departed that unhallowed hall.
 In this, too, God permitted them success—
 And in far more, that at the close He might
 Their highest height o'ertop, and with the arms
 Of love, all-conquering, fling forth more supreme
 His thrice victorious standard. Such His will ;
 Such, even in exile, now, the due, the dear
 Obedience of my heart ; for well I knew
 To change, or re-create, with Him perdured
 As facile as to make. The younger angel maid
 Who dauntless kept her faith, and still with me
 Held sad and sacred commune—though by stealth—
 Was suffered to remain, close cloistered first,
 In solitude religious, for that they
 The Empress' mind who swayed, dared not advise
 To put her quite to death ; and that the tie
 And natural sympathy of sisterhood,
 The memory of the excellent times of old,
 And flickering purposes of future years
 Which played about the heart of her enthroned,
 Together, wrought to spare her and preserve.
 Anon, though bidden to busy herself alone
 With her own matters, and those mixed with them—
 She, at convenient times, permission wrung
 To walk abroad and tend her charities ;
 But only in the humblest, homeliest guise.
 And as the Queen had shrunk not to abjure
 All past—all present—and all future love,
 Between her and myself—her whilom Lord—
 The younger, in derision, they who mocked
 Both, called the Bride Expectant and the Spouse.
 Now, what a change came o'er that orb serene !
 Through all the day was revelry and mirth—
 Nor respite knew the night, till no one recked
 Of natural order or of dues divine.

While the neglected damsel at the gates
 Of her imperious sister—at whose beck
 All luxuries started into life and use ;—
 In servile garb, and oft with ashes crowned
 As in contempt, an outcast sat forlorn.
 O royal menial ! O imperial thrall !
 Companion of the angels in their height,
 How lowly art thou fallen ; and yet how pure,
 Seen in the sin consuming light of God—
 How meek—how perfect in all servitude !—
 These contumelies and worse, unvexed, she bore
 Unheeding, uncomplaining. Day by day—
 Her to impress with due sense of disgrace,
 Was she led in, before the obsequious crowd,
 In sackcloth clad, to make obeisance meet
 Unto the Sisterly Majesty, which she
 Coldly, for peace-sake, made ; nor all hope lacked
 That some few gold-grains Time might number still
 Among the barren sands he measured forth ;—
 That Wisdom yet might wonn with them again ;
 And her usurping sister, still beloved,
 Though for this deed condemned, her seat resign
 To the diviner dynasty. In this
 Hope she survived, nor wholly stood alone.
 While all—almost—in that strange change of rule
 And law agreed, a certain few there were
 Nathless, within whose hearts the echoes staid
 Of those last words I uttered ; and these found
 Joy unconceived in hoping still they might
 In act be verified ; and oft—as best
 They could—they comforted the angel child.
 Daily and nightly, she, upon her knees,
 Besought God to re-ignite, in the hot
 And blinding darkness of her heart who ruled,
 The lovelight of His presence, and to quench
 The desolating river of their wrath—
 Who first infested that fair world with sin.

At night too, in the wilderness we met—
 For what was once a garden shewed but then
 A drear and desert world : and there from her,
 I, banished—learned what things and how befel :
 And me she never left without a prayer—
 Despite the wrongs I suffered with herself,
 Wrongs which too many loudly joyed to hear—
 That I for all would pray and intercede.
 There were who spared not breath to shew, that she
 Strove in my heart her sister to supplant ;
 Though I, who knew her well, knew better far—
 And, for that she was faithful, sought to bound
 All blessing in herself—and circumscribe,
 Through forfeiture of infidelity,
 The promise made to both, of highest bliss,
 Which from their birthplace they had brought with them :
 And writ in silvery phylacteries hung—
 In the one openly, the other hid,
 As though ashamed thereof—around their brows ;
 That so they might be known—those twins divine—
 The daughters of the Most High God. To each
 As creatural life, was trial still decreed,
 That they might know to relish good and joy—
 The woe of saintly innocence accused—
 The purifying suffering of sin.
 Yet such—although they knew not this—that both
 Should vanish, and good only and pure joy
 Encrown each other finally. In all
 Worlds there are truths and secrets only known
 And justifiable, to Him who laid
 Their sure foundations ; trembling though they stand
 Upon the countless columns of the air.
 By secret instigation thus the heart
 Was poisoned, of the Angel Queen, to shun,
 And doubt her innocent sister. Time by time
 Such imputations cast, failed not to work
 Wrath in the royal breast, though reckless all

Of former love, or future. 'Twas enough
 So proud presumption were but whispered round ;
 Thus visited. Within the central square
 Fronting the glittering palace stood the throne—
 Which changed so much the aspect of that orb,
 And which I told of first—whereon each day
 She, ministering blind justice sat, absorbed
 In love of her own empery ; rapt to hear
 The adulation of her foreign train ;
 To trifle with her sceptre as a toy,
 And court the rainbow flashes, startling bright,
 Of the star-gemmed tiara ; to her eyes
 Jewels well worth the satrapies of Heaven ;—
 Rich in all fancied virtues to attract
 Good, or from evil fend ; the which same gems
 She oft would deftly moralize, and prove
 To the subservient glozers ranged around,
 How well they did become her, how much stead
 The breast, the brow whereon they dazzling lay ;
 Now gleaming forth defiant, now reposed
 In silent capabilities of light.
 There, in her radiant siege, that angel Queen—
 What time the Sister, so abased as wont
 Meekly came forth in pale humility,
 Low bending like the crescent moon, when first
 Born of the golden calm the western sky
 Rejoiceth in, prophetic, to perform
 Due reverence—sat, and eyed askance ; then spake ;
 While o'er her head attendants from behind—
 Pavonian canopy of azure held,
 In manner of a sunshade, her to screen
 From the high glory that would else have slain :—
 Fair seeming Sister, is it true that thou—
 In my default—aspirest to espouse
 The angel prince, my sometime lord and lover,
 He exiled, thou in bonds ? If so, content.
 Ye well befit each other, and so far

As merits make, are equal, in my mind.
 Answered the younger of the twain divine.
 O heavenly consort!—O affianced bride
 Of God's own Son! Be there 'tween thee and me,
 Nor struggle, nor misdoubt. They both malign,
 Who sow the seeds of discord broad-cast here.
 We each have our forenoted lot. Be mine—
 The power, the privilege of servitude.
 Be thine, command. My faith can never change.
 But thou hast fallen from service to a throne.
 Though he who ever loves, nor swerves from that
 His heart hath fixed on once—with me consort,
 It is but for a season; and our talk
 Is of thee always. Countless prayers are thine.
 I, too, have my devotions, and serve God,
 Doubtless, although I worship not with thee,
 Replied the elder, bowing from her throne;
 We worship each our star, but all in Heaven.
 We may not worship but the Invisible;—
 Answered the younger, firm. No matter, now!
 Rejoined the angel monarch, smiling bright
 On her confederated beguilers round:
 Who smoothly sanctioned every pearly word
 That beauteous and imperial rebel spake;—
 My temple is my heart. My seat is fixed
 Here in the midst of friends; and by this crown—
 Each gem a sacred talisman of power,
 Or amulet protective from all harm,—
 Wrought by the spirits of the elements,
 And wondrously endowed,—I swear, and be
 The oath, as death, irrevocable—I,
 The dull alliance ye design abjure.
 Nor Lord, nor living equal shall be mine.
 Depart, and let him know our fixed resolve.
 Incipient murmurs of applause ran round
 The lustrous throng—when lo! an omen strange.
 While yet she spake, the jewels of her crown

Erewhile obtested, in the sight of all
 Dropped, several, down,—a sadly splendid lapse
 Like meteor showers autumnal in the skies,—
 Whose fancied virtues in her false esteem
 Were that which made her royal; down they fell,
 And but enriched the dust. With deep dismay
 She eyed the empty sockets—and was still.
 Stricken with shame, too, slowly slid away
 That parasitic court. The younger, then,
 Who at her sister's feet her seat still sought;—
 O Sister! O divine one! O most dear!
 There is a jewel more than worth all these—
 These but the shining rubbish of a wreck.
 Wilt thou not seek it? 'Tis, for asking, thine.
 A friend there is—a lover—one most true,
 Who would not thus desert thee, though it had been
 Thyself, by judgment, hurled into the dust—
 But there he would have comforted thee. No more!
 Said the haught Empress, I have cast my lot;—
 Then hurried from her throne and disappeared.
 Next came the crime of crimes with curses crowned,
 Staggering precipitate. No lack was there
 Of direful sign and potent; chief was this—
 Each day grew murker, for the light of truth
 Suns those serenest firmaments; and all
 The falsehoods each one uttered, lie by lie,
 Rolled into rings of darkness round their heads—
 Till the conglomerate gloom obscured the day,
 And each one so infringed the other's view
 That contact in collision ceased. And still,
 With gathering shades the stranger spirits grew
 Still lovelier, and, like light outletting flowers,
 Glowed in the lengthening eve; and oft at night
 As the stars streamed their silver radiance forth—
 Alternating with azure and all gems—
 Or as in nacrine blent in one soft blaze,
 Their rosy bowers they trimmed; and training low

The honeyed wreaths, heavy with odorous dew,—
 Warbled a vesper song, inviting mirth
 And amicable converse in the shade.
 There likewise they averred to serve their God—
 Whose living emblem dwelt, they said, among them—
 With natural worship and symbolic rites
 Of souls regenerated; there impart
 The esoteric truths which nature veiled,
 Of the one triplicative essence; there—
 All cosmogonic and theurgic lore,
 Without consideration, open free
 To the enraptured eye—and but for one
 Prostration of the spirit duly made,
 The sacred fire and secrets of the stars.
 Night after night these proffers were proclaimed—
 And mysteries more enchanting still, with smiles,
 Hinting of happier revelations yet,
 When those they loved were perfected in faith.
 These smiles at first were answered but with smiles,
 Incredulous, rebuking. See, said they,
 In impious invocation of that doom,
 How the night lengthens we have brought with us;—
 Permitted to this end, that out of night
 And preternatural darkness such as this,
 May spring that luminous vision we enjoy,
 And in ourselves create of things divine.
 Partake ye with us. Thus they tempted on.
 Wonder at last awoke desire. Among
 The original seed angelic, was a sage
 Of dominant lineage—for undated years
 Prime counsellor of good—who oft had urged
 Obedience, and reproof on all who erred
 In listening to the promissory guests,
 One wasted atom, even, of an hour—
 And most deplored their advent. Him it seemed
 Good to the Great One—who controls all life,
 And circumscribes all action, so to prove

His further ends superior—to permit
 One moment's fragile converse with the spirit
 Chief of those voluntary visitants,
 Who lay reclined on fragrant flowers, as though
 Dreaming, yet only half dissolved in sleep ;—
 The radiant chaplet drooping, and the zone
 Cœrulean, featly tricked with semblant stars,
 Unloosened for repose. Arise, he cried,
 Sternly. And wherefore ? said the angel guest ;
 In wise and happy idlesse, half divine,
 Those live who how to spend their life know best ;
 Our rest is contemplation : worship our
 Sole work. The weak alone unceasingly
 Devote themselves to action ; but for us,
 We mightiest are in rest. This eve return—
 And I will shew thee that we worship here.
 What more, in speech, hath never been divulged ;
 But neither was it much. Away he turned—
 His heart assaulted by a storm of thought.
 The day he passed in musing and in prayer
 Repeated, but unsatisfied. At night,
 When all the stars burned brightliest, and the bowers
 Of song were silent, he in stealth returned—
 And lo ! the Spirit slumbering as before.
 O ! sweet and soft salute of sacred sleep—
 The starry eyes, and lightning lids of earth,
 And evening, slowly sealing, and the cheek
 Of angel painting with a pearlier calm—
 How wert thou mocked then ! Morn came, and he
 Returned not,—poor apostate ! Soul by soul
 Who went to seek him stayed ; so strong the spell,
 One dread defection cast ; in every bower,
 But that wherein he was, 'twas said he hid ;
 And soon each flowery canopy one concealed—
 The proselyte of idols—slave of self,
 Who was to seek, but never to be found.
 Pity them, now, ye angels ! for, like you,

Equal—almost—in favour of their Lord,
 Were once those lapsed ones. These are heart wrung tears.
 At these words, sympathetic tears swam o'er
 For the first time, from each celestial eye,
 As trees autumnal shed their leafy tears
 In golden showers, shaken by sudden gust;—
 Tears not to be forbid. In saddest tone
 Resumed the Heavenly Stranger his discourse.
 Ne'er to be found, I said. But who can find
 A limit to the mercy of our Lord?
 In like estate they never may be found—
 They never shall be: still, for all is hope,
 Hope—the immortal virtue of the saints.
 But let the time-glass of their sins run down,
 Whose recollection whelms me still with woe.
 Not many darkening days had passed away
 Before the mighty mysteries stood revealed,
 And strangest aphanisms, one by one,
 Of those once loved and honoured most, made clear.
 Beneath the shade delicious of a wood—
 In whose Elysian glades those strangers fixed
 At first their dwelling, and therein prepared
 Their secret rites and sacred mysteries—
 Skirting the gold sands of the sapphire sea,
 Were those deceived assembled; so deceived,
 The day they weened was longer, brighter, now;
 And each the other hailed as happier then
 Than in the ages past. Forth flashed the song
 Upwards like earth-born lightning, and the dance—
 Of crystalline symmetry—skimmed around the shore,
 In vortices of light; the world-queen there
 Now mixing with the mirthful throng, now sole,
 Seeking in thought repose. Oh! this, they cried,
 Is joy—the bliss of liberty. At once
 That senseless dream to dissipate, lo! there rushed,
 Out of a cave, with toppling crags o'erhung,
 A hugeous monster, such as never Night

With murderer's mind engendered, when his heart
 Lay panting underneath the conscience pang—
 Like fawn beneath a wolf's jaw. Dragonlike
 In lengthening volumes stretched his further part,
 Incalculably curled; but in the front,
 On one wide neck a hundred heads he reared,
 Which spake with every mouth a hundred tongues,
 Through teeth of serried daggers black with blood.
 The breath he drew in day he breathed out night.
 And he descended to the sea to drink,
 Though close by his cave a cool bright river ran;
 For it was thirst the monster better loved
 Than aught that thirst could quench. The abhorrent sea
 Shrank backwards, tide by tide; but he pursued,
 Triumphant in its fascinating fear,
 Into the very midst; then gorged, returned,
 Soul-sodden to the shore, where prone he lay
 Before his horrid hold; with stormy joy
 Gnashing his steely teeth, and with his tail,
 Now close contorted, and now far out launched,
 Sweeping the shiny slime of the wide sea sands.
 In still and dreadful wonder, grouped by fear,
 Astound and awestruck stood the duped allies
 Of the delusive strangers. Ceased at once
 The choir-maze astrooidal; shouts of joy
 And gratulation, all ceased. First to speak
 Was one, the last who lapsed from pure estate.
 Be this the god ye serve?—The god ye swear
 That we should this day see?—Our god, said they.
 And are we bound to adore him who have passed
 Through your mysterious rules and on us ta'en
 His worship by the oath of fire? Ye are,
 In tones of hate replied the spirit chief,
 By whom that wise one told of, late, was lost—
 There standing as the hierophant of hell;—
 Behold, ye are before him—bow the knee.
 And the vast monster smiled; on every face,

A hot and lurid smile—like the red light
 Which hovereth o'er the earthquake yet unborn,
 Though quick. Oh woe! When all—such answer made
 As heretofore recorded—with remorse
 Were smitten and repentance, and aside
 Turned them to go;—the hierophant exclaimed,
 Give to the mighty one his victim due!
 Then those destroyers seized the angel youth
 Who first recanted his accurséd oath,
 And cast him at the monster's feet, which cried,
 No more of these ignoble victims; hence!
 Bring me the royal bride, and I depart.
 Soon as these fearful words were heard, lament
 And consternation seized the greater half
 Of those there present—and most base resolve
 Filled up like molten lead the others' hearts.
 Which cruel purpose when the sister-queen
 Saw—to that living idol, fierce and foul,
 She knelt, and, touched with natural sorrow, him
 Besought the child to spare. Take what, she said,
 Take all thou wilt, but leave alone this one—
 My sweet and sacred sister. She with me
 Once in the happy past, and innocent, lived
 A pure perpetual blessing; from her hand
 Came boundless bounties; not a word she spake,
 But seemed a benediction; her bright heart
 With lovelight glowed, for ever at the full.
 In days of old o'er all the orb she ranged,
 And reigned where'er she ranged. All things rejoiced
 In her ecstatic advent. By her touch
 The thrall a thronéd prince became; the dead
 Dawned into life; o'er all things spread the spell
 Of her resplendent presence. That they touched
 Her very footsteps gladdened, as the waves
 Leap into light and vanish in a smile.
 But now—because of deeds thou know'st too well,
 Deeds, peradventure, for repentance meet—

Immured, she lives the life of charity
 In the still precincts of her holy home,
 With many a lovely handmaiden around
 In starry palace templed, till the hour
 Of our celestial nuptials, as she deems,
 If sorrow have not wronged her reason—come.
 I, her rebukes of love have ofttimes borne
 And scorned, and heaped upon her infamies,
 Which she hath thrice forgiven ; but let her not
 Be out of life abolished, who hath done
 Such good, and been so harmless at the worst.
 Thou speakest as the she-fool only can—
 Retorted then the angry terror ; rise !
 The very reasons thou dost name for life
 Are those wherefore I hate her unto death.
 Go ! thou thyself shalt bind her to yon rock,
 Or I will slay ye both. His tongue then ceased
 Its frightful thunder-clang, nor spake he more.
 Meanwhile, those basest few who thought to win
 The tyrant monster's favour and preserve
 Themselves from fatal end—death-threatened now,
 Sought out the sorrowing maiden, and disguised
 In borrowed robes of cheerful thanksgiving,
 Entered the heavenly sanctuary, wherein
 At the high altar ministering she stood,
 Presaging sorrows soon to be fulfilled ;
 Predicting woes accomplished while foretold.
 These, in mock worship mingling with the rest,
 Yea even in mine own presence—for in her,
 'Midst all these woes, did I sole solace find—
 Her, sudden, seized, and bound, and hurried off
 To a lone sea-crag, circled by the sea,
 And, for the monster's evening victim, left.
 Then vowed I to deliver her from her foes—
 And for the rescue armed. The lightning steed,
 Which pastures on the air, and is the sign
 Of the divine destruction of all worlds,—

The sparkles of whose hoofs, in falling stars,
 Struck from the adamantine course of space,
 Stream o'er the skies,—in swift and solemn joy,
 Came trembling at my call. A lance of light,
 A sunbeam tempered in eternal fire,
 I in mine hand assumed, and forth we fared.
 Wide o'er the waters rose a wail of woe
 With a fierce shout of exultation twined—
 For chained to a dark rock, rough and high, the sea
 Was loathly yielding back to land,—there stood—
 Arrayed in Paradisal purity
 Alone, that meek and innocent angel-maid ;—
 The monster wading greedily through the waves,
 Her to devour ;—the angels, some aghast,
 Exulting some ; her sister, as half-dead,
 Fell fainting from her seat ; the light alone
 Of falling stars, with blinks of lightning mixed,
 Lamping the red horizon fitfully.
 Midway between the rock and sea we met,
 And though the creature bellowing would have fled,
 And have defiled the eye of light no more,
 Yet was I there to slay as well as save.
 The lance of light I couched : and straight my steed,
 Who knew, instinctive, all his dread devoir,
 Drove on like an inevitable storm ;—
 The weight behind propelled the point before
 Through the whole monstrous mass, till in the heart,
 Quivering it stood, triumphant. Down then dropped
 The soulless corse. The beauteous captive's bonds
 I, instant, burst, and wrapt her sacred limbs
 In the same robes I wore—of golden web
 And azure wove ; for forth I sped at first,
 Of conquest confident, mine armour dight
 With trophies rich, beseeeming such event ;—
 And on the rock where long she swooning lay,
 Though conscious she was saved from direst death,
 I laid her, perfect in pure loveliness,

And in that garb of glory. Then there came
 A voice, as of a star-cloud in the sky,
 Approving, and all blessing I had done ;
 Formed, too, beneath the cloud, a rainbow bright ;
 From whose arch, falling as in circular wind,
 And in diminishing spires, this bird of light,
 The sign and augury of peace divine,
 God-missioned, hovered round me for a time,
 Then nestled in my bosom—as ye see.
 But not so from the orb, where still remained
 Those recreant spirits who, with loud lament,
 Wept their extinguished god ; him to revive
 Striving with all their strength. In vain they strove.
 Now, lest the venomous vapours of his corpse
 Should the whole sphere impest, it was decreed
 By crown alike and lieges, all alarmed,
 To offer to the soul of the dead beast
 His body as a solemn holocaust ;—
 Nought else like worthy of such sacrifice.
 With a vast mass of pompous rites, the Queen,
 In sordid robes of false humility,
 And all her proudest subjects, head declined,—
 In mournful train, upon a mighty mound
 Upreared by the seaside, the heapy corpse
 Of the terrific slain laid out ;—and balked
 In their last complot, lo ! another seized
 Their souls—instinct with hate more murderous still—
 Mine own destruction. Me, where I remained,
 Protecting her I honoured, they approached,
 Beseeching I would witness the last rites
 And public incremation of the dead,
 In proof that I with them were reconciled,
 Ere they for aye departed. This I did—
 Knowing full well their most recondite sins
 And secretest intentions ; they the while
 Unknowing wholly mine. No sooner came
 I to the seat, in right opposal placed,

To that despotic empress, than they urged
 Me to revivify the hateful frame—
 The incarnation of that fleshly hell,
 I had, for her sake whom I loved, destroyed ;—
 But once for all their quest refused ; whereat,
 The throned one brake her sceptre in her wrath,
 And cried,—Have done with him ! I own him not,
 And have forsworn him. Let him die his death.
 Thereto I answered not—within myself
 Secretly praying but that God would make
 The spirit fair concordant with the form,
 And what was beauteous, lovely. They forthwith—
 Tempter and tempted hating me alike—
 Rushed on and bound me fast ; no sooner bound,—
 Than from the Heavenly Father of us all,
 All power I felt transfused into mine hands :
 Yet let them work their will, that all might be
 Accomplished in their nature, and the great
 Designs of God fulfilled which He sole knew.
 Three days and nights, or rather one long night,
 But by diverse degrees of darkness marked,
 Again it died, in foul offensive fumes
 Exhaled away ; so vast that carcass grim ;
 Around whose molten mass, too, the whole time
 Were fierce and bloody combats, tribe 'gainst tribe,
 In honour of the dead one, till at last,
 Me on that burning and abhorréd bier—
 That carnal hell impersonate, all fire,
 Remorseless cast they ; and their sin-palled eyes
 Perceived not that a Heaven-sent cloudlet caught
 Safe in its soft cool bosom ; there create
 By love divine of God, that mercy might
 The dear decrees of judgment execute,
 And scathless free the Being bound and doomed.
 High upwards rose, then, in Heaven's darkening face,
 Wide wavering from innumerable tongues,
 Like to the desert sand-cloud or simoom,

The columned execrations of the crowd ;
 But far below me swept ; they neared not e'en
 The prospect of my feet. Such malice grieved—
 How grievous to the soul of love, all sin !
 Yet need more made they should be won to God.
 Thus praying, I to the rock returned, where lay
 Entranced that lovely maiden of the main,
 And stirless, still. Her straight I raised and bore,
 Gently and lovingly, within these arms,
 To a lone star as yet unblest with life,
 Which round a larger and exterior orb,
 The central mirror of the world, wherein
 Are shadowed all things past and yet to come—
 Rolls restless in the Heavens, that so she might,
 Awakening, see new cause to bless her Lord.
 There, all enchanting, she enchanted lay ;
 Beheld of all, beloved of her kind ;
 I, guarding. Meanwhile, in that wretched orb
 Prevailed continuous night, and all things died
 That drew their life from light ; the flowers their life
 Breathed out in incense, and the trees laid down
 Their leafy crowns, forlorn ; the herbal earth
 In withered, barren, senseless nakedness,
 Lay like a clayey corpse. How changed from that bright orb
 The rolling skies had erst rejoiced to see ;
 Whereto the orient sun was wont to send,
 As to some eaglet orb that loved the light,
 His earliest beam to wake his welcomer—
 Signal to all of worship ! Now, alas !
 Cloaked in impenetrable night it glode
 A black abomination through the skies,
 A reptile world abhorred of all and shunned.
 Then fire was used for light, and each one bare
 With him a pitchy torch which reeked of hell ;
 Supplied by those deceptive guests who now—
 Their doubtful shapes resumed—incited strife,
 Commutual hatred, war ; and ground to dust

The victims of their mystic mockeries,
 With wrongs elaborate and self-torturing sins.
 She who, so prompt to rule alone, had deemed
 Herself a Queen for aye they laughed to scorn,
 Deposed and dungeoned, chained as mad—and slain—
 But that their hate preserved her. There she lay,
 In wretchedness repentant, wrecked in soul ;
 Scarce floating on the ages. How she longed
 Then, for her sister's voice—and hoped 'gainst hope
 For other accent than her own lone lips
 Re-echoed from the walls that confined her ;—
 For one embrace once prized beyond all price !
 But such desires as yet might naught avail.
 Be sure the Great Perfector hath well earned
 All that He gladdeneth over, as His own,
 Throughout the threefold world ; though Him it wrought
 Measureless dole, for the Divine is born
 Ever of bitterness ; and well I ween,
 Where sacrifice is not is never fire.
 There lay the stricken despot humbled down
 Into a penitent angel, sad and meek.
 Bright city, hallowed temple down were razed—
 Nay, e'en their deep foundations rooted up ;
 The sacred groves were fired, and tree by tree,
 Charred into naked blackness ; all the soil
 Was grisly ashes only. Day and night
 The skies rang with the cries of myriads' woe,
 Till the stars shuddered, and the orb was shook
 Wherein I watched the awakening of the maid.
 Close by her feet, insculptured, on the couch
 Whereon she lay, was seen a child, who held
 An hour glass in his hand. Ten times it turned,
 Upwards and downwards ; at the twelfth it fell,
 And falling broke ; and as it fell she rose ;
 Rose, like a lily bending o'er its stem,
 Gently until she stood. And hark, she cried,
 Beloved ! hearest thou not that wail of woe ?

I know it, whence it comes. Oh let us hence
 Hasten, and Heaven beseech to save, to save!
 Then stirred the dove divine, imbosomed here;
 And I obeyed its impulse, as of God,
 From whom it came; and calling to my side
 A cloudlet—like a silver swan that sailed
 The deeps of air—we clasped its snowy down,
 And swiftly winged our way;—till drawing nigh,
 Again, that dark apostate orb, the tears
 Of my beloved one fell like raindrops down.
 Thus moved, I said, unto the air, be fire;
 And to the waters, be ye flames; and straight
 It was so; for it seemed but meet to purge
 The sanctuary in this wise, so defiled.
 From side to side, from end to end, it burned;
 From pole to pole it blazed—from sea to sea;
 Till, in the central city of that sphere,
 Now shining ruins only, from the height
 Of one immoveable mountain monument,
 Forked like a double pyramid, which sole
 Survived the splendid wreck, was spied, far off
 On the horizon, the unbroken ring
 Of round beleaguering fire, which, swift as thought,
 The nations all into one death-doomed flock,
 Relentless, hunted. Midst this fiery woe,
 Struck suddenly, as out of vertical space,
 Once more the blazing swordstar shewed in Heaven;
 Which many, fearful, deemed, if brandished then
 By the same hand as first, would cleave in twain
 Their self accurséd sphere, and hurl its dust,
 With them, for aye, into the deadly void.
 Near and more near on waves of light it rode,
 Swiftly triumphing, and with blinding beam,
 Till full above the centre of the orb—
 The conflagration of the sphere self-quelled,
 As though in presence of a mightier power—
 Slowly descending, it alit at last,

And upright stood ;—no more a flaming sword,
 But sunbright cross ; 'neath whose redemptive light,
 And restorative radiance, all the seeds
 Of life leapt upwards in the face of Heaven.
 There now it stands, and all who will may live,
 Seeking its light. Alas for creature will !
 The darkness and the light still stand opposed,
 Ceaseless, as is the war 'tween good and ill,
 Which win and lose eternally in turn ;
 While these vivific globules, stars y'cleped,
 Roll through the veins galactic of the Heavens ;—
 So long as lasts Creation. Go, I said, thou pure
 And selfless spirit ! Take thou this golden key,—
 Which saying, I from out of my bosom took
 The true and triple key of all the worlds,
 Which nought may let ; which opes whatever can
 Be shut, and shuts whate'er be oped ; which turns
 The wards of Heaven's own gates of solid light,
 The portals of the palace of the Sun—
 No eye create shall else behold ;—and placed
 In her pure palm. This take and ope, I said,
 The prison wherein she, groaning—dying—lies.
 Restore her to the vital light. Strike off
 The manacles from her hands ; and from her feet
 Loosen the gory fetters ; in her wounds
 Pour thou the oil of peace, and wash with streams
 Of living waters. Clothe her with thyself
 As thou art clothed. O cheer her heart with hope
 And inspiration of thy faith, and say
 I sent thee to redeem her. Tell her, still,
 My love hath never altered ; not in grief,
 In passion not, not in disgrace, nor guilt ;
 Howe'er inconstant her heart, or opposed,
 Her love I with an everlasting love ;—
 The one am I unchanging ;—what beside
 Thou wilt, for thou canst only utter truth.
 Go ! and may He who over-orders all,

Speed thee upon thy quest. She, wordless, went,
 But looked her thanks—which seemed to promise full
 Accomplishment of precept—on a wind
 Wafting herself away. I, who, while all
 That dark defection reigned, had warned in vain—
 Now having seen in recompense most dear
 Heaven's own eternal standard planted there,
 As in all orbs, triumphant; and once more
 By this dear monitor, this God-gift moved,
 That sphere to quit;—first in myself resolved
 The mighty stream of Time to pass, which bounds
 And separates the realms of sense and soul
 From Heaven's eternal spirit-land, that I
 Might to the sire of all which live present
 For all the supplications of my heart;—
 And that the prayerful love of that bright maid,
 For her belovéd sister, might receive
 The seal of God's acceptance. On this high
 And arduousest emprise behold me bound;—
 Yet, ere I left my cloudlet car, whence late
 I marked that world-wreck, once again I gazed
 Thitherward, and beheld before the gates
 Of a half-buried palace—black as death,
 Its marble portals—locked in blest embrace,
 The well-belovéd twain. A voice then spake—
 The voice of one joy-hearted, soft and clear
 As bells at early morn, on that blest day,
 Named in the breast-laws of each starry orb,
 Wherein Eternity entwines with Time
 Its golden strands, and weds the world to Heaven;
 Arise! come forth, beloved sister, rise.
 How blest am.I to serve thee, to release!
 Nor doubt, nor wait. Behold thy handmaid, me.
 Gifts bring I for thee, gifts of countless price—
 Of priceless worth. Thy lover Lord commands
 Array thee for the bridals. Lo! the new
 And shining robes, by heavenly fingers wrought,—

Fit for the form divine of her whose love
 Is hallowed in the eternal rites of Heaven.
 So shall we dwell together here in bliss,
 Till He shall come who ever comes to all
 His promise sanctifies. Improve the hour
 Which yet remains, in all obedience clear ;
 And deck thyself in weeds of righteousness,
 With jewels of good deeds adorned, and clad
 In golden garments redolent of praise.
 For infinite is every gift of His
 Divine bestowing ; and Salvation's cup,
 And Nature's, He to overflowing fills.
 With joy I heard—I saw. Nor longer then
 Awaited, but where most the starlands crowd
 The potent north, soared upwards, space by space,
 And firmament by firmament of stars,
 Leaving in turn behind ; passing unharmed
 Upon the verge of Being, where the path
 Narrows to almost nothing, the monsters foul
 Earth-dust and Death-night—things ye know not of—
 Yet fatal beasts to all who, me before,
 That way had urged. But God hath favoured me.
 And nigh thereto, the Golgotha of worlds—
 The charnel-house of Time—where skull-like orbs,
 Extinct of life, with rotten, sickly, light,
 Defiled the purview, and advance delayed ;
 Yet shrinking nought, though shuddering, passed I on,
 Through all uncleanness, clean, all foulness, pure.
 Hungered, athirst and faint with fasting, still,
 My purposed way I held, till bright afar,
 The kindly radiance of this angel world
 Beaconed me hither—and I came. Ye now,
 Thanks for your holy hospitality,
 Behold me journeying to the city of God,
 There to prefer my prayers and plead for those
 Whom still I love, though drawn aside to trust
 The natural strength allotted them, and not—

With sole reliance—God ; who thus to all
 By failure e'en of angels, when He wills,
 Asserts in all His high supremacy.
 Let whoso feels in holy will inspired,
 Me to accompany, speak—to that bright throne
 Where God our Father in all glory sits,
 The world in holy audience at His feet ;—
 And there, with me, while giving praise for all,
 His word hath made and saved, for those not yet
 Redeemed, pray ceaselessly. Uprising then
 As 'twere a constellation, suddenly,
 Seven of those gracious angels pressed around,
 Eager for friendly escort ; when the chief
 Cherub who welcomed first that pilgrim bright,
 Thus said :—Another holy day, made blest
 By our dear guest—how different he from those
 Deceptive friends he tells of !—hath now slid
 Into the passive strength-restoring night ;
 Rest also ye. Such is mine own intent,
 Replied the eloquent guest ; and less for that,
 These life-tried limbs have gone through, than their sakes,
 Who know not half the flight they meditate.
 Then worship before rest ; as was the wont
 In every alternation of the day,
 Ere action, or refreshment, or repose.
 Last, on their happy couches, odorous all
 Of flowery incense, lay the angels down ;
 Shading their faces with the plummy gold
 Of their space searching pinions ; sacred sleep
 Stealing the starry wonders of their eyes,
 And with divinest visions hallowing all.
 Morn, like a maiden glancing o'er her pearls,
 Streamed o'er the manna-dew, as though the ground
 Were sown with starseed ;—and the angels rose,
 Each from his hallowed couch, and—duly made
 The sole oblation of the heart to God—
 Stood ready for departure ; taking leave,

For a brief space, of their beloved compeers ;
 With many an ardent longing for the way,
 As yet untried—'neath such sweet leadership.
 At length the last embrace, last look, exchanged,
 High upward the bright bevy, like to light
 Out of the crownéd north,—shot ; on and on,
 Through firmamental fields of furthest space,
 Till at the brink of a vast river they
 Arriving, halted, which pervaded Heaven ;—
 Swift as a cataract, yet unbroken, still
 And level as the mean line of the sea.
 Thick with chaotic matter and unformed—
 Like the volcanic blood which bounds, unseen,
 In veins of lightning, through earth's cavernous heart—
 Mid ruined orbs, like broken ice-lumps, rolled,
 Melting and crumbling, to the ocean deeps
 Of vast eternity, it gushed along.
 Its depths were darkness self ; but every wave,
 Which curled out of the mass, seemed light alive,
 Though but an instant. On an eminent height,
 Which overpeered the stream, the angels sate.
 Then said the angel leader to the rest,
 What see ye past the river ? And they said,
 We nothing see beyond. Athwart this stream,
 If stream it be—and not a shoreless main—
 Is more than we can ken. But I, returned
 The questioner, see beyond the clear bright land
 Of Heavenly immortality, mine own
 By birthright and by gift ; and thither, we.
 Descending to the shore, he stooped, and dipped
 Into the stream his hand ; which filling full,
 He tasted and thus spake. Ye waters—once
 Of death—but now of life eternal, take
 Back the libation I have made of ye ;
 And be ye changed for ever. Uttering this,
 He cast the dark remainder in the flood,
 That instant changed into a flood of life,

Flashing with light celestial to its depths
 Of bottomless infinitude ;—and straight,
 Grasping the bright branch of an olive tree,
 Which bowered with verdant gold the peaceful shore,
 He therewith sprinkled, one by one, the band
 Who him accompanied ; with these pure rites
 Making them free, initiate into Heaven,
 And death the lesser mysteries of life.
 The solemn marvel of these gladsome deeds,
 Each heart lit up with self evolving joy.
 And round him all stood linked in one embrace.
 Behold, he said ; for fit it is that now
 We keep our course ; and close below there lay,
 Moored but a little distance from the side,
 A crescent-boat, translucent as a star,
 Wherein we all embarked, in godly dread :
 For one among that chosen seven was I.
 If lightning were the gross corporeal frame
 Of some angelic essence, whose bright thoughts
 As far surpassed in keen rapidity,
 The lagging action of his limbs as doth
 Man's mind his clay ; with like excess of speed
 To animated thought of lightning, flew
 That moon-horned vessel o'er life's deeps divine ;—
 Far past the golden isles of memory,
 Where only names exist and things are not ;
 Mingled wherewith a cloudy counterpart
 Mocks every islet, and therein are lost
 Those upon whom the bright seductive sea
 Smiles, wreckful ; and sincerest smoothness feigns.
 We went, we knew not how. It was as though
 The finite, mingling with the infinite,
 Produced an utter ravishment and sense
 Of o'er abundant reason. At the last,
 Heaven's azure shores we made, and leaped on land.
 Scarce had we touched that land of life, when lo !
 From every footfall, like soft waves of light,

A murmuring music sprang, as if its own
 It welcomed to its bosom, with soft joy
 Rejoicing inwardly. The sacred soil,
 To this premortal music vibrating,
 The same which Faith hears in the still of Time—
 Their chief saluted; kneeling, likewise, we.
 Then He embraced us all and each in turn.
 Here let us build, said he, a tower of light;
 That all upon the further side may know
 We have in safety crossed the flood. Himself
 Placed the foundation-stone, and one by one,
 Masses of dazzling adamant which starred
 The shining shore, like flowers that fringe the banks
 Of woodland brook, we piled up altarwise
 At his command. On every stone engraved,
 In gleamy darkness, was the name of God;
 For every star a stone; and every name
 A separate title symbolising love.
 A sheaf of lightning on the head he placed,
 Which with the skies innate communion held,
 And burned in correspondence. Thus was all
 With the pure blessing of perfection crowned.
 Our journey called us on; and pleased we trode
 That land of solid concord; yet not long
 The lower line of progress kept. Aloft
 Once more we stretched the light-related wing,
 High in the face of Heaven's eternal towers,
 Which still immeasurably distant shewed,
 Of soul enkindling brilliance, and a power,
 Light-uttering splendour, that at first appeared
 Enough to quench our lesser beam. But this
 As we approached them strengthened, and enlarged,
 In heart and effluence. Whilst we happy seven
 Were marvelling at such change, inwapt in thought,
 Lost in the labyrinth of boundless love,
 Self humbled by the glory on us poured,
 We found that Heaven was close to us; and we

The shining basement of the walls had reached
 Of the celestial city, which did itself
 Enclose, or seemed, the essential universe ;—
 And standing by the glowing gate of prayer,
 About to enter, missed our stranger friend.
 In holy wonder lost, still greater now,
 Each to the other turned, yet nothing spake,
 For silence sealed each tongue. But straight on high
 A voice spake for us, saying—Enter ye,
 For I am He who led ye hither ; I
 Who lead ye still, the Son. Then rushed on all,
 Like eagre swallowing up its streamy way,
 The whole mysterious truth. And we obeyed
 The word magnetic, the divine constraint.
 We entered. All was silent. One sole voice,
 Through the serene eternity of Heaven,
 Streamed upwards towards the Ineffable ;—nor harp,
 Nor hymn, nor breath beside ; nor thought, nor hope
 Of all Creation, but therein was bound.
 Father, He said, I pray for all the worlds,
 Whom Thou by these creating hands hast made,
 And linked with mine. Though fallen they be by sin,
 Through trusting in themselves and not in Thee,
 Let not imperfect nature, tried by Thy
 Perfection, their eternal ruin prove.
 Rather let me that glory I partake
 With Thee, to them dispense, that Heaven's pure light
 The darkness of the world may clarify,
 And Time, impregnated by Thy pure Spirit, bring forth
 Divine eternity ; death's bitter flood
 O'erpast, the pure regeneration come
 To all life, saved and sanctified to Thee.
 He ceased ; and issuant from the eternal throne,
 Came like a cloud of light, the bright response,
 The Godhead in expression, uttering love
 In laws more broad than light, which thus were known.
 Son ! for Thy sake I make the world mine own ;

For Thy sake hallowed, and in Thee redeemed,
 The universal life exempt from sin.
 That love which founded first the skiey stars
 Shall see no bound, and so be satisfied
 With sempiternal ingrowth. World on world,
 The illuminated missal of the skies,
 Thou turnest, leaf by leaf in turn shall close.
 Thy spirit only, which Thyself hast poured
 Into the worlds of life, shall live for aye,
 And in this presence, as the angel man,
 Acknowledging his Lord and Thee his love.
 In everlasting union all shall dwell
 With Thee, who giving up the joys of Heaven,
 And union with the One, for life discept,
 And spheres of shining sadness, madest Thyself,
 Sinless, a perfect sacrifice for sin.
 Therefore in Thee shall sin and death be sanctified.
 And flesh made spirit, human nature made
 Divinity, vice virtue, and earth Heaven.
 As in creating light, is night destroyed,
 So every bodily organ shall be changed
 Into a spirit-sense; and human power
 Into divinest faculty; each fault
 Into a pure possession and stronghold.
 Behold! the worlds Thou prayedst for, all are Thine;
 And that in chief I gave Thee, recreant once—
 To bliss restored and glorified in grace,
 Made happier and diviner far than first,
 The earnest of the harvest of the skies;—
 Behold it at Thy feet: the creature lures
 Of mystery and idolatry, become
 Pure faith and simple worship; the blazing sword,
 Whose firebirth of incendiary sins
 Wrapped at the last in pitchy flames, the orb
 Of stainless beauty, so created—now
 Transformed, the fateful mysteries of the cross
 Foreshadows and confirms. Lo there it stands;

And all Thou prayedst for, perfected ere prayed.
 God said ; responsive silence caught the words
 And hid them in her heart, as night the stars.
 Glowing and sparkling in the life-rayed sun
 Of the celestial firmament, glided up
 On pinions wide of playful lightnings poised,
 That sphere Elysian, consummate in bliss.
 And all the angels thereto bent their gaze
 As stars in nightly council watch the earth.
 Then looked and saw, three paces from the light,
 'Midst of that pure and renovated orb,
 Beside the gardened bank of a bright stream,
 A fair and lofty lady, clad in robes
 Of seagreen hue, engirdled with a zone
 All variously tinct, and round her brow,
 Encrowned with peaks of quivering fire, a veil
 Of heavenly azure. In one hand she held
 A tower, and in the other hand a tree.
 Sat at her feet a melancholy maid,
 Pale, perfect, and serene, between whom passed
 A mutual smile of sympathy and trust,
 As though their lot were linked ; yet knew they not
 How, nor the invisible presence of the Heavens.
 These, as they both intently eyed, at last
 One to the other spake. Sweet sister mine,
 Sleep thou, and let me wait his coming sole.
 Me He expects to watch, but would not thou.
 Thereon, that lovely lady laid her down
 Below a rock, whereby in woods embowered,
 And scented with all flowers, the river flowed,—
 Her last words, watch ; in sooth, He will not come
 Or not to me, who wrought him so great bale.
 And the sun set ; still watched the maiden meek,
 And at midnight she prayed. My Lord, my God !
 Thine is the spirit which commands and smiles ;
 The soul which serves and suffers ;—Thine the stars
 Tabled upon Thy bosom like the stones

Oracular of light, on the priest's breast ;
 Thine the minutest mote the moonbeams shew.
 Let but Thy words come true, and all are blest ;
 Be but Thine infinite intents fulfilled,—
 And what shall foil the covenanted oath
 Whereon the mounded earth is based ?—and lo !
 The whole at last redeemed and glorified.
 While thus she prayed, Heaven looking on, came down
 From His eternal heights the Angel-God,
 Upon whose breast the sun blazed ; and He stood
 Between them ; and the lady rose all pale ;
 But the mild maiden gladdened in her heart.
 The Angel took the maiden by the hand,
 And said, O thou who watchedst and hadst faith,
 What shall be thy reward ? If I, she said,
 Have done well, 'twas from reverence of Thee
 And love of Thy Divine love ; she, alas !
 Being infinitely worthier of Thy heart,
 Predestined from the first to Thy bright breast,
 Than I the thousand virtues to proclaim,
 Which own Thee Lord for ever. What though sin,
 Serpent-like, fanged her, and she fell, I knew
 That Thou by touch couldst heal her, and thy power
 To do good equalled by Thy will to do,
 Whose love is world-wide. Were there due to me
 Of guerdon aught, it should be still to serve
 And dwell with both for aye. Be, then, to her
 The vow performed first promised, and let my
 Betrothal, Lord ! in her espousals end.
 Then whelmed with gratitude, that royal dame,
 In all her bridal beauty cast her down,
 And clasped her handmaid's knees and wept aloud.
 But her the Angel raised and dried her tears,
 With His serenest smiles, and blessed them both.
 Come ye with me, He said, belovéd come !
 The handmaid's faith hath saved the mistress' throne.
 Be one my sister, and be one, my bride ;

Each than the other dearer, more divine.
 The world's wide doomring is the land I rule,
 My home is Heaven, and mine inheritance
 Both shall enjoy, predestinate of God.
 The Father to the Son gives all in Time,
 The Son restores all in Eternity
 Unto His Sire ; and I myself to Him.
 Then, one by either hand, He led them up ;
 This, with the holy presence and august,
 Most like the mother goddess, city crowned,
 Now tiar'd as with the towers of Paradise ;
 That, with the lucid crescent on her brow,
 To the high seats of old prepared for both.
 And all the angels and the spirits blest,
 They who had erred and they who taught to err—
 Along with those, who wise and pure withstood
 Temptation, yet now wisest, humblest were—
 Dwelt in that sphere, concentric with the Sun,
 Which ruled the skies supernal ; and they passed
 Upward and downward as best listed them.
 And Wisdom passed amidst them, like a thought
 Among a gladsome circle. And the face
 Of all the orbs was changed. Then too was seen
 The great unveiling of all mysteries,
 Creation glorified : in childlike calm,
 Lapped in the mantle of eternal rest.
 The jubilant song swelled circling through the courts
 Of everlasting joy, like a round wave,
 Till it suffused all life, and touched the stars
 On the unlimited eye-line of pure space.
 Smiled the Eternal Son, who can alone
 Behold the Invisible, and Heaven then saw,
 Reflected in the face of Him Divine,
 Born of the Light as eye glance of the Eye,
 The unseen likeness of the Ineffable One ;
 Each like the other as the sky and the sea,
 Imbosoming the imaged Infinite.

The Son Eternal smiled ; and from His throne
 Stretched out the hand of blessing o'er the world :
 And blest it was—for ever—blest it is.

ANGEL OF EARTH. The ways of Heaven are always
 circular ;

Its æras are all cycles ; its events,
 How strange soe'er, are ever orbital.
 Thus though the sin Promethean never cease,
 Nor the avenging eagle's beak, blood-wet,
 Yet is the arrow always on the wing
 Which seeks the heart of vengeance, seeks and slays.
 So from the first Divine forgiveness clasps,
 To her all quickening bosom, all which live ;
 Calls all by name, and halloweth them thereby.

SAINTS. Thus, by God's goodness, goodness comes to us,
 Out of His boundless plenitude ; and man,
 The shadowy semblance of the vast Divine,
 Like a dark sphere absorbed into the sun,
 As in presecular time emergent thence,
 His constellated seat assumes in Heaven,
 A deathless incarnation of the Light.
 And this despite of evil, sin, and pain,
 That every faculty be perfected,
 And all affection purified in man ;
 Love being love of good, hate, hate of ill ;
 Divinest hate, unanimous with love.
 Wherefore to those who realise God's will,
 And with the same their own assimilate,
 Water in water flowing, air in air,
 Passive as silence, active as the light,
 Receiving and dispensing, moments fall
 Like silver raindrops stippled in the ground,
 Whose resurrection is in grain of gold.
 But with the generation of the world,
 Not thus, who turned their backs upon the sun
 To toy with their own shadows, greatly glad
 Their growth to mark, unthinking that the more

These things extend themselves, the nearer they
To their extinction. So the night comes on ;
And lo ! the whole flock in the fold of death.

LUNIEL. Ends and beginnings mingle at the last ;
All ultimates are foreordained ; these days,
And those far times, when yon fair flowering orb,
Lily-like, beamed out of Time's shadowy tide ;
And spread its bright and continental leaves,
Fragrant with sunny incense, to the Heavens.
But His infallible eye, beneath whose beam
Essence becomes appearance, every day
Doomsday, an inner circlet of pure time,
Concentric with eternity, and part
Of the same all inclusive octave here,
The darkness from the light shall sejugate ;
The visible veil of the invisible.
And the times near when all shall be complete ;
The golden seed from ripe fulfilment fall ;
Eternal mind immortal utterance make ;
The many coloured arch a circle be ;
Earth's orb elect her crescent horns conjoin
With light perpetual, total, vital light ;
And, the mixed past made pure and holy, cause
The present Paradise, the future Heaven.

SAINTS. Man's being is an everlasting birth ;
We are ourselves the elements of Heaven.
And as the eye is sacred to the sun,
So be the soul to God. It is sweet to point
To prophesies fulfilled, when spells of good.
To us extinct all ill, all sin, all woe ;
The world seems wreathed from end to end with joy,
And garlanded with glory, as the hall
Of some great populous palace at a feast.
Our nature we relume, too, as the sun,
From the bright burning atmosphere he breathes,
The starry spirits of his frame renews,
And revels in his glory without end.

So we in that Divinity rejoice,
Wherein all things authentic do causate.

SCENE—*The Millennial Earth.*

SAINTS *and* ANGELS *worshipping*; FESTUS.

SAINTS. To Thee God, Maker, Ruler, Saviour, Judge!
The Infinite, the Universal One,
Whose righteousnesses are as numberless
As creature sins; who Giver art of life;
Who sawest from the first that all was good,
Which Thou didst make; and sealed it with Thy love,
Thy boundless benediction on the world;
To Thee be honour, glory, prayer, and praise,
And full orb'd worship from all worlds, all Heavens.
May every being bless Thee in return
As Thou dost bless it; every age and orb
Utter to Thee the praise Thou dost inspire.
Let man, Lord! praise Thee most, as all redeemed,
As many in the saints, as one in Thee.
Oh may perpetual pleasure, peace, and joy,
And spiritual light inform all souls,
And grace and mercy in bliss thousand-fold
Enwrap the world of life. May all who dwell
On open earth, or in the hid abyss,
Howe'er they sin or suffer, in the end,
Receive, as beings born at first of Thee,
The mercy that is mightier than all ill.
May all souls love each other in all worlds,
And all conditions of existence; even
As now these lower lives that dwell with man
In amity, rejoicing in the care
Of their superior, and in useful peace,
Upon the common earth, no more distained
With mutual slaughter—no more doomed to groan
At sights of woe, and cruelty, and crime.

Lo! all things now rejoicing in the life
 Thou art to each and givest, live to Thee ;
 And knowing others' nature and their own
 Live in serene delight, content with good,
 Yet earnest for the last and best degree.
 Their hands are full of kindness and their tongues
 Are full of blessings, and their hearts of good.
 All things are happy here. May kindness, truth,
 Wisdom, and knowledge, liberty, and power,
 Virtue, and holiness, o'erspread all orbs
 As this star now ; the world be bliss and love ;
 And Heaven alone be all things ; till at last
 The music from all souls redeemed shall rise,
 Like a perpetual fountain of pure sound
 Upspringing, sparkling in the silvery blue ;
 From round creation to Thy feet, O God!

ANGEL. The earth is all one Eden. Pity, sure,
 That it should ever end.

SAINT. I say not so ;
 Although I have a thousand plans in hand,
 Some interwoven with the farthest stars—
 Each one of which might ask a year of years
 To perfect.

ANGEL. True ; our maker knoweth best
 What thought or deed may best belong to time
 Or to eternity.

SAINT. All prophesy
 Hath said the earth shall cease, and that right soon.

FESTUS. 'Tis like enough. Beauty's akin to Death.

ANGEL. Behold, our sister Graces of the skies,
 Faith, Hope, and Love, descend ! Methinks of late
 Ye chiefly dwell on earth.

LOVE. Where lives and reigns
 The Son of God, there are we ever seen,
 Successive, as the seasons to the sun.

SAINTS. Well are ye known and welcome in all worlds.
 Wherever lofty thought or godly deed

Is lodged or compassed, there your blessings rest.

HOPE. How sweet, how sacred now, this earth of man's,
The prelude of a yet sublimer bliss!—

I marked it from the first, while yet it lay
Lightless and stirless; ere the forming fire

Was kindled in its bosom, or the land
Lift its volcanic breast-work up from sea.

The deluge and idolatries of men
I viewed, though shuddering, and with faltering eye,

E'en to the incarnation of Heaven's Lord,
And dawning of His faith; that faith which was

An infant and anon a giant; was
A star, and grew a Heaven fulfilling sun;

Which was an outcast, and became, ere long,
A dweller in all palaces; which hid

Its head in dens of deserts, and sat throned,
After, in richest temples high as hills:

Which was poured out in mortal blood, and rose
In an immortal spirit; as a slave

Was sold for gold and prostrated to Power;—
And now that lowly bondmaid is a Queen;

And lo! she is beloved in earth and Heaven;
And lieth in the bosom of her Lord,

The Bride of the All-worshipped, one with God.

LOVE. We, even, of divinest origin,
In infinite progression view all worlds;

And we are happy.

FAITH. The dead sleep as yet;
But their time cometh, and the bonds of death

Already slacken round the living soul;

The mortal sleep of ages, which began

When Time sank down into his slumberous west,

Thins even now o'er the reviving eyes,

Gathering their Heaven-lent light, no more to wane

In woe or age; never be quenched in tears,

Like a star in the sea. 'Tis as I ever knew;

My life is to receive and to believe

The Word and words of God.

LOVE. I who am Love,
 And Grace, and Charity, rejoice with you,
 Whither ye wend I with ye ; whether here,
 Or on the utmost rim of Light's broad reign,
 The least and last of stars which even seems
 To tremble at its insignificance,
 In presence of Infinity ; where yet
 No angel's wing hath waved, nor foot of fiend
 Left its hot imprint ;—still, in all do we
 Find fit delight and honour, as now here.
 Now earth and Heaven hold commune, day and night ;
 There's not a wind but bears upon its wing
 The messages of God ; and not a star
 But knows the bliss of earth.

FESTUS. The earth hath God
 Remade, and all its elements refined,
 Fit for sublimer Being. Flesh hath passed
 Its fiery baptism, and come forth clear
 As crystal gold : all that of vile or mean
 Pertained to it hath perished atomless.
 The kindred ties of family and race,
 Intensified into identity, now,
 Unite us with the Maid-born ; He, with God.
 Earth, like a diamond, basks in her own free light
 Unfed, unaided, unrequiring aught.
 All now is purity, and power, and peace.
 The first-born of creation, they who hail
 Archangels as their brethren, mountainlike
 Reign o'er the plains of men, converting all ;
 Reaping the fields of immortality,
 Each one his sheaf, for Him the Harvest-Lord ;
 To whom belongs earth's whole estate and life,
 And every world's.

ANGEL. And He shall garner all.
 The awful tribes which have in Hades dwelt,
 Past count of time, await their rising. God's

Great day, the Sabbath of the world's long week,
Is at high noon ; and Christ hath yet to come
To judge and save the living and the dead.

SAINT. The shadows of eternity o'ercast
Already Time's bright towers. The Heavens shall come
Down like a cloud upon a hill, and sweep
Their spirit over earth, and the whole face
And form of things shall be dissolved and changed.
Nothing shall be but essence, perfect, pure,
And void of every attribute but God's.
This even is too gross for that which is
To come. The holy have both earth and Heaven.

FESTUS. Nor pain, nor toil of mind or frame, nor doubt,
Nor discontent, nor enmity to God,
Disturb the steady joy the spirit feels ;
Nor element can torture, nor time tire ;
Nor sea nor mountain make or bar or fear ;
Sickness and woe and death are things gone by ;
Destroyed with the destruction of the world :—
Shadows of things which have been, never more
To waste the world's bright hours, nor grate the heart
Of mighty man ; now fit for thrones and wings ;
Ruler of worlds, main minister of Heaven,
Inheritor of all the prophecies
Of God, fore-uttered through the tongues of Time,
Ages of ages. Evil is no more.

ARCHANGEL. And does earth satisfy thee now ?

FESTUS.

As earth.

There is a brighter, loftier life for man
Even yet, the very union with God.

ARCHANGEL. God works by means. Between the two
extremes

Of earth and Heaven there lies a mediate state,—
A pause between the lightning lapse of life
And following thunders of eternity ;—
Between eternity and time a lapse,
To soul unconscious, though agelasting, where

Spirit is tempered to its final fate ;
 Within or between worlds, repose or bliss,
 Divested, man shall mix with Deity,
 And the Eternal and Immortal make
 One Being. As in earth's first paradise
 God's spirit walked with man, and commune made
 With him, so in the second, after death,
 Man's spirit walks with God in an elect
 Existence, and a vigil of the great,
 The holy day which is to break in Heaven.
 Thither the Lord of Life went, in the hour
 That hell by earth revenged itself on Heaven,
 With one soul penitent accompanied ;—
 Nor long remain'd He there, yet long enough
 To cheer earth's faithful, who received Him then
 In silent unknown blessedness of soul,
 With time-outwearing hope that yet in Him
 They should partake the Godhood of His love.
 And with Him rose then, in prophetic proof
 Of his Divinity, many a deathless ghost,
 Triumphant o'er that blind revenge which wrought
 Hell ! thy destruction—thy salvation, earth !

FESTUS. That such will be, the just well know ; and all
 Earth's great events and changes tend thereto ;
 Its fiery dissolution in the past,
 And supernatural recommencement now
 Under the universal creed of Christ.
 The chosen and the world-redeemed partake
 His personal and spiritual reign.

ARCHANGEL. And this shall last, till like the setting sun
 Deserting earth, he shall retire to Heaven,
 With all his captive victors in his train,
 Triumphant, and translated evermore
 In the hierarchal skies. Wilt see,
 While yet time is, earth's shadowy world within—
 The inward living death she bears about
 Her heart, hath ever borne—and, augur-like,

Explore the ominous bowels of the earth ?
 As one great life it is pervadeth all
 That bud, breathe, beam, so in the spirit world,
 Of God, His will through countless ministries
 Confided potently, works publicly ;
 And I, the liberating Angel, marked
 Unto this end, from supramundane time.
 To me are given the secrets of the centre,
 The keys of earth, to lock and to unlock,
 Coffer-like. I it was who seized and bound,
 At His behest who wills and it is done,
 Even on their thrones, the mighty thou wilt see.

FESTUS. Angel of Heaven ! I would view these things .

ARCHANGEL. Nor these alone, but other wonders yet.
 The valley where Death's dark wings brooded o'er,
 A God-offending night, unvisited
 By sun or star, where but the fatuous fire
 Of man's weak judgment wandered, till God's Son
 Laid o'er the black abyss a bridge of light,
 And married earth to the mainland of Heaven—
 This shalt thou see, Death's grave ; and over him,
 And over it, that monument of light,
 Enlightening earth. The gods and fiends of old,
 And all the fictions of the heart of man,
 Imagined of the future past for aye,
 Thou shalt inspect. Behold this mountain ! We
 Must pass through it ; for under lie the gates
 Of the invisible regions whereunto
 We tend, for a brief season.

FESTUS. On then !

ARCHANGEL. Bare
 Thy marble breast, O mountain, to its depths !
 An angel and a man divine demand
 A way through these foundations.

FESTUS. And the rocks
 Open like mists before thee.

ARCHANGEL. Follow me !

SCENE—*Hades*.

ARCHANGEL, FESTUS, DEATH, LUCIFER.

FESTUS. Almighty God! sustain me. This is Death;—
 And this—I knew not, angel! he was here—
 Is Lucifer—the fallen, like a bolt
 Of thunder forged in intramundane air,
 Self-buried in the centre. Lucifer!
 Wake from thy sealike sleep; in peace or wrath,
 Rouse from thine age-long trance; arise and see;
 The representatives of earth and Heaven
 Stand by thee. As for me, I blame no more
 The part thou tookest in my mortal life;
 'Tis gone—nor spurn thee for delusions dead.
 The blood that hath been spilled is sunk in earth,
 And run into the rivers, and dried up
 Into the air;—and there's an end of it.
 What good hath come of it alone I bear
 At heart. And we have both offended God.
 Let me, though not in nature to forget,
 Forgive, what every one hath sometime felt—
 The devil's burning gripe upon his heart.
 I see thee with compassion, half with hope.

LUCIFER. Mortal! I bow to thee, and would do to
 The least and lowest spirit God hath made;
 But still the curse that I am curséd with
 Outlasts the elements—outlives all time.

FESTUS. All curses cease with time; all ill, all woe.
 Blessings star forth for ever, but a curse
 Is like a cloud—it passes.

LUCIFER. 'Twas by him—
 Yon angel, only not almighty, there!
 As with a chain of mountains I was bound
 And hurled into this unformed nebulous life;

Whate'er it be, and wheresoever. Go!—

LUCIFER. Let us away, O Death!

DEATH.

Let us away!

My realm I leave behind me.

LUCIFER.

I mine seek.

FESTUS. Lo! they are gone. Earth's breast is purified.
The air feels lighter. I breath easier.

And who are these gigantic awful shades,
Which fill the midst—the present of the place?

ARCHANGEL. These are the mighty nothings man of old,
Made; the dread unrealities by whom
He swore, to whom he prayed, and at whose shrines
He sacrificed a thousand times a day:—
His brother falsehoods these, men like himself,
Which mere imagination changed to gods;
Some for their good deeds, others for their bad:
Bel, Odin, Bramh, and Zeus, the Lords of death
And fire, and judgment, waiting here their death
And fiery judgment—Time and Titan—war—
Beauty, and strength, and Light, and the long roll
Of creatural powers and passions Deified;—
Who gave their names to stars which still roam round
The skies, all worshipless, even from climes
Where their own altars once topped every hill.

JOVE. Before the Christian cross and moslem mosque
My marble fanes have fallen, and my shrines
Shrunk like a withered hand, ages ago.
But now all signs and sacred domes for gods
To dwell in are extinct. The world is all
One Temple of the Truth.

BRAMH.

The ages feigned,

That made Time groan to think how old he was,
And Deities in millions, are no more.
Ageless eternity, and God the sole,
The royalty of Heaven, is at hand.

BOODH. All things that are, shall nothing be at last,
Save what's resolvable in Deity.

FESTUS. And all the lesser shades, which move like
moons,

Half-darkened by the greater—half-illumed—
Are priests and prophets of the mightier ones?

ARCHANGEL. They are;—and further round than eye can
mark,

The myriads of adorers of each god,
Confused and prostrate, as their souls awake
To the demoniac madness of their creeds.
Behold! they kneel to those they hailed on earth
As makers—as omnipotent—eterne—
And cry for help, for comfort; none have they
To give to others or themselves. The false,
The base, the brutish Deities give way,
And all their sacred follies in their train,
Before the earthquake truth, engulfing all.
Woe to the false gods, woe! to prophet, priest,
And worshipper, all woe!

FESTUS. Hark! round the earth
Each soul hath found a tongue and uttereth woe.
Lo! from their thrones the man-made gods descend,
And rend their robes and trample on their crowns,
And hurl away their sceptres. Woe to all
The gods and idols of the heart of man!
Their sun is set for ever in the night
Which was ere Light was. Surely it is more
To be true man or woman than false god
And falser prophet. God alone, the true,
The God of Heaven, shall be witnessed to
And worshipped.

ARCHANGEL. Witnessed, worshipped, too,
By all: the faithful and the faithless—saint
And sinner. See, like clouds, the gods disperse,
Into their preoriginal nothingness.
False gods there never have been, nor false suns;
Save the abnormal shadows which betimes
Leap into life around him, and to man's

Weak sense owe all existence. So of these,
 Parheliacal gods which mocked men's minds,
 And, lighting them to darkness, left them there.
 False gods there never have been ; but of God
 False names, false notions numberless. Behold
 In these the transient types of one eterne ;
 Each several aspect Deified, of Truth ;
 The obeliskal One, the Primal Three ;
 The powers Divine and cardinal of Heaven.
 Yet prayer, preferred with a pure heart, to Baal,
 As neither heard nor answered could it be
 By non existent Dæmon, might, by Him,
 Who sits enthroned in unthought purity,
 The Lord and Lover of the world, be ta'en,
 And righteously fulfilled ; so angels deem.
 But in the depths of man's own nature, see,
 As in a lake, reflected, hills, skies, clouds,
 His Heaven, his hell, and all his creature gods,
 Inverted, and distorted, and obscured :
 All which must vanish ere the truth Divine
 In glory supervene. Idolatry
 Worshipped God meanly, as though knowable
 Through generative energies and powers ;
 Not as man's great Regenerative Lord.
 For life was of the Angels, as was law ;
 But love in place of law, in lieu of life
 The immortality of Heaven, Christ gave.
 Hence what, in false faiths, energies were deemed,
 Are never more than symbols in the true.
 God's omnipresence seems not sensuous ;
 Unless He be in us we are not in Him.
 Signify all things ; nothing represents.
 And therefore were the chosen race alone,
 To whom the godly secret was confined,
 Lapsing from faith, rebuked and charged with sin.
 The general world, unconscious pietists
 Of falsest creeds and errors, God allowed

To live on, unreprieved, till came the time
 When all the mysteries of heaven and earth
 Were put in evolution ; are but now
 Fulfilling.

FESTUS. Lo ! the nations of the dead,
 Which do outnumber all earth's races, rise ;
 And high in sunless myriads over head
 Sweep past us in a cloud, as it were the skirts
 Of the Eternal passing.

A VOICE. Souls, arise
 To deathless life !

ARCHANGEL. It is God speaks. Let us hence.
 The general judgment is in hand,—God's hand.
 The souls of those whom God loves circle us.
 For thee, thy lot thou knowest. As a seed
 Buried in earth doth multiply itself
 Full fifty fold, so will thy nature when
 Changed, it lifts head in the air divine of Heaven.

FESTUS. Out of the depths of earth and the world's womb
 Thine unborn angels seek thee, God, all Love !
 Now is Thine hour for which all hours were made,
 All life created, all things else ordained ;
 Be it the hour of mercy, Lord ! to all,
 For Thy Son's sake, who, for the sake of man,
 Came down from Heaven into the pit of earth,
 And lived as one of us and died ;—He died
 The death of all at once of every age ;
 The world's accumulated weight of woe,
 From its first life unto its last, which none
 But the Omnipotent could bear—He bore ;
 And all for us. God became man that man
 Might become God. Oh, favour infinite !
 Now reap the righteous, righteous but in Him
 Any, their guerdon. Evil to repay
 With good was Christ's command, and earth with Heaven
 Is thus the great example of His word.
 Enough for sinners this, for all which live.

Do Thou, Lord! be with us. In Thee we live;
 Our treasure, trust, and triumph is in Thee.
 Behold the day of our salvation come
 Unto the countless all Thou hast redeemed!
 The ages sweep around me with their wings
 Like angered eagles cheated of their prey.
 Reach forth your arms, ye angels! wreath anew
 Your starry crowns. Earth was betrothed to Heaven
 Upon her natal day. I hear them come;
 I hear the armed torrent of their wings
 Hitherward streaming. Lo! the glowing Heavens
 Are rushing to receive us. Oh, rejoice
 All ye that are immortal; and whate'er
 Hath been predestined to eternal end;
 The day, determined ere all time was, dawns.

SCENE—*Earth.*

ANGELS *and* SAINTS—AN ANGEL *descending*; FESTUS.

SAINT. Whence art thou?

ANGEL. I? from Heaven, and thither tend;—
 One moment here to bid ye to prepare.
 Our Lord the Eternal Son comes hither, girt
 With His victorious hosts, to judge the world.

SAINT. What victory hath our Almighty gained?

ANGEL. One final, over death and hell. Shout earth!
 Thy freedom is accomplished, and thy foes
 Brought down to endless ruin.

SAINT. Angel, speak!
 We burn to learn the tidings of this war,
 Whereof thou tell'st, and doubtless wast a part.

ANGEL. Hot from the fight I come. This lightning blade
 Hath holpen well to thin the infernal rout,
 Which back hath fled to hell, howling like winds.
 But let me, at your will, ye peaceful saints,

Relate what happened to us, from first to last.
 The time was come in Heaven when God the Son,
 Bowing His head before the Omnipotent,
 Who doubled every blessing infinite
 Wherewith He had enriched His Only One
 From first, rose from His glorious throne, and stepped
 Into His sun-bright car, calling aloud
 His angels to attend Him while He went
 To judge the earth, as foreordained of old ;
 That Heaven and earth might view the majesty
 And mercy of the God of all. We came,
 Selectest spirits, countless ; crowded bright
 As the great stream of stars which flows through Heaven,
 Fast by the foot of God, each wave a world ;
 Eager to eye this act of glory long
 Talked of in Heaven, and now to be achieved.
 Forth from the starry towers, and world-wide walls,
 Of Heaven, we set in high and silent joy,
 And journeyed half our way through Heaven, when lo !
 A sight which checked the foremost flaming ranks,
 That halted frontwise, working doubt at first,
 But triumph after. Shielded and drawn up close,
 Behind a broken and decaying world,
 From which the light had vanished like the light
 Out of a death-shrunk eye, sat Lucifer—
 Midst in the powers of darkness, and the hosts
 Of hell, enthroned sublime ; and all were still
 As ambushed silence round the foe of God.
 But oh ! how changed from him we knew in Heaven,
 Whose brightness nothing made might match nor mar :
 Who rose, and it was morn ; who stretched his wing,
 And stepped from star to star ; so changed he shewed
 Most like a shadowy meteor, thorough which
 The stars dim glint—woe-wasted, pined with pain.
 And by his side there sat or shrank a shape
 We angels knew not, but the Son of God
 Knew him, and called him Death ; whom when he saw,

Arousing, after, out of sleep intense,
 That unreamed tyrant drew his mortal dart,
 And drave it through himself,—a shade, shade-quelled.
 Then to that chief of mischief and his fiends,
 Who, thick as burning stones that from the throat
 Of some volcano foul the benighted sky,
 Shot up triumphant into air, as they
 Beheld our ranks move on, thus spake our Lord,—
 Not wrathfully, but sternly pitying :
 Hell's wretched remnant ! wherefore crouch ye here ?
 Is it to sue destruction, or to bar
 My passage ? If it be, in both ye err.
 And will ye trust yourselves again to war
 With me Almighty ? Have I not overcome
 Ye separately both ? Speak, brutal Death !
 Fit follower and fellow to all woes,—
 Wherefore this instantaneous haste from hell,
 And both from Hadeän bondage, thus again
 So soon to compass mightiest wickedness,
 And tempt extremest wrath ? Speak head of hell !
 To Him thus Lucifer : Almighty Son !
 Thy power I defy not ; but in peace
 I war with fate. My life is to destroy.
 Evil hath more activity, if good
 More strength : and one must wear the other out.
 The more august the sin, so much the more
 Is my necessity. Yon earth hath been
 The battle plain of Heaven and hell. From Thee,
 Who knowest all things, it were vain to hide
 My purpose, which for a thousand years, the years
 Of bondage, hath grown in me and lived on,
 Toad-like within a rock—vital where all
 Beside was death—to seize the nascent souls
 Of men as they rerose from death to life,
 And sweep them off in midst of all these hosts
 Assembled for that cause here as Thou seest,
 To hell ;—the universal race of man.

But if ordained that not on them, but Thee
 And Thine, old hate shall satisfy itself,
 Approach no nearer : for we live by death ;—
 Or turn the tide of fate, Thou sole who canst !
 Ceasing thereat, his host upraised a shout
 Which shook the stars, and made them ring again.
 Our Lord to him then spake thus, mild as Spring
 Addressing earth, when smiling she lets fall
 All flowerets from her lips,—'Tis well there is a God.
 Lo ! to what base extremes infernal pride
 Can push a princely spirit once in Heaven.
 Thee we will not destroy now, for thine hour
 Hath yet to come—when least thou thinkest it.
 God's wrath thou hast endured in punishment,
 Not yet His power. Away ! I warn ye hence,
 Ere wrath ride forth again. To Him the Fiend
 Answered : God rules not us the unordered damned,
 Nor recks of hell. For ages past belief,
 Unless by those who like ourselves denied
 Thine own eternity—by creature mind,
 However lofty, hardly compassed—we
 Have borne our pain without remorse, or sign
 Of pity from our Maker. Shall we now
 Believe, whilst thus confronting Him again,
 He means us better ? Never worse than now.
 Therefore I say to ye, on ! mightiest fiends,
 On ! Let us reap companions for our woes,
 Or earn annihilation ! At the word
 His fiery phalanx rushed to bar the way
 Of Him whose ways are over all His works.
 A million spears blazed forth their answer bright,
 As of as many tongues. Serene our ranks
 Stood as the stars o'er thunder. God the Son
 Sate in His orbéd car, and breathed on them ;
 And they were rolled up like the desert sands
 Before the burning wind,—throne wrecked on throne,
 All ruined and foredone. Pursue ! He cried,

Nor let them near the earth I go to judge.
 And we pursued, as many as He chose,
 And chased from sphere to sphere that wretched wreck
 Of falsest fiends :—and I, it seems, am first
 Of all my victor brethren to declare
 The triumph past and coming, and to cheer
 Your hearts with tidings of our Lord, to whom
 Be glory for His universal deeds,
 And to Him, only God!

SAINT. Behold where comes
 Another warrior-angel from on high ;
 Like angels, always singly or in hosts.

ANGEL. It is the most dread Azrael, unto whom
 The sword of Death is given as a boon.

SAINT. What say'st thou, Heavenly one ?

AZRAEL. To the extreme bound
 Of light's domain we chased the flying foe,
 Who on the confines of the lower air
 Once rallied at their leader's stern command,
 Whom more they fear, or seem to fear, than God.
 They halted, formed, and faced us. I and mine
 As on we came in order, full career,
 Exalted by success, hoped ardently
 One more convincing contest ; but in spite
 Of future woe or the tempestuous threats
 Of the great Fiend who marshalled them, each eyed
 His neighbour pale ; their trembling shock all air ;
 And each one lift his arm, but no one struck.
 Awhile in dead throe-like suspense they stood,
 Or like the irresolution of the sea
 At turn of tide—then wheeled and fled amain,
 And in one mass immense broke down from Heaven,
 Cliff-like ;—there let them lie ! such fate have fiends.
 And we returned, hoping to meet, as charge
 To all was given, the Lord our glory here.

ARCHANGEL. Let all the dead rejoice ! their Saviour
 comes.

SCENE—*The Judgment of Earth.*

THE SON OF GOD, THE ARCHANGEL, SAINTS, *and* ANGELS.

ARCHANGEL. Let all the dead rejoice! their Saviour comes.

With clouds of angels circled like a sun,
 Belted with light, and brighter than all light.
 Lo! He descends and seats Him on His throne,
 Alighting like a new-made sun in Heaven.
 The world awaits Thee, Lord! Rise, souls of men,
 Buried beneath all ages from the first;
 Ye numbered and unnumbered, loathed and loved,
 Awake to judgment! Rise! the grave no more
 Hath power upon ye than the ravening sea
 Upon the stars of Heaven. Ye elements!
 Give back your stolen dead. He claimeth them
 Whose they both were and are, and aye shall be.

SON OF GOD.

I come to repay sin with holiness,
 And death with immortality; man's soul
 With God's Spirit; all evil with all good.
 All men have sinned: and as for all I died,
 All men are saved. Oh! not a single soul
 Less than the countless all can satisfy
 The infinite triumph which to me belongs,
 Who infinitely suffered. Ye elect!
 And all ye angels, with God's love informed,
 Who reign with me o'er earth and Heaven, assume
 Your seats of judgment. Judge ye all in love,
 The love which God the Father hath to you—
 For His Son's sake, and all shall be forgiven.

SAINTS. Lord! let us render back to Thee the love
 Which is Thine own: none else is worthy Thee.
 Who shall commemorate all Thy chosen names,

Thou who art Sire at once and Son of man ?
 Servant, friend, brother, bridegroom, husband, Lord,
 Priest, advocate, physician, teacher, guide,
 King, conqueror, and master, world-adored !
 Owner of all things here and almoner !
 Thou the Divine Protagonist of time,
 The everlasting sacrifice ; the world's
 Eternal victim, Thou, and victor God !
 On high the light of all perfections, here
 The blessed shadow ! Sun of righteousness,
 And star of wisdom lonely in the Heavens !
 The cloud of glory in life's wilderness,
 The splendour in the temple ; Temple, rock,
 City of refuge ! Branch and root, and vine !
 Tree, too, of Life, of knowledge ! Almond tree
 First flowering from the wintry world of death !—
 Thou too the olive, whence distils the oil
 Of inspiration for the elect anoint !—
 Robe, sceptre, crown, and shield ! Eye, arm and head !
 Earth's corner stone and architect of Heaven !
 Fire, fountain, river ! Sacrifice for sin,
 And sin itself ! The serpent of the saved,
 The angel of redemption, and our God !—
 Curse transessentiate into blessing ! Man,
 Angel and deity ! The all in all,
 The one sole Being of the universe !
 The Lord of armies, and the Prince of peace,
 Whose humblest follower is a prince with God !—
 Our fellow-heir and our inheritance,
 Witness and Judge, and ransom and reward,
 Originator, mediator, Fine,
 For Thou art all of these, and Thou alone !

SON OF GOD.

Behold this day I dwell with ye on earth,
 E'en to the last ; the next shall be in Heaven,
 Where ye shall meet the Father, and remain
 In the eternal presence, He through me

Blessing all spirits overflowingly.

SAINTS. Dear Lord, our God and Saviour! for Thy gifts
The world were poor in thanks, though every soul
Were to do nought but breathe them; every blade
Of grass and every atomie of earth
To utter it like dew. Thy ways are plain
Only in Thine own light. And this great day
Unveils all nature's laws and miracles—
All to Thee all as one. Thy death was life;
Thy judgment is all mercy, Lord of Love!
The world's incomprehensible no more
To man, but all is bright as new-born star.

SON OF GOD.

The Book of Life is opened. Heaven begins.

SCENE—*The Heaven of Heavens.*

THE RECORDING ANGEL, LUCIFER, FESTUS, ANGELS.

THE RECORDING ANGEL. All men are judged save one.

SON OF GOD.

He too is saved.

Immortal! I have saved thy soul to Heaven.
Come hither. All hearts bare themselves to me,
As clouds unbind their bosom to the sun.
And thine was wealthy in the gifts of good.
And, if its guilt and glory lay in love,
Let light outweigh the darkness! Thou art saved.

SAINTS. Rejoice! rejoice!

FESTUS. Could I, Lord! pour my soul out,
In thanks, even as a river rolling ever,
It would be too scant for what I owe to Thee.

SON OF GOD.

Nay; immortality is long enough,
As life, or as a moment is, to shew
Thy love of good, thy thanks to me and God.

One heart-throb sometimes earneth Heaven—one tear.

FESTUS. My Maker! let me thank Thee, I have lived,
 And live a deathless witness of Thy grace.
 And Thee, the Holy One, who hast chosen me,
 From old eternity, while yet I lay
 Hid, like a thought in God, unuttered—Thou,
 Who makest finite full with the Infinite,
 As is a womb with an immortal spirit,
 Oh! let me thank Thee that I witness to Thee.
 And Thou mid-God! my Saviour, and my Judge!
 Sun of the soul, whose day is now all noon—
 Who makest of the universe one Heaven—
 I praise Thee. Heaven doth praise Thee. God doth praise
 Thee.

The Holy Ghost doth praise Thee. Praise Thyself!

LUCIFER. Is he not mine?

God.

Evil! away for aye!

In the beginning, ere I bade things be—
 Or ever I begat the worlds on space,
 I knew of him, and saved him in my Son,
 Who now hath judged; for fraught with God-hood, He
 Yet feels the frailties of the things He has made;
 And therefore can, like-feelingly, judge them.
 For I abide not sin; and in my Son
 There is no sin—not that He takes away.
 It is destroyed for ever and made nothing.

SON OF GOD.

Spirit, depart! this mortal loved me.
 With all his doubts, he never doubted God:
 But from doubt gathered truth, like snow from clouds,
 The most, and whitest, from the darkest. Go!

LUCIFER. I leave thee, Festus. Here thou wilt be
 happy.

To be in Heaven is to love for ever
 God—and thou must love here. Here thou wilt find
 All that thou canst and oughtst to love: for souls,

Re-made of God, and moulded over again
 Into His sun-like emblems, multiply
 His might and love: the saved are suns, not earths;
 And with original glory shine of God;
 While I shall keep on deepening in my darkness,
 With not one gleam across the gloom of being.

FESTUS. Let us part, spirit! It may be, in the coming,
 That as we sometime were all worth God's making,
 We may be worth forgiving; taking back
 Into His bosom, pure again—and then,
 All shall be one with Him, who is one in all.

LUCIFER. It may be, then, that I shall die. Farewell.
 Forgive me that I tempted thee!

FESTUS.

I am glad.

GOD.

Stay, spirit! all created things unmade,
 It suits not the eternal laws of good
 That Evil be immortal. In all space
 Is joy and glory, and the gladdened stars,
 Exultant in the sacrifice of sin,
 And of all human matter in themselves,
 Leap forth as though to welcome earth to Heaven—
 Leap forth and die. All nature disappears.
 Shadows are passed away. Through all is light.
 Man is as high above temptation now,—
 And where by grace he always shall remain,
 As ever sun o'er sea; and sin is burned
 In hell to ashes with the dust of death.
 The worlds themselves are but as dreams within
 Their souls who lived in them, and thou art null,
 And thy vocation useless, gone with them.
 Therefore shall Heaven rejoice in thee again,
 And the lost tribes of angels, who with thee
 Wedded themselves to woe, and all who dwell
 Around the dizzy centres of all worlds,
 Again be blessed with the blessedest.
 Lo! ye are all restored, rebought, rebrought

To Heaven by Him who cast ye forth, your God.
 Receive ye tenfold of all gifts and powers.
 And thou who cam'st to Heaven to claim one soul,
 Remain possessed by all. The sons of bliss
 Shall welcome thee again, and all thy hosts,
 Whereof thou first in glory as in woe—
 In brightness as in darkness erst—shalt shine.
 Take, Lucifer, thy place. This day art thou
 Redeemed to archangelic state. Bright child
 Of morning, once again thou shinest fair
 O'er all the starry armaments of light.

LUCIFER. The highest and the humblest I of all
 The beings Thou hast made, Eternal Lord!

ANGEL. Behold, they come, the legions of the lost,
 Transformed already by the bare behest
 Of God our maker to the purest form
 Of seraph brightness.

THE RESTORED ANGELS. His be all the praise!
 And ours submissive thanks. When evil had done
 Its worst, then God most blessed us and forgave.
 Oh, He hath triumphed over all the world,
 In mercy, over death, and earth, and hell!

SON OF GOD.

All God hath made are saved. Heaven is complete.

GUARDIAN ANGEL. Hither with me!

FESTUS. But where are those I love?
 The dear religions of my heart, all true,
 All perfect, all consoling while they ruled?

GUARDIAN ANGEL. You happy troop!

FESTUS. Ah blest ones, come to me.
 Loves of my heart on earth, and soul, in Heaven,
 Are ye all here too with me?

ANGELS. All!

FESTUS. It is Heaven.

Before God's all felicitating love,
 All earth love pales, how pure soe'er or dear;
 And worship, sense of immanent Deity,

Labouring within the spirit to burst forth
 Into supreme fulfilment of all truth,
 Like to a luminous effluence from the heart,
 Circles the soul as with a glory cloud.

ANGELS. All praise, all love, all worship, Lord ! be Thine.

FESTUS. Who can survey the world's vast ways and woes,
 That he hath passed through, times extinct, to this,—
 This dome of worship, past all orbs like earth,
 The sun-born seed and increment of light,
 Founded in strata, deep and dim of fire ;
 Beyond those skies, the camp of light, where gleams
 The bannered sun, the oriflamme of God ;
 Past many a sun-star beaming out his life,
 As with a glorious gratitude of light,
 In empyrean loneliness, to God ;
 Beyond all opposites, beyond all results,
 All rest, all mutability, all act,
 And mighty sequences of light and night ;
 Far out beyond all systems, where mere form
 Deformity becomes, the abode Divine ;
 Beyond the infinite bound which circumscribes
 Created reason, into this primal state,
 The bright and absolute centre of pure cause,
 Nor feel that worship unitive with Him,
 The great destroyer of all evil, God,
 The highest bliss of Being, Being knows ?
 Wherefore let us Him ceaselessly adore ;
 Praise Him ye chosen of the earth and skies ;
 Ye visible raylets of the invisible Light,
 Blend with the universal Heavens your lays ;
 Immortal leaflets of Love's holy flower,
 Breathe forth the perfume of eternal praise.

ANGEL. Come let us join our souls into the song
 Of glory, which the saved all sing, to God.

THE SAVED. Father of goodness,
 Son of love,
 Spirit of comfort,

Be with us !
 God who hast made us,
 God who has saved us,
 God who hast judged us,
 Thee we praise.
 Heaven our Spirits,
 Hallow our hearts ;
 Let us have God-light
 Endlessly.
 Ours is the wide world,
 Heaven on Heaven ;
 What have we done, Lord,
 Worthy this ?
 Oh ! we have loved Thee ;
 That alone
 Maketh our glory,
 Duty, meed.
 Oh ! we have loved Thee !
 Love we will
 Ever, and every
 Soul of us.
 God of the savéd,
 God of the tried,
 God of the lost ones,
 Be with all !
 Let us be near Thee
 Ever and aye ;
 Oh ! let us love Thee
 Infinite !

FESTUS. So, soul and song, begin and end in Heaven,
 Your birth-place and your everlasting home.

ANGELS. In Heaven extolled are now all souls of earth,
 And each particular essence at Thy word
 O God ! rejoins the pure and pious skies.
 All government, rule, empire is at last
 United here, the kingdom sole of Heaven,
 Meant from the first for universal rule.

In boundless bliss all creatural power is now
 Essentially and ever more absorbed.
 Henceforth the holy offspring of the word
 Of all sustaining grace, shall teach the souls,
 Victors through God, eternal virtue's truth,
 Adding celestial might to every thought
 Hallowed by Thee, by Thee all thought inspired.
 The Gods are one God and all power is His.
 High over all and deep in all dost Thou
 Ever rule one thing by another ; still
 On all Thy throne is based, and round all Thou
 Stretchest the line unlimited of Heaven.
 Divine and holy is Thine every work,
 Eternal only as ordained by Thee,
 Unknown but to Thyself, who dost remain
 Steadfast in love though Heaven and earth rebel.
 All sway is Thine, Lord ! Heaven and earth are one
 In universal glory : world by world
 Night renders up to Thee the fruit of light,
 Sown in her bosom, reaped and ripened here ;
 Unutterably happy to approach
 Perfection in the Infinite, how far,
 How high soever still to Thee allied.
 All blessing God ; who with Thy boundless love
 Dost Deify the Heavens and make the soul
 Of man expand with immortality,
 Now we with him in fourfold joy rejoice,
 And all the Heavenly hierarchies of light,
 Ineffable, adore Thy grace supreme.
 All sanctifying Lord of love and might,
 Let whole creation testify to Thee
 As vice to virtue, darkness to the light,
 Hell thus to Heaven and man to Deity !—
 Glory to Thee our God, who all to prove,
 Of earth the law, of Heaven the grace above,
 Dost make the great I am, the all I love.

THE HOLY GHOST.

Time there hath been when only God was all :
 And it shall be again. The hour is named,
 When seraph, cherub, angel, saint, man, fiend,
 Made pure, and unbelievably uplift
 Above their present state—drawn up to God,
 Like dew into the air—shall be all Heaven ;
 And all souls shall be in God, and shall be God,
 And nothing but God, be.

SON OF GOD.

Let all be God's.

GOD.

World without end, and I am God alone ;
 The Aye, the Infinite, the Whole, the One.
 I only was—nor matter else, nor mind,
 The self-contained Perfection unconfined.
 I only am—in might and mercy one ;
 I live in all things and am closed in none.
 I only shall be—when the worlds have done
 My boundless Being will be but begun.

FINIS.

L'ENVOI.

READ this, world! He who writes is dead to thee,
But still lives in these leaves. He spake inspired:
Night and day, thought came unhelped, undesired,
Like blood to his heart. The course of study he
Went through was of the soul-rack. The degree
He took was high: it was wise wretchedness.
He suffered perfectly, and gained no less
A prize than, in his own torn heart, to see
A few bright seeds: he sowed them—hoped them truth.
The autumn of that seed is in these pages.
God was with him; and bade old Time, to the youth,
Unclench his heart, and teach the book of ages.
Peace to thee, world!—farewell! May God the Power,
And God the Love—and God the Grace, be ours!

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