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LETTERS VISIONS AND POEMS

ISRAFEL

LETTERS VISIONS

AND

POEMS

BY

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

" And the Angel Israfil whose heartstrings are a lute and who
has the sweetest voice of God's creatures."

" Me ludit amabilis
Insania."

LONDON

E. W. ALLEN AVE MARIA LANE

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LETTERS.

It seems necessary to state that the verses introduced into the text of these letters are not quotations unless they are marked s such by inverted commas.



ISRAEL.

LETTER I.

WHEN a mission is given to a man, or a revelation, or a new hope, he is in a certain sense lifted above humanity, and he is to be judged henceforth by a higher standard than that which we refer to when we decide upon the actions of ordinary men. He is still, indeed, a frail and fallen nature, lapsed from that "pure land lying in the pure sky," which the sublime Plato dreamed of, but he can no longer plead the same excuse for life, because the seed of a new nature has been sown within him, a light has been kindled in his soul, a call has come to him, which he must follow—if he will not, woe be unto him ! He must suffer, he must achieve, he must reign. He is the *vas insigne electionis* ; he is *electus ex millibus*. If he prove himself unworthy of this vocation, he will descend from the illuminated mansion of his own

spiritual being into the perdition of a degenerate existence ;
to him may be applied the lines—

Lucifer, thy star
Is dimm'd for ever ! Desolate and grey
Its lone lands stretch, vast temples open stand
In solitude and silence.

Be sure that such a nature will be scourged till it
attain an elevation far above that which was first required
of it !

On an altitude supreme
Thy throne awaits thee ; it is thine, and thou
Must reign there, whether by thine own will's free
And fair co-operation, or, if not,
By Destiny that drives thee to the steps.
Beware lest on it to eternity
With tortured soul, to thine own woe, thou reignest !

We have looked upon the face of Israfel, and it has
become to us a mission, a revelation, a high and holy
hope. I stand before thee boldly, and declare that having
seen Israfel, we are set utterly apart from all the world, and
the life that we led in the past is for ever more impossible
to us. An old story tells us that whoever reaches the
foot of the Rainbow will find a golden chalice, and I do
not doubt that this chalice contains the Wine of Life.
Now, there is a hidden meaning in this fable which we
found in the face of Israfel. That which is signified by
the beautiful and heavenly Iris is wonderfully realised in

him. We have found in his modesty and beauty the ideal grace, the ideal virtue, the perfect pure maidenhood, which alone can achieve the Holy Graal. So also do we find in him the magic chalice, or that spiritual treasure which is typified thereby ; we drink in spirit of that cup which is the source of inspiration, of lucid vision, and of divine plans and purposes. As the chalice is to be found only at the foot of the Rainbow, that which the chalice signifies is to be found at the feet of Israfel, which is also an emblematic phrase, meaning his study, his imitation, and his unselfish love.

It is plain that for us Israfel has passed into a Symbol, by which these things have alone become true concerning him ; but he is human also, as we well know. As a symbol he is divine, as a symbol he shines in the firmament of eternity ; the symbolic Israfel has soared over the horizon of our two lives, and we aspire towards him ; but the human Israfel is not so far above us as to be beyond our help. Let us rejoice, indeed, together with pure joy and gladness ; a high vocation has unfolded its vistas before me, and by a special privilege thou art included in it. . . . It is permitted us to live for Israfel ; it is not only permitted us, but we are called to do so. We have seen his face, and the memory of its beauty dwells for ever in our minds—it constrains us towards the perfect life ; like a magnet, it draws us to the summits of heroism and sacrifice. It has been revealed to me in vision that by a voluntary act we may transfer the

merits of a noble and virtuous existence to the most chaste and starbright soul of Israfel, who will shine in the eternal world with the imputed merit of both our lives. I call on thee to make this sacrifice, to join with me in the renunciation of ourselves for the good of others in this world, and for the exaltation and the joy of Israfel in the world to come. Every noble and pure thought conceived and cherished in our hearts will be a thread of light in the samite robe, spun from moonbeams, against the day of the assumption of Israfel by the blessed angels of the heavenly hierarchies. Every noble and heroic deed will be a new star or gem in that bright diadem forged in the treasure-house of eternity against the day of the coronation of this same pure spirit. Consider, therefore, what is the most that we can do for his sake. And behold, before both of us there is an immense prospect unfolding ! There is a high hope, a firm faith, a resolution which nothing can conquer, kindled in our hearts by the love of Israfel !

Let our past life be as a shadow cast behind us by the moon of Israfel. Let the future be sown with achievements as the midnight sky with stars. Let us do all things for him without recompense, and then there will come to us, with no seeking, an unfailing and great reward. Whatever we perform, whatever we renounce, whatever we gain for Israfel, will strengthen our own souls, will enlarge, and light them. A new prospect will open before us in all and each ; the more we achieve for

him, the more will that prospect widen, and the greater will be the capacity for achievement. Carissime if we could die for Israfel, we should attain Eternity !

I see the day wane, the twilight coming, the stars at hand. I see Israfel raised into the company of the angels ; he stands with face transfigured in a virgin's robe ; he is bound about the waist with white lilies. There is a crown of gold, like fire, upon his head. I see him standing, with clasped hands, within the mystic circle which is the Rose of Dante. The Light from the centre of the Rose, which is the *Lumière incréée*, the *Splendor Paternæ Luminis*, the burning and shining veil surrounding on all sides the Unapproachable Shrine, the *Holy of Holies*, that Light falls on him in a continual stream, and it is the medium through which his beatified spirit beholds the Eternal. . . . This is the future of Israfel.

Wrapp'd in a magic ecstasy,
I see thee, and thy state is high ;
Join'd art thou to eternity.

Only the heart that knows decay
Can e'er external joys repay,
A dream hath wrapp'd thine own away.

Fix'd art thou, chance and change are o'er ;
Thoughts, like steep paths that rise before,
Exalt thee ever more and more.

For ever and for ever thou,
Thought-monarch, art uplifted now,
Thy dreams make glory round thy brow ;

Thine ample mind's creative power
Is fed and nourish'd hour by hour
From stores within, thy spirit's dower.

And to the dreams of thine intent,
Achieving mind true life is lent
From thy will's fount of strength unspent.

A spirit people born of thee,
Instinct with power and life, shall be,
The sons of immortality.

I stood at night within the temple of my own soul. It was filled with emblematic figures variously grouped. On an altar in the centre there was placed, as it might be, a paten of pure gold, bearing a talismanic inscription, and on this paten lay a Ruby, which lighted all the place. By this stone was signified the Love of Israfel. And the angels came down out of Heaven, and tried to extinguish the light of the Ruby, but they could not do so, for, ever as they strove, it burned brighter, and all things in the temple were transfigured. They sought also to remove it, that they might bear it thence, but the spell of the consecrated talisman overcame the great spirits, and they

could not take it away. Then said the angels, desisting, and with great reverence:—"This is an immortal and true love, which no power shall destroy." And they returned into Heaven, but the fragrance which they left behind them dwelt ever round the Ruby, which is the Love of Israfel.



LETTER II.

In a vision I have seen Israfel

“standing motionless upon the golden

Threshold of the wide open gate of dreams,

Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista.”

The threshold of the future is the Gate of Dreams, but the vision has a double significance ; it is the *altitudo divitiarum sapientiæ et scientiæ Dei*, which in this life is his study, and will be the beatitude in the future of his sanctified soul.

I saw thy forehead touch'd with starry light,

Pax tecum. sponsa Christi! Christ and God,

Enlarge thee, Bright One, and abide in thee ;

Thy chastity surrounds thee as a wall,

Where angels watch to keep thy soul from fall.

In the Pastor of Hermas we learn that Chastity is the mother of Intelligence, by which I understand that it is a creative principle, fruitful in the spiritual order, namely, in the generations of the undying mind. Chastity is typified in the cedar, as you may read any day in *Cœleste Palmetum*, where the Virgin who conceives miraculously,

and becomes the mother of the Logos, is allegorically invoked as *Cedrus Castitatis*. As the cedar in the lands of the Morning, as the palm in the East, so stands he who has been revealed to us, strong, stately, full of grace and beauty.

Erect and firm he stands, a house of strength,
With gleaming walls and turrets flank'd with gold!

Fiat pax in virtute tua et abundantia in turribus tuis.

The world sees him and does not know him, but the chastity of Israfel is the supreme fact of these days, to us, at least, on whom the ends of the Age are come. I, who write these things, have been permitted to understand in part the unsearchable mystery of Israfel, I know not why, unless it be, indeed, because I have cherished lofty hopes, and my imagination has been nourished by heroic romances. The initiates of the Eleusinian Mysteries were named, and not without meaning, the Regenerated children of the Moon, and in the esoteric doctrines of certain dead religions the Moon, and not without meaning, was called the Home of Souls. . . . "As the moon on the lost through obscurity dawns," the face of Israfel shines on us in the night and light of time, and to us the Moon of Israfel is here the Soul's Home. Therefore, do I hold myself henceforth and for ever the initiate of a new, secret, and supernatural knowledge; my understanding is illuminated by a mystery full of peace and joy, and I count myself the first among the Regenerated

Children of the Spiritual Moon. Hermes and Orpheus are dead, and the tomb of the last Rosicrucian may be found in an ancient Kentish Church with green hop-gardens round it, but the soul of Israfel is alive and bright for ever; within the Sanctuary of his immortal nature are deposited the Keys of Solomon, the Secrets of Supernatural Power, the Stone of the Philosophers, and Eternal Youth.*

I rose in the morning early, and walked through the streets of the great city. The air was cool, the sky clouded, the streets were white and clean. It was my desire to reach that vast Hall wherein reign the supreme Kings of Thought from the days of Zoroaster. Their voices speak through the town's tumult into the earnest student's ear; of these it may be said that on earth they reign but "live no more"—they are withdrawn into the Ideal World. Many years have I sat at the feet of these kings to everlasting, and my spirit has been sustained by their high teachings; but this day, as I pressed forward with the haste of an eager mind following on the call of grace, there rose suddenly before me in its brightness and

* The Keys of Solomon stand here for those spiritual talismans which repel evil spirits and bind them; the Secrets of Supernatural Power are chastity, charity, and the faith which works miracles; the Stone of the Philosophers, by which all things are turned into gold, is the wisdom which out of resisted sin—the dross of earth—extracts the gold of sanctity and soul-strength; Eternal Youth is the consciousness of Immortality.

in its beauty, the face of the most beautiful and bright Israfel. The voices of the Kings of Thought, which had been calling in the distance, ceased suddenly, as the bells of a Temple when they are drowned in the first deep breathings of the organ; and I followed in his footsteps, while the stones of the street exhaled the fragrance of violets, and the cool air, which his passing form divided, vibrated with fairy music.

As a man in the night awaking beholds with awe and wonder the apparition of an angel in his room, so was my heart filled with a tremulous astonishment when I beheld in the busy crowd the manifestation of the Mystery of Israfel; and I remarked with indignation and sorrow that none but myself noticed him, or seemed in any way aware of his existence. But thus it is; the messengers of highest Heaven, the Sons of Eternity, are in our midst, and we do not know it; "a single thickness of white cloth," say the Karens of Burmah, alone divides us from the secret and the sight of God, yet how few hands have ever lifted it!

My brain was filled with speculation as I followed in the consecrated footsteps of our most dear Israfel, our starry prince, our chaste unicorn, our mild and milk-white dove, "immortal and unchanged." Why was our Symbol revealed in open day before the eyes of an indifferent and preoccupied world? While this problem absorbed me, giving rise to strange flights of the excursive mind, we came suddenly to the Vale of Avalon, and Israfel passed

within. I, pausing on the threshold, saw presently our inviolate virgin issue from the secret, inner circle, where the Mysteries are prepared, and, robed in dazzling white, he slowly entered the *Sacrarium*, bearing in his hands the "book of the Everlasting Gospel," and followed by the Pontiff of the Holy Graal. Afterwards, I beheld in the morning sunshine, in the mystic, spiritual Avalon, before the Life-giving Graal, the modest ministry of Israfel, and secret things not to be heard or told. Thereby has been revealed to me his high lineage; I know that he dwells for ever,

"Lofty and passionless as date palm's bride,
High on the upmost summits of his soul."

If my aspiration hath exalted him above the stars, I know now that he is truly throned beyond all space and time. I see him always in my spirit among the palms of the spiritual Avalon, in the groves of the new Dodona, in the new Garden of the Hesperides. He is the swan of Avalon; his snow-white breast divides the waters of eternal life, whose streams keep green the symbolic valley. His silence is the swan's silence. We have hewn out for ourselves broken cisterns which can hold no water; he drinks of the Fount Divine which feeds the thirst of the ideal.

“His cycle moves ascending.” It draws him upward
by divine decree. . . . What more shall we think or
say ?

All stars be his, all heights his soul achieve,
Confirm'd himself in chastity and strength
For ever !

O the peace and joy of Israfel ! O the light and truth
of Israfel ! O the love of our Father and God, Who hath
permitted us to gaze on this gracious, pure ideal, and
hath frozen all lust within us at the sight of his passionless
beauty !



LETTER III.

The soul of Israfel is a garden of immaculate lilies. In the spirit I entered there, and a divine, insupportable fragrance vivified my whole nature. I saw bright birds, which are the beautiful thoughts of Israfel, continually going and returning, bearing upon their many-coloured wings the seeds of new flowers, which, falling on the fruitful ground, began to germinate visibly around me. The cool wind of the Spirit blew softly through the garden, and all day long a harp-like music filled it. This was the aspiration of the intelligence of Israfel towards the Source of life and light; it rose from the incorporeal earth as the incense from the thuribulum. In the evening and the morning a dew fell, and then the music deepened to an organ-tone, as the prayers of Israfel went up to the angel Sandalphon, who

“gathers the prayers as he stands
And they change into flowers in his hands,
Into garlands of purple and red;
And past the great arch of the portal,
Through the gates of the City Immortal,
Is wafted the fragrance they shed.”

“The rustle of the eternal reign of love” falls in the garden at intervals, and at times out of a bright cloud there dart the swift lightnings of prevision and revelation. Through the stillness of the mystical nights the stars shine, which are the eyes of angels, and the moon, the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mother, passes in light and in majesty.

I say that in the spirit, in the true self, in the creative, imaginative mind, I—even I—have stood in that garden, and since that moment of vision and inspiration there is for me neither joy nor sorrow, neither pain nor bliss, neither disappointment nor triumph, neither life nor death. I am absorbed in a sublime contemplation, and the universe of illusions has rolled up from around me like a scroll in the face of this immortal reality.

When we emerge from a heated and unhealthy hall into the cold and searching night, the cheek flushes, the chest expands, the eye glistens, the brain clears, in our steps there is the vigour of youth. In like manner, when the soul seeks the world of perfect chastity, it is refreshed and enlarged beyond measure. This vigour and capacity are the endowments of Israfel by virtue of that continence which is set like the safeguard and the seal of God on every avenue of thought. The world of chastity is the world of lucid vision, of revelation, and spiritual dream ;

the symbolic Israfel dwells, therefore, upon Tabor and Parnassus, the prophetic heights are his and the realms of the creative mind. His face shines like Moses' in the light of the burning wood, and in the darkness of doubt and uncertainty he stands before us strong and stately, with the stature and the aspect of a god, "wrapped in a wind of prophecy."

A recovered if not an original chastity was required for all initiations, it is indispensable to true clairvoyance, and the narrow path of perfect self-restraint is the one road to the knowledge and peace of God. Our modest and mystical maiden, our garden of immaculate lilies, our white unfallen Adam, whose youth is eternal, whose bride is Lilith, the extra-natural, magical principle, has attained the *Clavis absconditorum à constitutiones Mundi* long sought for by the illuminated William Postel, and he has accomplished in his own person the mysterious *Regnum Dei*.

When perfect purity of act and thought co-exist in the same being, he possesses within him a creative principle, as we are taught in the Hermetic philosophy, and by its means he has dominion over the universal agent, that "incalculable force," whose direction is the great arcanum of the Rosicrucian Mystery. The continence of Israfel is Aaron's Stole ; it is the Branch of the Blossoming Almond ; it is the androgyne union of the Cabalists.

For the chastity of Israfel—ten thousand stars ! For the sanctity of Israfel—ten thousand stars ! For the soul in the eyes of Israfel—ten thousand, thousand stars ! And

may God stand round his neophyte as the hills stand round Jerusalem !

When e'er his eyes, which glow with vestal flame,
Behold the splendours of the sinking sun,
May angel faces thence look forth on him,
And, like a sunbeam lighting all his days,
Approving smiles bestow !

Clement of Alexandria, the philosopher and catechist, hath this sentence in "The Pædagogus"—"And the eternity of simplicity which shall know no old age." Here is the secret of the youth of Israfel and of all his beauty. He is sphered in eternal simplicity ; he is united to Nature who works by simple, universal laws. *Sigillum naturæ et artis simplicitas*. But he has also another aspect. He is the Bird of Paradise which, born in Heaven, comes down on earth, but is not of it, and his feet do not touch the earth, that is, he is never identified with flesh. His true home is in the violet vault of the Empyrean ; his unfathomable eyes bear witness to his origin and lineage.

Those eyes
Have enter'd into all things and give all
Surpassing beauty, while our dreams in turn,
At noon or night, adorn our Bird of Love
With all selected beauties of the sky
New swept by wind and rain, all charms which earth
Wins from the lingering sunset's amber light ;

The presence and the buoyancy and joy
Of the free open ocean in that mood
Which summer noons make mildest, these are his.

I was present in my spirit when the angels made Israfel.

They wrought his flesh from flowers with fairest spells;
They took the rose-red sunset for his cheeks
And poet's lips; the stars of God they search'd
For his eyes' lustre; 'mid the autumn leaves
They found his tresses; crystal and cold snow,
With ivory white, of these his limbs were form'd,
Kindled with morning light and glowing noon.
His voice is kindred to the birds and brooks,
Sylphs smooth'd his shape to symmetry, and him
The Dryads fill'd with freshness of their own
Green woods; on his firm mouth three several times
The Salamanders kiss'd him, and inflamed
His heart with love. These wrought his human form,
But whence his spirit? Did the Magi's star
And mystic Pentagram in spell combine? . . .
Our Symbol high was sent from God to fill
That house of flesh, and he is one therewith!
May angels guard him still! May every saint
Protect his path! May their revolving swords
Bright flames beyond endurance make in rings
Around him!

The consciousness of a depth which has been never sounded, of a height which has never been scaled, has grown up suddenly within us since the rising moon of Israfel has brightened all our lives.

Poise, happy moon, for ever, in the cold
And starry spaces, poise thy shining shield !
Behold, as shadows on the road are cast
Our meaner selves behind us ! Earth and sea
Lie in thy light transfigured ; vistas bright
And paths that wind for ever tempt us forth ;
A thousand lofty hopes inspire the heart,
Which from the lonely zenith of the soul
Thou pourest downward as the moon her beams,
O mystic moon enthroned in heaven of mind !

“ The peace of God which passeth all understanding ”
is the possession of Israfel. His home is the Vale of
Avalon ; he is nourished with the Holy and Life-giving
Grael ; the unsullied robe of his baptismal innocence is
white as the vesture of the lilies, and “ Solomon in all his
glory ” was not clothed as he is.

This is the mystery of Israfel.

For him in Avalon be endless rest,
Cool shade, cool shelter, and a fountain cool—
Swan of the snow-white breast !
I see thy plumage shining white as wool.

LETTER IV.

I beheld in the interior state, in the translucid, diaphanous mind, a world of dazzling snow—still, clear, and cold. Above it was a sapphire sky, and the beams of a spiritual sun illuminated the white scene. In this vision there was typified the perpetual virginity of Israfel. . . . Again, I was poised in my spirit over a vast water, and I gazed with the mind's eyes into its clear and starry depths. There is no water in all the world that can compare with it; the stillest streams are troubled and the purest springs are clouded, but this shone with a soft silver light, and in the pellucid abysses of its beauty I saw the secret of Israfel, for in my vision his intellectual nature was presented in a symbolic manner, with its chastity, its truth, and its light.

I am accused in my conscience of investing Israfel with the glory of the Christ. ABSIT! The symbolic Israfel is the angel of the New Age; the Christ is the Logos, the Angel of Eternity. The human Israfel is the Lily of Avalon—God keep that modest flower in starry bloom for ever! He is a white virgin whose spotless maidenhood is

our common faith, our pious hope, our bond of brotherhood in the charity of the New Life. We have not proved it; which of us has held speech with Israfel? His silence is the gold of wisdom and the condition of initiation. Virginity is made known in temptation. Which of us shall tempt Israfel? He is the handmaid of Christus, the priest to come, he is the thyrsis-bearer in the Mysteries of the Logos. That the Angel of the New Age has taken flesh, or, rather, has for us in a mystic way assumed to himself the nature of our dove-eyed child of God is the bright dream whereby we have deceived ourselves towards the perfect life. *Me ludit amabilis insania*. The foundation of our dream is this, that the human Israfel made manifest before us has evoked the vision of the emblematic angel and all his glory and we cannot separate them now; we identify them, therefore, but in dream, not dogma, and from this spiritual union of symbol and concrete form, of soul and flesh, he issues whom we variously name and praise—the New Eos, Gold of Morning, Light-bearer, our hearts' high hope, our star.

Break, Rose of Morning, break in bright array!
Thy fragrance fills the spaces of the air,
Thine eyes' smile lights the future!

If the question should be asked us, "What is Israfel?" it might be answered in several ways, but all, of necessity, metaphorical, for "many are the thyrsis-bearers, but few are the mystics," and, though it is possible, indeed, for the

mystery of Israfel to be revealed before the whole world, and though, in a certain sense, it is already manifest and shining in the full face of day, the unveiled and naked truth would not be understood; but I understand it, and to you it is proclaimed by me.

The name of Israfel contains an arcanum. He is silent with the lips, and this silence is a precious, incorruptible gold, the magian's dream; but his heart sings for ever, its voice has melted heaven and earth, it has invoked on us the New Age. Israfel may be considered in his essence and in his appearance. In his essence he is of the nature of the angels, and the Book of his soul's Revolutions,

inscribed

In characters of light, is shining still
Among the eternal archives of the sky,
And haply some time in the far-off years
Made known to man will thrill both heart and mind,
But now is hidden.

In his manifestation Israfel is a moon in the night, whose "silver crescent's growing charm" increases ever towards a perfect light.* The symbolic angel is a

* In a moment of rare inspiration, the magic moon of Israfel was revealed to the soul of Kirke White, when, casting aside the learning of the schools, and raising his eyes to heaven, he cried—

"Sad vestal, why art thou so fair,
Or why am I so frail?"

“ Hierophant ablaze with Deity.” He is sphered in supernatural knowledge as his earthly counterpart is fixed in faith and trust ; his magic art forecasts the future. He is the Temple of the Mysteries ; on his breast is the dedication of his nature— To God and Christus ! He sees “ the broken circle of life ” made whole. His chief emblem is the Unicorn, in which inviolate chastity is typified. His sign in Heaven is the celestial serpent, which, as Plutarch tells us, is also a symbol of virginity ; on earth it is the *agnus castus*—which preserves purity, and was used in the Mysteries of Ceres - with the lily and lotus-flower. His banner is the banner of the Everlasting Graal, and the emblazonment upon it is the Rose-Cross, which signifies sacrifice creating joy and joy renewing sacrifice.

To us the symbolic Israfel is at times presented as a dove flying, sometimes as an eagle soaring, sometimes as a human face where the pity and pain of love are tempered by the patience of the stars ; in rare moments he comes to us as a strong, planetary spirit.

And we behold him in the still, cold air,
Beneath the starry arches or the moon,

There is no sadness in the face of Israfel ; it is informed with a gentle light, which is the visible evidence of an abundant supernatural joy, but the mind of man invests exterior objects with its own particular disposition ; thus the lonely brightness and exaltation of Israfel were presented to the poet under a semblance of sadness which, in reality, surrounded his own mind.

His wide wings spreading, past the moon and stars
Soar to his native region. Unapproach'd
The path ; his brother spirits seek in vain
That altitude precipitous. In storms
The same he seems – his wings disperse the clouds
About him, and the driving rain his form
Encircles, never touching ; at his feet
The lightnings play, the thunders peal around him
But harm him not. The battles of the air
Strengthen his mighty nature, as the deep
March-music fires the soldier ; the star-hymns
Pour out his welcome.

This is Israfel in his first manifestation. The second is a mild and gentle human face which we have known and loved ; and because of the Hermetic maxim *Quod superius sicut quod inferius*, I believe that the human Israfel is essentially one with the symbolic, whence he has received a Name

Whose chrism of sweet melody anoints,
Whene'er voice calls him, as a peerless prince
His radiant soul.

We have a mission in regard to him wherein God speed us both, but whether we speed or not,

The treasures of eternity are turn'd
By careful angels over day by day,
Yet never gems befitting him are found,
For every time the heaps selected last,

For some unnoticed blemish do they cast
Aside. If I should see them at their task,
I'd bid them take the light of his soft eyes
To beautify their jewels.

I speak here with the weakness of human exaggeration ; there is no flaw in the jewels of Eternity, nor in the Stars' Language is there a shadow of imperfection ; our earthly gems alone have blemishes, and only mortal speech is subject to the errors of enthusiasm.

Let us consider Israfel in his relation to ourselves.

He glides before us with the torch of Christ,
“ *Lux Christi !* ” crying in the night of time ;
My heart is set to follow, to his face
I turn for light, because that face is turn'd
For ever upward ; there the light of God
Falls visibly in shafts of burning sunshine ;
His beauty chaste and passionless becomes
To us that love him an Apocalypse,
A crystal glass of vision, in whose depths
We read this life anew ; a sunset-light
Has fallen on its pages, every line
Of that close-written volume takes a new
Unlook'd for meaning. Evermore, between
The lines of life's enigmas do we read
The message of his beauty.

We have dwelt in an atmosphere of passion and feverish hope, as on a low tropical plain, and now there is re-

vealed to us the super-eminent sanctity of our gracious and beautiful Symbol. It is like a high mountain whose summit clad with snow soars into the searching air. We are no longer dust and ashes ; we have a love within us which has a claim on immortality, which conquers space and time. We are the initiates of a new and higher mysticism. . . . The gigantic error of all mysticism in the past is, that it has sought God in the Self, instead of in the Not-Self, the Divine within us, instead of the Divine without us—the Ideal in our own minds instead of seeing it revealed before us—faintly, imperfectly, but still in a progressive way—in all that is pure and fair in the humanity around us. In the modesty and beauty of Israfel we have found at once the extent of this error, and the Ideal which mysticism has sought vainly in the Self ; this is the philosophic side of the romance of Israfel, whose simple narration is found in this book, but which is painfully struggling towards a practical expression in both our lives. We trust that this expression will not in the end be inadequate ; all things beautiful in conception are true for us because we have known Israfel. There is no faith too fair, no hope too high, no love of God or man too great for him who, by his aspiration, is uplifted to the light and height of Israfel, our sea-girt House of God, our Eden Bower, a sacramental gift to thee and me, an outward sign of inward grace from the divine and adorable Christus, of whom our symbolic angel at the altitude of his power and his glory is a dim and faint reflection, “a show that shows.”

My heart is purer with my love for him,
My life is brighten'd by his love most true !
Let those whose penetrating glance can read
Man's most inmost nature read this night in mine—
I bare it now before them—all my thoughts
Are open to the angels. Witness these,
What lights have led me since I look'd on him,
What aspirations high, what holy hopes,
Have kindled in me, how my soul her wings
Hath strengthen'd ever for a starry flight,
The secret light, the bright arcane seeks out
With eagle gaze ! Be then the change within
My chief excuse if having lifted him
Above our human nature, I am now
Before his beauty lost in trance æterne !
O wondrous lustre of the mountain snow,
By sacred morning's light of gold inform'd,
By golden morning's holy light illumed,
By magian light on all its airless peaks,
Whatever storms may vex the world below,
Whatever clouds may darken earth and sea,
On those proud peaks beneath the ebon sky
Through all and all illumed !

On the summits of the sanctity of Israfel we stand
translated in the ecstasy of mystic dream, and see through
the night of time, faintly blossoming in the farthest
East, the Rose of Everlasting Day. By an image, there-

fore, Israfel is himself the Rose of Morning, the Herald of the New Age. He is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" of night and change and death, calling to the Higher Life, prophesying by the silence of his supreme exaltation the end of meanness, misery, and sin. I see him on the mountain pausing with uplifted arm; on his lips there is the heaven's eternal smile, on his forehead there is the star of God, the mystic Pentagram, in his eye there is the light of a strong undying soul come forth from God and conscious of its origin.

I dream'd one day this angel came to me,
And bent in brightness o'er me; his deep eyes
Search'd all my being, and immortal love
Within those shrines of sanctity and light
Look'd forth on me from their aionian home;
His virgin lips a moment press'd on mine
Through all my nature in electric flame
Sent potent virtue circling. I henceforth,
By this thy virtue strengthen'd, rise to thee,
Star of the time approaching!

This is Israfel in his relation to us. The emblems we have applied to him are all true, at least in a certain sense, and yet he is distinct from all. The mountain of Israfel is the mystic Lebanon; the moon of Israfel is the torch or reed of Prometheus. The star of Israfel is a pantacle of great power; it has the single horn in the ascendant because the Soul rules.

But Israfel in his relation to mankind is a point of supreme importance. Our love has called us to the regeneration of the world for his sake. We are pledged to achieve the New Age and the *Regnum Dei*, that we may set it like a jewel in his crown.

And I beseech you by this dream so bright,
By all the tender thoughts it breeds in us,
By all the purpose high it nourishes,
Remember this, through all remember it !
I saw my saint's redemption as a thing
Accomplish'd, saw in spirit on his brows
That crown resplendent, saw in robes of light
Those limbs invested, saw the achieving soul
To star-outreaching altitude, a King
On gem-set throne, uplifted. What remains ?
This weeping world we love for love of him
To lift by love of him to him we love.

The vision which has saved us from ourselves, which has illuminated our spirits with a pure and imperishable light, which has exalted and sanctified our whole nature, is withdrawn from us—no longer can we gaze on Israfel. The Vale of Avalon is empty ; the spiritual moon of Israfel has set in the visionary sky : the prophetic oracles within us have predicted no certain return. Yet we are not sad, nor have we any oppressive sense of desolation. One thought makes glory round us, one high thought.

A bright, triumphant smile lightens on our faces, whenever it recurs to us ; a secret more precious than pearls is ours—we know the destiny of Israfel, and all its beauty ; we know the wonder and the joy, the peace and exaltation, of the divine destiny of Israfel. *Intende, prospere procede, et regna*, we cry to his ascending planet,

Which floods the house of life for evermore
With spiritual lustre.

What is left us in his absence ? There is the love of Israfel—there is through all things the pure, immortal, perfect love of Israfel, which is always with us ; there is the image of the beauty of Israfel, which goes before us like a light ; there is the still, small voice of Israfel, which calls from eternity ; and there is the mission of our lives, and there is the Crown of Life—the true high crown of immortal and increasing life, towards which the will within us directs our natures as a persuading destiny, and the Destiny without us directs our will as an overpowering God.

Immortal Will, for aye the man compel !
Rule, Holy Fate, the awful force of will !
Dread God, reveal'd in both, Thy high decrees,
With wisdom shaped, fulfil by fate and will !
O secret Symbol, seen by bad and good,
To none but us made known, thy depths and heights
Unfold for ever, may we know thee more,
And more expanding may thy meaning high

Increase for ever, may it lead and light !
Pass all things dark before it, pass and die !
And on the pure, regenerated, free,
Ascending mind of man, on the New Age,
Shine mellow moon unwaning, shed thy beams
Of mildness, mercy, and intelligence !
Symbolic Moon, may God light man in thee ! . . .
All earthly lights have fail'd us, thine illumines ;
All earthly loves have perish'd, that remains
Wherewith we love thee and are led to thee,
And that, imperishable, perfect, strong,
By which thy spirit is to God led up,
O human nature of our Emblem high,
With whom may God remain in light and love,
In life immortal, and the Crown of Life !

Pax tecum !

Remember Israfel and his violet eyes !
“ The light that never was on land or sea,”
Shall then thy life illumine, flood thy path,
Rich hopes reveal, through all thy days create
The matter of achievement. Think of him,
And, lo, whate'er thy fears may teach,
No height is out of thy nature's reach !
Nothing's too lofty, nothing too far—
Resolve ! and on the furthest star
Thy throne, thy vast hall dighted are,
And spirit peoples waiting thee
Shall welcome in thy majesty !

Remember the crown which we have vowed to Israfel,
and all its lustre ! Remember the day of the coronation
of Israfel, when we shall place upon his temples the Crown
of Life, when he shall be seated on the throne of his
sanctity amidst the acclamations of the companion stars
and the transcendent intelligences of Eternity !

God gave me gems and gold that crown to forge ;
I stole from all the stars essential light,
My spirit to the sun went questing forth
And sped through space triumphant ; I became
Inform'd myself through all my nature's depths,
Through all her heights, with lustre ; visibly
My spirit shone therewith, so bright, so fair
The gifts I gain'd for him, this change they wrought
By contact with them. Now his soul is clad,
His stately soul, his wrapt, aspiring soul,
Is clad with these, and over stars and seas
He sits exalted in his Crown's pure light,
In his seraphic nature's blinding light,
Amongst his kindred angels hid from all,
Yea, hid with burning nimbus.

Voice that blesses, eyes that light,
Hands that help to heaven's far height,
Bright one,
White one,
Lead aright !

Chaste as lily, mild as dove,
Brave as eagle, fair as love,
Move us,
Prove us,
Lead above !

Mystic mountains all untrod
We shall pass, with patience shod,
Take us,
Break us,
Lead to God !



V I S I O N S.

THE FIRST VISION.

It is my privilege to stand again
Beside the sea, and from the steep cliff's edge
I scan the world of waters. Many times
Have I thank'd God for that most perfect line
Wherewith the still sky rings the restless deep;
For passing ships, for tides which come and go,
For cultivated fields which to the shore
Slope with an ample curve, for the sun's glare
On rough white chalk, for many a silent cave,
For shelter'd coves and shallows known to few,
For waste and lonely places unenclosed
Which ocean peoples with a thousand voices,
For all the sounds and sights of shore and sea,
Have I thank'd God. But now my soul is moved
By deeper thoughts than these can kindle there,
The dream review'd which since I last beheld thee,
Grey ocean, hath enlarged it; I recall
One face transmuted with the light of mind,
Which shining softly as the autumn moon,
When, from the mists of mead and marsh escaping,
It soars into the zenith, has above

My life's horizon risen. Israfel,
That face is thine ! I stand and think of thee,
My thoughts evoke thine image ; it is poised
In white above the waters, to the sky
Thy face is turn'd, thy listless hands are clasp'd,
The light wind gently lifts and floats thy hair,
Thy vesture likewise by the wind is trail'd
A yard behind thee, a subtle mist of light
Surrounds thy body, and thy waist is girdled
With white and fragrant lilies.

Israfel,

I greet thee, God be with thee ! I have clothed
Thy human form in dreams with angel-hood,
And evermore a spirit to my thought
Art thou ; transfigured thou hast pass'd for me
Into the world of emblems, and therein
The stature of immortal life is thine ;
There is thy nature perfect, there supreme ;
Exempt from passion, weakness, pain, and change,
Dost thou live ever a reserved, remote,
Unmundane life. And having lifted thee
Above thine earthly being, I believe
That this idealised, diviner part
My dreams have fashion'd, is most truly thine.
It was thy human nature prompted it,
The meekness, modesty, and peace thereof
Have nourish'd and enlarged it ; thou alone
Didst prompt the vision, and the same, I hold,

Is therefore thou. Thy gentle form of flesh,
Before my mind presented, has reveal'd
An inner self which more than fleshly form
Is thine, is thou. Thou art not yet perchance
In full fruition of that nobler part,
That part exalted ; the deific spark
Holds often from the human self aloof ;
Its light shines o'er it, and in warmth its love
Descends thereon, thine own augœides.
But perfect union in this life therewith
Is rarely compass'd ; when the man achieves
He rises towards it, when the life of sense
Sinks down subdued, and the immortal mind
In conquest towers above it, mind and flesh
Are both illumined by the light thereof,
For flesh when vanquish'd most, then most doth shine.
Thou in that light art dwelling, and thy face
Has, like a mirror, to my gifted sight
Reveal'd thy nobler self, I see thy god !
This proves thee stately, stedfast, clean of heart,
Since earthly natures with the meaner man
And mundane things contented have so far
Lapsed from their god that no light falls therefrom
To beautify their being, and the same
Can never, therefore, to the lucid sight
Reveal the brilliant spectrum of that high,
Undying part.

I stand beside the sea,
Waves swell, wind rises, falls the autumn night ;
And as the moon doth, when the darkness deepens,
Her own face brighten more, thy face grows brighter
Amid the moral darkness of the world !
Thy soul doth brighten towards its self divine
Ascending daily, and mine own shines also,
With thy great love suffused, with the fair, strong,
Undying love of thee suffused, inform'd.
I look to see thee in the World Beyond
With God made one for ever in thy god ;
May I with God be one in love for thee ;
May this wide sea before me strengthen me ;
May this full moon above me cheer and lead ;
May this dark night descending hide from me
All paths but those which to the heights of life
Lead upward ; may it hide all human love,
But mine immortal, perfect love for thee ;
May that my spirit sanctify and cleanse,
And, for thy love, may I the world itself
By mine own labours cleanse and sanctify,
And make the merit of that Titan task
One new star shining in thy Crown of Life,
My saint, my star, my symbol, Israfel !



THE SECOND VISION.

Too well I love thee for thy love to seek !
If from my slumber in the night awaking
I found refulgence fill my lonely room,
More bright than moonlight, mellow as the moon,
And soft as that which round thy gentle face
Is shining ever ; if an angel stood
Within that sacred circle of pure flame,
And held, with venerating head bent low,
And drooping ringlets bright as burning wool,
In his two hands thy purged and holy heart,
Whose measured motions visibly reveal'd
Made music round him ; if he bade me press
With open palm that flesh with life instinct,
And swore the heart whose music thus was hush'd,
As harp by hand, should thrill through all thy life,
Should by that momentary contact thrill
Through all thine after-life with love for me,
This arm should wither ere I thus would search
Thy sober nature with the pain of love.

But, prostrate then before that heart of thine,
I'd hear entranced the music breathing thence
Through angel fingers, and the stars' high speech,
The mystic hymn by none but virgins sung,
Would there with supermundane wisdom light
My doubtful mind.

I hear it even now,
Though this be dream. The opal twilight falls,
And in the silence of the wind and sea
The church-bell summons to the Vesper-hymn !
Is that thy voice which calls me also forth ?
Is that the music of thy heart most clean
Which in the pauses of the whirl of thought
Sends forth its summons like a bell to me ?
I will not stay to take up staff and scrip,
Nor count the things I leave, nor bid farewells.
Behold, I come ! Mine empty hands can bear
Whatever burdens may seem well to thee !
And now my soul uplifted sees afar
The heights of life it sought in vain so long,
And faintly limn'd against the furthest sky
Accivities undream'd of. Thence thy voice
Is calling ; nothing I behold of thee—
A voice alone upon the mountain heights
Which calls and calls ! The road is steep and wild—
I come no less ! I will not pause nor faint.
Ascend, bright spirit, with the speech of God !
My heart is strong to follow and achieve ;

And when the furthest heights of life I win,
Return into the altitude above,
And lead me thus for ever—still remote—
A voice alone on the eternal hills
Which calls and calls !



THE THIRD VISION.

What voice is that which from this mystic home
In ancient Avalon thy soul hath call'd ?
Speak, vestal, ever at the shrine of Christ
In modest ministry by night and day
To wait elected, to adore allow'd,
And in those mystic rites to man unknown
Permitted to participate and serve ! . . .
O saffron Light of Morning, on the hills
By weeping angels watch'd with straining eyes,
Who wait for Christus from the dead to rise—
Thou rose and lily in the morning sun
Set on a single stem—thou virgin youth,
In thy most awful sanctity of soul
As in white samite, as in light of stars,
As in the sun's intolerable light,
As with the angels' nature, as in God's
Bright smile beatified—thou Symbol high,
Which dost the scope of all symbolic forms,
Of all bright images, all words, all thoughts
Exhaust, whose beauty to its native heights,
To its true, native, unascended heights,

My nature drew, which lights, which leads, which
draws

(Unseen henceforward), to thy God through thee
The bard whose vision of thy vanish'd form
Becomes his fate for ever—speak this day,
Speak once! Will never to its native vale,
To its pure stream, the milk-white swan return?
What voice at least hath call'd? Declare what
voice! . . .

'Tis Christus calling, 'tis the Crown of Life,
Thy star, which leads thee! It is well—proceed,
In peace proceed and reign!

I pause no more;

The dark arcades, the cool and sacred air,
Of thy sweet presence in the past retain
No stronger fragrance than its faded leaves
Hold of the rose o'erblown. I too am call'd:
What voice is that which doth from morn to eve,
And still through dreams as much from eve till dawn,
Invite in dulcet tones? What fervid hope
Its lighted torch upholds? . . . The start is made,
The world before me spreads with cloud involved—
Is that the early moon within the mist
Which I see southward like a phantom light
Hang in the rainy sky? Chirps one weak bird,
From wold and woodland like a dream the day,
The sickly day, withdraws. The wind is bleak,
It stirs the naked trees; night comes and storm,

But I go forth ; I leave thy sacred shrine,
Thou verdant valley, in the storm I start
With stalwart heart. Far winds the path I take,
With autumn leaves 'tis strown. One star leads on,
It is one voice invites, one star which lights,
One hope which leads through all. So now no more
My feet shall pause among thy haunted groves,
Thou lodge of refuge. . . . Lo, the meads stretch-wide !
Lo, all the west behind me suddenly
Has lighted ! How the blue sky clears o'erhead !
It is not night, it is not evening yet,
The spring sun shines, and like a tocsin beats
The heart of youth through all the smiling land.
Sing on, thou lark ! O'er all the open field
The long grass glitters in the light and wind.
Thou wind, sing on ! Thou clear and rippling stream,
Make merry music ! Neither storm nor night
Are round me now. Fair winds the path I take,
Spring buds of bushes upon both its sides
Are bursting forth.

'Tis Christus calls this day,
Light, beauty lead, and lead, thou hand of God !
Call earth and sky, calls mystic sea profound,
Life calls and death ! The shining Crown of Life,
And thine uplifted nature's frozen heights,
My strengthened spirit to achieve sets out,
Saint Israfel !

* * * * *

The early sun descends
With brooding vapours veil'd ; it casts pale light
On miles of meadows to the west immersed
In winter floods. The hedges and the trees
Which from the waters rise cast deep'ning shade
Along the gleaming surface. All around
I hear the gentle lapse of little streams,
While not more cool than fragrant seems this eve
The south's soft air. And though the theme be trite
To speak of sparrows on the old inn's eaves
Perch'd chirping still, or of the lark's last song,
These trifles prompt full oft in musing minds,
No common thoughts. But now the waters catch
The gold of sunset, and yon brood of ducks,
Ere night descends, to land in one long line
Betake themselves. . . . My soul hath sought this day
A refuge here, that thus with nature round
She might herself set free from burning thoughts.

Ye naked elms which loom so gaunt and tall,
Ye clouds whose darkness doth by stealth involve
The fading sky, with solemn sense impress,
Subdue me ! Spirits of the wind, the trees—
Descending night—ye fields forlorn and dim—
Genii of solitude, of space—be ye
My confidants ! This day my feet have turn'd
From age-long travels both in thought and flesh,
Quest for the Crown of Life, Truth's high pursuit,

To those green groves, to that most cool retreat,
The vale of refuge, saintly Avalon !
And though my hair is white, though years have pass'd,
Though westward sinks the failing star of Time,
And on the wide horizon of the soul
I look to see that awful moon arise,
Eternity ! though time and space are vain
To mete the distance the immortal mind
Hath journey'd forward since in youth it left
That haunted place, within those groves unchanged
In mien or mood (attest it, earth and sky !)
These eyes of flesh have look'd in deed and truth
On Israfel, have seen him serving there
In modest ministry of prayer and praise
To wait elected, to adore allow'd,
And in those mystic rites from men conceal'd
Permitted to participate and aid.
O light as zephyr in the noon-day heat
Or pontiff's buffet to the kneeling youth
In grace confirm'd, or knightly accolade,
Time's touch that crumbles granite falls on him !
On his fair head is set the Crown of Life,
The crown of endless, ever-increasing life,
Which I sought vainly, I in vain sought long,
And stand this day with seam'd and naked brows,
While his with beauty, with eternal joy,
With light—with light—are wreath'd ! . . . The
search is done,

My hopes were fix'd upon that shining crown,
And now to-day mine eyes have look'd thereon ;
It rings thy head, above thy face it burns !
Ah, had I won it after toil and pain,
If all the path that led, my lord, thereto
Could show my footprints mark'd in tears and blood,
Could I do less than on that virgin brow
The gem-set crown resplendent set to shine !
It rings thy head, above thine eyes it burns !
'Tis well, 'tis well ! My crown in thine is won,
And thine unending life, thy youth æterne,
Whose soul for ever doth its flesh renew,
Dispel henceforth from the illumined mind
The impossible dream of death. I see thine eyes
In night's keen stars with silent speech divine
Reveal the secret of eternal life.
Lo, all bright hopes are true, the end is plain !—
All men triumphant over grief and sin
From strife and darkness into light emerge,
And thy bright spirit to its star attain'd
Is throned adoring there !



THE FOURTH VISION.

My heart had sicken'd of its dreams of thee,
Their varied beauty cloy'd enfeebled sense ;
Then I fared forth in thought o'er summer seas,
I paused on mountains in the morning light,
And out from forests in the night and wind
On lonely coasts I issued, or at eve
When stormy clouds involved the splendid West,
But up the sky the sun, departing, drove
One blazing shaft, suffusing all its path
With angry red, and where it smote dispersing
The thin far scatt'ring phantoms of the storm,
Till glancing onward to the blue serene
It melted in the zenith. I beheld
In mine own mind, as in a magic glass,
The spectacle of Nature. " It is well ! "
I cried, " Sufficient ! There is rest in this,
But light I seek ! Achieve, O soul, the light ! "
And then my spirit in the waste alone
Her refuge sought, and dwelt and ponder'd there . . .

It was the hoarse voice of the far off main
Which on my refuge in the sandy rock,
And on my solitude, my silence there,
My mental conquest, on the problem solved,
On life and death reveal'd, did break at length.
It drew me forth ; I cross'd the meads and mounts,
I roved by woods and waters, till I reach'd
The sea once more ? I saw the vast sky stretch
Above the vast sea to unearthly height,
And in the West, beyond all dream remote,
A saffron sunset died. Thither my soul
Her flight pursued, with eagle wings essay'd
That stormy path, dared winds, dared ocean deep,
Dared lightnings there. The solemn night profound,
A thousand voices speaking in the night,
Did strengthen her, the searching cold inform'd,
And more than all the mystic hope upheld ;
Till, lo, the flight achieved, the further shore !
Lo, land, green plains, bright morning breaking round !

I saw before me loom an ancient house ;
One portal there, with magic words inscribed,
Had in the centre graved, with single horn
Ascending (sign of the immortal mind
Which rules for ever and is ruled by none,
Because united to the Law Divine
'Tis made for ever to itself a law),
Thy burning star, dread, potent Pentagram !

Before that threshold in the morn's first light,
In wonder lost, in ecstasy of joy,
I stood : Thou spirit to the end attain'd,
Thou crown'd adept, thy long probation done,
Was that the Temple of the Rose and Cross ?
Speak, hierophant !

Who stands in starry white ?
Who leads me in ? Smooth gleams his golden hair,
With comely features mortified and mild,
Cheeks tinged with flower-pale pink ! What eyes
are those

Which in the sunshine seem like golden grey,
Elsewhere as violets deep ? His mien is high,
He bears the fragrance of the morning rose
Round all his form, his hand is raised to bless,
Whene'er his eyes look up all heaven looks down ;
About his path the snowdrop sprouts in spring,
Burst buds in blossom upon thorn and tree ;
His voice all solitudes, all silent peaks,
And all the spacious, cool, translucent air,
Fills with melodious souls. His name is Spring,
His name is Eos, born of dews and light,
His are a thousand names in one contain'd
(Of some high quality the sign is each,
Of all high qualities is one the sign).
Before the Threshold of the Mysteries,
Before the Temple of the Rose and Cross,
Before the secret, sacred, inmost shrine,

In white refulgent, as he wont, array'd,
'Twixt burning tripods on the right and left
(The Light of Christus to His priest vouchsafed',
He stands in beauty and with open hands
He welcomes in :—" The Light of Christus ! " cries,
" Eternal Truth ! " and ranged in lines behind,
I see the sages and the seers of old,
A thousand pontiffs and a thousand kings !
Shines Moses there, and Plato brightly shines,
And I see Hermes of the Burning Belt,
The " thrice great Hermes," stand with Enoch there !



THE FIFTH VISION.

THE DESTINY OF ISRAFEL.

My dreams have fashioned many fates for thee
Because thy destiny all dream transcends ;
May that most worthy thee be nearest thine !
I see thy soul upon the Mount of God
Unfolding slowly, like the mystic Rose
Of Hermic lore, which issues bright and fair
(Strange virtues circling with the sap therein)
Beneath the universal spirit's breath
From the mercurial stone.

Behold in Starland stood a vacant throne,
None found to fill it ! On a lonely height
'Twas set, the world commanding ; he beheld
Who reign'd thereon, the plane of time and change
Outstretch'd below him. Passion and anguish there
Play parts, and the illuminated soul
From that far height with steadfast eyes unmoved
In silence watch'd, the issues and the end
To him reveal'd, the worth and meaning known,
To whose sublime magnificence of mind

The fleeting hopes and fears could ne'er return
Which vex the vastness of those depths profound.
Thus was it ; but to distant heights undream'd
The abstracted soul forth-issuing left behind
Its ancient seat, and He with anxious mind
Who o'er those spheres spreads wide his rule æterne,
The Great Star King, did solemn council hold
With messengers and heralds from afar ;
But not from out his own divine estate,
Nor realms beyond, was suppliant known whose eyes
Unflinching view'd the vast and varied charge,
The lonely life, the splendour, view'd unchill'd
Behold in Star-Land stood that vacant throne
None found to fill it !

But the Central Sun,
Intelligence Supreme, Eternity's
Tremendous King, by angels bright at length
Sent tidings down to Star-Land, and the Great
Star King rose joyful from his throne sublime,
His prayer was answer'd—found a soul unstain'd
To fill that empty seat ! It dwelt on earth
Not all unconscious of its destiny,
But, dedicate to ministries most high,
In hopes but half defined, in yearnings vague,
By sacred impulse prompted aye to seek
The Source of Light, at least to gifted eyes
Made evident its origin divine—
'Twas thine, O Rose of Morning, Israfel !

Thy shining soul, my white one, my dear, my dove ! . . .
The Star-King paused at hearing, thought a space,
Then passed in silence through his lonely hall,
Its pavement vast as ocean, and its dome
As heaven remote. Upon the gleaming wall
Of that most awful temple there was hung
A magic mirror, wherein the gifted sight,
By power of will, the wish'd-for soul could call
Into its holy crystal. There the King,
Did on that lucid convex fix awhile
His eyes illuminated, clear, profound,
And soon a thin flame started, light and pure,
In brilliance, beauty waxing, till thyself
In semblance perfect shone reflected there.
The mighty presence that inform'd the place
Breathed once thereon, then answer'd :—" It is well !
The phantom shows no blemish."

It was now
On earth the hour of sunset ; sank day's god
Behind a bank of black, foreboding cloud,
Whence droop'd long tendrils down of angry light.
A stealthy secret whisper of the wind
Among the leaves and grass had call'd me forth,
And I went musing into meads and down
Dark cypress groves. Therein my thoughts were
 wrapp'd
Beyond the sphere of time. One Voice of Brightness
When this creation's furthest star was pass'd

Still call'd me onward, through unnumber'd ranks
Of radiant intelligences, priests
And princes of eternity ; I paused
Before that veil which doth from sight created
The light unbearable in mercy hide.
The veil was moved by agency within ;
A stream of flame and scorching heat intense
Was pour'd in shafts upon me, and my soul
Beneath it shrivell'd like an autumn leaf,
Till the voice sounding in the light made strong
My failing nature, its intelligence
Informing with the mission unto which
My days were to be dedicate. One word
Of power divine was spoken and the whole
Lay clear before me, for the perfect speech
Reveal'd it, a life's work was in that word,
Thy destiny surpassing strange, supreme,
Thy star ascending in the house of life,
With light and glory through the infinite.
Upon my brain that mystic word impress'd
Lives in my sense of mission and divine
Election, but the awful sound is lost,
The flesh-confined intelligence no more
Can form it to itself, nor human speech
Express it, nor this element too gross
Of earthly air to that most subtle sound
Give life in its vibrations. But in dreams
It passes through my being like a flash

Of vivid lightning, and my soul in dreams
Is lifted into Star-Land, where I see
Thy vacant throne await thee on that height
Remote and unimagined——thine, pure gift
Of earth to Æther !

Like the hand of God
About the man it leads in spite of self,
The sense of mission circles all my life,
And drives me onward to achieve for thee.
A herald of the stern, primeval, strong
Star-King, I gather for thy crowning day
All gentle souls together, all pure souls,
The silent spaces round thy lonely throne
To people with intelligence and love. . . .
Behold, in thought that chosen band I see
By sanctity and sacrifice of self
Above the world exalted, vow'd to thee,
Son of the Morning, Star of light and joy !
My spirit, borne upon the wings of dream
Transcendent, in eternity's most vast,
God-haunted regions loses life and thought,
And sinks in dizzy circles, while thine own,
Uplifted ever with expanding powers,
There finds its eyrie, there its native air,
Translucent, tranquil. Mount, mine eagle, mount !
Thy light supreme, thy lone, uplifted state,
I see reveal'd ; infinity receives
A starry prince—ascend, achieve, and reign !

IN CIVITATE DEI MAGNA.

The city is dusty, the streets are long,
And the sky overhead looks dim ;
But, ah ! it is fill'd with the thought of thee,
As the church with the chanted hymn.
It is fill'd with the memories bright of thee
As the spirit with grace divine ;
If a sunbeam fall upon path or wall
I know 'tis a smile of thine.

Comes there a pause in the whirl around,
Thy heartstrings there I hear ;
Sounds there a voice that is sweet and low,
I know thy voice is near ;
Gleams there a face that is fair to see,
Wherever thy flesh may dwell,
I know it is thou by the white, white brow,
Thou spirit of Israfel !

O, I shall stand in a moment more
Where oft thy feet have trod,
Which now go over the steep incline
That leads to the Mount of God !
• As ever they press on their forward way
There falls on the pilgrim's face
A beam more bright of the wond'rous light
That shines in the Holy Place.

THE MAGUS.

There dwells in a land that is distant,
There dwells by the stream and the sea,
In rites thaumaturgic assistant,
Spell-weaver for thee and for me,
A wizard, whose magic shall dight thee
With wealth that the world cannot vaunt,
With wisdom, the longed-for, to light thee,
High purpose, and visions that haunt.

O name me thy dream that is dearest,
Best hope in this world or beyond,
'Tis he knows the path that is nearest,
To him the star-prophets respond !
Where the secrets of Isis are hidden,
Where Aden lies shrouded in dream,
There ranges uncheck'd and unhidden,
This virginal lord of Irêm.

He stands far in front, he is stately ;
Light bursts ! 'Tis his smile leads thee on —
O see where his foot's print was lately
The crown of thy hope ! . . . He is gone ;
But, like Memnon invoking the morning
His charms can all favours compel,
Where he now stands a new hope is dawning—
Lead, magic of Israfel !

THE REAPER.

In simple dreams, I see thy shy blue eyes
Upraised to scan thy sphere of earthly work,
Which spreads like fields all ripe with corn and wheat;
The harvest waits, be thou the reaper there,
The barns of God stand empty, fill them thou !
There is a sickle on thy strong right thigh—
Reap well, reap all, that when the sheaves are bound
No single grain may lie to rot without
I'the autumn rain and cold. . . . The days go by ;
I see the mellow moon in the starless south
Her magic disc increase. . . . Is thy work done ?
Hard hast thou toil'd, thou hast not thought of self,
The priest of labour thou, by toil made priest,
Thy work accomplish'd is thy sacrifice.
The wind begins about the naked fields
To breathe and stir, around a thousand sheaves
It laps and lingers—lo, the moon hath set !
A faint uncertain light about the east
Spreads slowly out, on thy pale face it falls,
And on thy prostrate form ; shines keen and blue,
The well-used sickle, at thy side it lies,
And thy right arm about the latest sheaf
I'the night has stiffen'd. Now, the morning breaks,
They bear the harvest in ; the barns are closed,
The grain is reckon'd, there is none left out ;
Thy spirit voice repeats the festal hymn
In the endless harvest home !

THE ASCENT OF ISRAFEL.

I.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL ASPIRES TOWARDS THE PERFECT LIFE.

There is no need for haste ; we have, my soul,
The whole day through to roam in ; e'en should night
In fields surprise us, when the clouds clear off
A thousand stars will shine to light our path ;
And though 'twere long to wait till thou dost rise,
Thou bright March moon, what thoughts would haunt
 the night,
With stars above us, in the searching wind,
Thy ghostly light invoking ! . . . We have paused
Where oft in youth, O pre-existent soul,
The old, the deathless, in the youth of flesh,
We dream'd and roved ! It has not long gone by,
It is mine still, in hours of strength like this
That youth is mine ; but now what sacred aims
Unheard of then, what lights, what impulse lead
My nature forth as thou art led this day,
To gaze abroad, thou royal Israfel !
The earth is round thee, and the gleaming sea
Spreads far before, as light and bright as youth
Its silver surface ; on the beach it lies

Like a child breathing on the breast asleep.
There is no limit to the golden hopes
Which light, like lamps, the future's flowery paths,
The earth and ocean call, their wealth they spread,
There is no path too long, no goal too far,
No height beyond thee ; thou art strong for all,
And all in turn renouncest—land and sea,
Youth's kingship, youth's inheritance therein ;
And towards the perfect, pure, immortal life
Directest only thy desiring eyes.
The Angels help thee, on thy breast they bind
One fragrant lily of supernal bloom.
May thy bright soul be throned o'er space and time,
Be thine the Secret Name, the Morning Star !

O quam pulchra est casta generatio cum claritate.

II.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL ACHIEVES THE CONQUEST OF THE FLESH.

Like Michael soaring from celestial strife,
When Satan smote was plunged in Hades' gulf,
O'er ruined natures and aionian death,
Himself a ruin and in death, to reign,
(O mournful Morning Star still rings thy cry !)
I saw thee rise, through surging mist and cloud
Thy strong right arm put forth, thy shapely head
With striving face upturn'd and streaming hair,
All light itself, into the light ascend !

Thy gleaming breasts appear, thy starry limbs ;
 The rainbow splendour of unspotted mind
 Invests thee now, the bitter strife is done.
 Like Ahriman, at length the flesh subdued
 Sinks trembling down, the while, like Ormuz, thou
 Dost pause triumphant, sphered in strength and peace.
 Descend in majesty and might sublime
 From Heaven's arcane the bright Archangels down ;
 About thy waist they clasp the burning belt
 Of mystic Hermes, sire of Magian lore.

*Dilexisti justitiam et odisti iniquitatem, propterea unxit te
 Deus, Deus tuus, oleo lætitiæ.* *

III.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL OBTAINS INTELLECTUAL ILLUMINATION.

And now the lily on thy breast assumes
 A starry lustre, all thy waist is ring'd
 With searching flame, about thy heart it glows !
 Thine eyes uplifted meet the noon-day sun,
 Thou dost not flinch, the belt has strengthen'd thee,
 Through all thy frame creative force infusing.
 Thine earnest lips the light of mind invoke,
 The secret Light which sees and searches all.
 O bird of knowledge, on the wings of thought
 Through starry space and time uncheck'd thou speedest !
 And, lo, when next mine eyes are fix'd on thee,
 Thou art erect, with modest eyelids dropp'd,
 With even pulse, with cool, collected mien !

Thy hands are clasp'd, thou dost not move nor speak ;
The night descends, and in the furthest east
The early moon "begins her horn to fill,"
But all the space about thy form I see
Peopled with eyes. Who sets the Star of God,
Who sets the Pentagram, the Star of Mind,
The Star of God, on thy white brow to shine ?
The light thereof about thy face and head
Is pour'd in streams—the third celestial choir,
The Principalities endow thee thus,
They lift the veil which hides the Land of Soul,
Whose lustrous vistas daze thy splendid eyes !
*Specie tua et pulchritudine tua, intende, prospere procede, et
regna !*

IV.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL RECEIVES THE SPIRITUAL ILLUMINATION.

I see this eve o'er these familiar fields
The sky grow blue, thy transient opal shines ;
I see thine amethyst and opal deep,
Thou sky of God, and all thy west aflame !
Ensanguined clouds across that gleaming vault
Sail in the wind of evening ! Ye will pale,
Above me now ye fade, O splendours bright;
But one for ever by achievement high
With youth, with beauty shines ! Remark him now
His pinions pluming still for starry flight ;
Assist him earth and sea, cold, crystal air,

Breathe softly winds about him ! There is none
 To mark his path ; he seeks the sphere of Soul,
 He seeks the awful altitudes of life,
 The soul's Parnassus on the timeless plane,
 Where grace of vision and revealment join
 With Deity. Where is our eagle flown ?
 Our earnest prayers went up to guard his path,
 If love could shield him, we have loved him well—
 Make answer, earth and sea ! Your brightest child
 Is absent long, where hath our eagle flown ? . . .
 He stands once more in simple white array'd,
 His mouth is firm, his mien is calm and high,
 The fourth celestial choir is round him now,
 The powers Transcendent ; on his head they place,
 Of mystic Roses twined, a garland bright,
 Because that most pure spirit of its own
 Free will the generations of the mind
 Pre-sanctified, divinest, to the gross
 And failing generations of the flesh
 Preferr'd—for ever be the world enrich'd,
 O virgin mind, with thine unfailing fruit !

*Elegit eum Deus et præ elegit eum, in tabernaculo suo habitore
 fecit eum.*

V.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL RECEIVES THE SEAL OF THE ETERNAL
 PRIESTHOOD.

When from thy solitude of silent thought,
 Thy long probation, to the world once more

Thou shalt return, thy nature's depths and heights
Inform'd with Mission, I adjure thee, say
What logos set within thy sinless mouth
Shall fire the hearts of men with love divine?
The heart is cold to-day, the heart is faint;
Though Reason reigns indeed in regal state,
The senses only round her throne of light
Are set to serve. The Soul in vain invoked
No voice sends down from her supernal heights.
If up the path precipitous and hard
Which leads thereto, a voice should cry—"Descend!
O Love descend!" a broken murmur comes,
Confused by echo and the distance vast,
"Ascend!" it breathes. Thy heart and soul are join'd,
Thy reason ever on thy soul's far heights
In truth and light abides, and there is served
By faith and grace; to thee the soul responds—
What wilt thou bring to man, what word divine?
I see the cold and shrouded sun descend,
But on the wide horizon of the age
The first faint lustre of thy rising star
Begins to kindle; it is mark'd by few,
Yet brighten, brighten, star, with lustre soft
Lead on the light of mind, the soul reveal'd!
Be that the logos in thy virgin mouth
To fire the hearts of men with love divine!

The strife is done; achieved the end sublime !
 Thou hast, triumphant by the strength of will,
 Thine own creation compass'd. There is none
 To teach thee now ; it is the voice of God
 Instructeth thee, the light of Christ illumines,
 And thou dost issue from thy house of thought
 A priest for ever ; on thy soul there shines
 The mystic chrism, and a golden cross
 Beneath the lily on thy breast unstain'd
 The Virtues bind ; they give thee Aaron's rod,
 The reed which John received, to meté therewith
 The breadth and height, with all that dwell therein,
 Of the universal Temple. Shrink not thou,
 O gentle spirit, with a bounteous hand
 Let now thy wand describe round all the earth
 Its magic circle, be there none left out,
 No life rejected as unclean and lost
 When God through thee shall make those walls
 complete !

*Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in diebus suis placuit Deo. Ideo
jurejurando fecit illum Dominus crescere in plebem suam.*

VI.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL DEVOTES ITSELF TO THE CAUSE OF
 HUMANITY, AND OFFERS THE PRIESTLY SACRIFICE, HIS
 PROPER SELF.

God knows, my saint, I might have held with thee
 The human intercourse of friend and friend ;

Speech might have pass'd between us, our two hands
Have clasp'd; we might have met and walk'd together
(The moon has risen above the eastern hills
Behind a small farm-village and humble church);
I might have done for thee in health and sickness
The kindly services which brighten life.
(Seas roll their tides between us; dost thou watch
The bright queen rising where old Tagus pours
His broaden'd waters? Are thine eyes and mine
Both fix'd thereon? Does thy heart swell like mine?
Soars all thy nature upward, gazing there,
Pure soul, bright soul?) The privileges high
And precious of such gracious intercourse,
When I recall them now, would search my heart
With pain intense, did not one thought vouchsafe
Its strength abundant—of my own free will,
No outward force compelling, I renounced
The pure vocation (by unselfish love
To brighten life about thee), that my soul
Might in the mirror of the mind preserve
Thy sacred semblance free from slightest stain;
Till, like a spirit from the sea's white spume
In light ascending, lo, thy Symbol rose
And draws me on for ever! Thou hast lost
My human service, mystic flower of faith,
Mild saint of Christus, but that potent sign
My spells evoked pours down its light on thee;
It is no dream, it draws thy human self,

It takes thee starward, thou art daily raised,
Till, like the cold and shifting sea, far down
Thine eyes behold the mortal life of man,
A restless waste below thee toss perturb'd . . .
The burning seraphs on their thrones abide ;
My dreams, ambitious of their place supreme,
Depict for thee co-equal state and reign !
(Grow, potent spell, grow, star, the end achieve !)
Lo, on that height I see thy vestal lamp,
Thy spirit manifest in lambent flame,
Set high for ever before the Veil of God !

So hast thou now come forth ; in white array'd
Thou hast return'd, thy flesh with grace suffused,
Thy hands uplifted ; thou art priest and king,
From thine anointed fingers pour in streams
The healing aura. Thou art nobler now,
Thy human nature holds at length itself
In full possession ; and the mind this day
Holds too the flesh in a complete control ;
And mind and body by thy soul well-poised—
A mystic ternary—are ruled and led.
What dost thou seek amongst thy weaker kind ?
The priestly sacrifice of thine own self
For man to offer in the name of God,
Thine earnest heart, thine ample brain inform'd,
Thy perfect body and the strength thereof,
All, all devoted now to man's great cause,

The cause of God ! From your sixth heaven descend,
 Ye Dominations, to the chosen priest
 The mystic Blossom of the Almond bear,
 The *signum pacis*. Bear it, priest of God !
 It blooms for ever, in thy hand it blooms,
 And he that holds, like Enoch, walks with God.

*Sacerdos et pontifex et virtutum opifex, pastor bone in populo,
 ora pro nobis Deum !*

VII.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL CURES THE DISEASES OF THE PHYSICAL
 LIFE OF MAN WITH THE BREAD OF LIFE, WHICH IS THE
 UNIVERSAL MEDICINE.

I see, my God, thy scarlet sun descend !
 There is no shadow on its blazing orb,
 There is no mist about it ; it is vast,
 It gives no rays, it sinks in silence slowly ! . . .
 Behold the burning circle broken now !
 There is no wind on land, no wave at sea ;
 Behind the meadow with the mill beside
 The day-god's head devolves ! The lark's last song,
 High in the lavender and opal sky,
 To grey refined, in the summer silence rings,
 And night is held thereby ; with folded wings
 I'the West she waits. Send up, sweet mother Earth,
 Thy gifted messenger, defer it still !
 Ascend, thou voice, ring on, thy parent doth
 The aspiration of her evening fragrance

After thy flight direct ! And I, too, stand,
I stand a humble image-haunted man,
Who in thy melody and madness loses
The dreamy ripples of the dim, faint sea,
Who loses earth and sea, whose soul ascends,
And, like a fragrance from the earth exhaled,
In aspiration and in ecstasy
Where thy wings beat the air, wild bird, it dies !

I set mine eyes on yonder sunset-clouds,
And all my thoughts I set this eve on thee
Thy tale creating. (Shrill, thou lark, on high !)
The pure, the gentle, generous youth goes forth,
Awhile is lost among the crowds of men. . . .
What light breaks now ? What angels dwell with men ?
Nay, ask what earnest man of mien erect,
In whose eyes shine the light of other worlds,
Sets with no flourish of pretentious words
His broad and nervous hands on men diseased,
And weakness, anguish, death itself depart
And leave their victims free ? Who now reveals
The perfect Rule of Life, that bread divine,
Whereby the body of the man is made
A temple healthy, consecrated, sound,
Meet for the House of God ? Is it thou, child—
Thou, youth develop'd into man of strength—
Thou, man expanded into God for men ?
The Thrones descend from their unheard-of heights

To circle thee ; they bear the " four-square " Stone,
The corner-stone, the rock which Moses smote,
The Schemhamphoras, graved with secret words
And Names Divine, the synthesis of God.

*Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis, propterea benedixit te Deus
in æternum.*

VIII.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL COMPLETES ITS MISSION ON EARTH BY
CURING THE DISEASES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF MAN WITH
WINE DRAWN FROM THE UNFAILING FOUNTAIN OF THE IDEAL.

Along the grey and saturated shore
The grey sea creeps. There is no wave in sight,
With gentle ripple and with sad, faint sound
The evening tide flows in. The wind from shore
Blows cool by fits ; dark clouds about the west
Take angry colours, and the blue looks dim
When o'er the sea the pale blue sky peers forth.
Will not one star above the wave this night
Look out on wave and coast ? and see the moon—
The moon new-born—a slender line of light
Shows faintly in the south 'twixt stormy clouds.

Because thy praise hath rung through earth and sky
Thy bard is proud, but thou thyself art calm,
The earnest face, the placid smile of old,
The broad and thoughtful brow. My lord, all hail !
Thou priest and pontifex of years to come,

Thou bold bridge-builder, span the breathless height
'Twixt man and God, the mystic Æsir show,
No longer narrow as a sword's sharp edge,
Steep still, but broad, that all may tread thereon.
Set up the mystic Stone thou bearest now
And strike with Aaron's rod ! What stream flows
forth ?

The fount unfailing of the Wine of Life :
Bid all men drink thereof, both small and great !
And, lo, the Cherubim with flaming swords
Descend and circle thee ! That fire they bear
Which cleansed the prophet's lips, with life endow'd
The Titan's man of clay. Thy rod take up,
Light from those flaming swords, now rise and fly,
The awful summits of the soul seek out,
There set that beacon light to burn for aye !
Its light unwaning drives from human minds
The darkness mother of disease and sin. . . .
At length thy work is done, thy hair is white,
A voice is calling from the World Unseen ;
Put off thy garments now, strong soul, bright soul !
The lapse and wash of the eternal sea
Ring in the twilight hush. Plunge bravely in !
The waters once above thy form will close,
But when thy head their surface calm divides
The light and warmth of the eternal day
Will pour on thee !

Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus.

IX.

THE SOUL OF ISRAFEL ACHIEVES IMMORTALITY. HE ENTERS
BEHIND THE VEIL, AND LEARNS THE FIRST SECRET OF ETERNITY.
HE BEARS IT INTO A NEW UNIVERSE, AND RECOMMENCES THUS
THE CYCLE OF EXISTENCE WHICH IS RENEWED FOR EVER.

Speak boldly, poet ! Say that man has lived
Not vainly nor unpleasantly who once—
Yes, once alone—hath seen a green hedge bend
About the winding of a rural road ;
Has seen through elms and oaks one English home
Look forth, the land commanding ; has seen rooks
About their windy nests in circles wheel,
And by the symmetry of motion shame
Their own discordant voices ; has seen once
The lovely contrast of a green oak grove
With ancient, sombre, solitary firs ;
Has seen a white horse in a green mead grazing,
With one black foal beside with one white star
That decks its head ; has subtle scent inhaled,
Some evening early in the month of June,
From hawthorn hedges and from clover fields
Just after rain ascending ; who has cross'd
A country stile and suddenly beheld
Above the stretch of level pasture-land
The lifting mist leave bare the downs beyond ;
Who once has stood, while closed the twilight round,
Beneath the shadow of an old church porch,
With old tombs round him, and has heard afar

The solemn washing of the open sea,
As if eternity to time had sent
Some voice with tidings from the Home of Souls.
Declare that man, who out of all these things
Attains one only, gains a boon in life
Which makes a claim on the retentive mind ;
That whosoe'er the grace of youth or maid
Dwells with pure eyes on, who hath kiss'd once only
A modest, fond, and friendly mouth—thereby
Makes life worth living ; while the man who dares
Achieve some end heroic and sublime
Shall wear it as a crown for evermore.

I ask you, stars of night, thee wind, thee sea,
Have I not gain'd a crown and end in life,
Who was permitted for so long to gaze
On one mild face and find a world within it ?
It prompts me ever in my brightest dreams,
It gave the dream whose tale this night is closed.
And though the air which once we breathed together
Gives up no more, except at Fancy's call,
The form I loved, it does not live the less.
The world shall know thereof, this day perchance ;
If not, to-morrow ; in a year at most ;
Yet, should an age elapse, the hope deferr'd
Ensures it more and more.

Thy tale is done.
Thou dost forsake the sinking house of flesh,

In silence glide behind the mystic veil,
And there thy youth renew. The Crown of Life
Is brought by Seraphim, themselves the crown
Of angel-life, it gleams henceforth on thee.
I ask no inspiration now from night,
Nor ocean's voice, to paint in human words
Thy soul transfigured with immortal being.
I see thy former nature magnified,
The strength, nobility, and grace thereof
With virtue kindled from eternity,
Whose primal secret revelated makes
Another mission in a world unknown
On which thou farest forth, commencing thus
The second cycle of a life renew'd
By saintly missions of revealments born,
Of God's deep secrets born, for evermore.

And now to Him Who gives us space to dream in
Be praise for ever from our dreams and us !
May noble acts be food for thoughts still nobler,
And these ascending in the scale divine
The scope of action and of life enlarge
Till life with dream be one.

*Gloria et honore coronasti eum Dominus. Posuisti Domine
super caput ejus coronam de lapide pretioso.*



EPILOGUE.

I.

I set my Symbol filled with meanings deep
To shine before thee, in thy face, O man,
To shine in beauty ! It is mine no more ;
The cold invigorating sea this eve
Breaks at my feet, it bounds the scene before me ;
No sea-gull flies, no bark is sailing there.
Take it, O man ! beside the main I stand ;
If something prompted once of selfish mood
To hold it mine alone, the open sea,
The strong, free, generous sea, hath broken that ;
Its stormy music surging in my soul
Hath broken self, as rocks that gird the beach
Are strewn in tempest with titanic waves ! . . .
There is no creature nigh me ; I, indeed,
Have seen this day from o'er the shifting waste
Some wearied swallows pass, some stately ships
Above the magic circle rise and then
Sink down once more. But now the lilac sky,
The grey, grand sea, whose white and crumbling crests
Take phantom lights from sunset, form alone
The empire of the eyes, As here this eve,

So in my mind I stand with mighty thoughts
Wide as the world before me. . . . Hear me, world!
(This night the may upon the hawthorn bush
Begins to blow, its graceful sprays unfold,
The lark's last song rings in the violet air.)
My soul has shaped from dreams a Symbol bright,
Has draped one being with the light thereof ;
But from the lofty eminence of life
To which the former prompted thought at first,
Then raised thereto, as drops the lark from heaven,
So has my soul sunk down. I rise again
On stronger wings supported, (God make strong !)
But of my dream-born emblem nevermore
Can man or angel count me worthy now.
Shall it remain a fair but faded rose
Betwixt thy secret leaves, close-written book
Of memory ? I count it wiser far
To set my Symbol in thy face, fair world,
To shine in beauty ! I renounce it wholly,
I make my lapse and loss a gain for thee—
Like this green, winding lane, the end thereof
Can none behold. Accept it, gentle world,
Be worthy thou, fulfil what wants in me !
So as the moon new-born this month of May
Doth wax each night, this star of thine and mine
Will amplify in meaning ; should it prove
That in far years its lustrous beam matured
Shall shine on thee, the daylight of the mind,

Remember him who set that flaming torch
On his soul's heights to burn, but fell therefrom,
And greaten, greaten, more ! Peace fill thy heart,
And be thou pure for me, for me be strong,
My falls retrieve, while I go faring forth,
With none to follow, on a bolder quest,
My part to act, the Crown of Life to find.
If I should set it on the brows I love,
Thou too wilt reign beneath it, thou in him.
And so farewell.—O, all things great be Thine !
If from the apex of the soul I cry,
Believe the news I send of realms unknown ;
My friends, my lovers, judge me worthy you,
And seek in Avalon the Rose thereof,
Which blooms conceal'd, and think me worthy that !

II.

If one that loved thee once renounce thee now,
Thou Saint and Seraph, do I love thee less ?
Fair moon that soar'd above the heaven of youth,
Betwixt dark clouds of passion and pride look'd forth,
And all clouds faded round thee, all fires died,
But thy pure flame, thy torch of shining light
Increased for ever as the moon in air !

My soul hath lapsed ! I bade thy beam withdraw !
In night I dwelt, till strove the god within,
By stronger spells than even thou can'st weave

Invoking help once more. Abide with me,
New strength divine, and Thou, the Source thereof,
The awful Word forgive! My heart is set
In worship towards Thee, until death 'tis set;
Because Thy hand hath spared, which might have smote!
Ah, raise me rather, unto Thee lead on!
I ask not wealth, I ask not Fame in life;
The Light I seek. I stand with staff in hand,
And there is nothing on the earth or sea
To stay me now. Thou lurest, ocean grey,
How thy white waves roll in! Dim, clouded sky,
Break over me, eternal blue come forth!
Dame Nature calls and ballad voice of Spring—
Sweet mistress, mother of the life of man,
And gentle maid who dost the world renew,
Behold I come! A hundred stars unveil,
The clouds have vanish'd, the supernal vault,
The glass of vision and of ecstasy,
Its concave surface spreads. The moon therein
Doth like a spirit from a crystal pure
In light pass off, and here like angels' wings,
The winds of night among the ancient trees,
Thy trees, O God—pass in a storm of sound!

Behold, as brilliant as that Queen of Night
Departing now, I mark two moons ascend,
Distinct henceforth, to light the heaven of life—
It is the double moon of Israfel!

It is the Emblem from the human soul
Which prompted that divided. Bright they shine !
I see the individual light of each
Eclipse their mingled beam ; I see them grow
The emblem grows for ever, it compels
The hearts of men, it lights the age to come,
It is the spirit of the age new-born
In all its qualities and strength resumed,
An awful pantacle ! Thy face shines too,
Its graces shine for ever. Thou art pale,
And pure, and saintly, of demeanour high,
And on that bright baptismal robe of thine
There is no spot—the maid of Christus thou,
A silent spirit in the haunted halls
Of Avalon.

And so the tale is done,
The strange, divine romance is ended now,
Though in the heart its music rings away !
The strength of mind upon thy beauty wrought,
In brooding dream, the sacred work of light,
The *magnum opus*, in the sage's gold
Resulting ; it has brought thy Symbol forth
From out the mystic crucible of thought,
That brilliant vision with a mien like thee
Which is not thou. The heart confused them long,
The brain divided next, and now they shine
With individual lustre. Yea, 'tis done !

Now, I go forth to find the Truth of God,
And with thy Symbol high this star renew ;
Be all the merit of the world's new birth
By free gift thine —thy Crown of Life and Light;
And thus the sign which out of thee came forth,
O virgin-prince, shall merge once more in thee !



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE SOUL'S WINDOWS.

Thou spiritual light
Which, like the stars at night,
In human eyes dost burn and burn away—
Fair light, bright light,
By whose translucent, emblematic ray
The solemn mystery of soul in sight
Is shown in earthly day —
Most beautiful, all hail !
The vesture and the veil
Of holy life, of life intense, immortal,
Light hiding Light Divine, grace hiding Grace,
Veil of the Secret Shrine, the Holy Place —
Hail, Veil of Isis, hail the Temple's starry portal !

The morning darkness whitens,
The mist of twilight lightens,
All the low sky brightens ;
When the great day-star soars upward, O the blaze and
the gold
On the streams and rolling seas !
And, how fairer far than these !
On the gentle eyes, the human eyes whose lids unfold !

Dark eyes and bright eyes passing all the day,
How they shine round us, how their lightnings play !
How the bright thoughts make them sparkle, how the
 deep thoughts make them burn,
How the love, the love within them, makes the fond eyes
 yearn !

O mystery of shining eyes, each one a world around me,
When e'er our casual glances meet, I know the Soul hath
 found me ;

The Soul herself is shining forth, the spirit speaketh there,
Mind unto mind gives answer and the Inmost Shrine is bare.

For, lo, the eyes round all the face a burning nimbus make !
The body from the light within doth grace and lustre take;
The spirit strips its vestures off, it lifts the fleshly veil,
 And in the Secret Shrine, the Holy Place,
 Immortal Truth of Love, we see thy face—
The presence which informs, the god within, we hail !



FROM LANE TO COAST.

Whene'er I pause in verdant summer lane,
Perchance, as now, at evening, nothing more
I ask or seek. I see the pale blue sky
Suffused with dreamy melody of larks,
And all transfigured in the waning light
Far winds the path before me. If an elm
Above the hedge should rise, in the soft warm air
Its lightest branches scarcely seem to move,
And on the soothing green of either bank
The sight rests thankful. There the starwort shines
The rabbit-parsley spreads its graceful sprays,
Wild musk so modest in the grass conceals
Its golden head.

When in some mead I stand
All rich with scent of clover, while a stream
Winds by, with willows on the banks thereof,
And may-trees all in blossom, while I see
Amidst its ancient elms some ancient church
Facing the bright west with embattled tower
And red-tiled roof all glowing ; o'er the stream
I lean and watch the dancing swarm of gnats,
And hear far off upon the broad high-road

The beat of horses' hoofs, or sounding horn
Before some thatch'd old-fashion'd wayside inn,
And then so long as any lark will sing—
One sings all day—no more I ask than this.

But when from some strait road—as this to night—
Forth on the lonely sea with eager steps
Alone I issue, when I stand thereby,
And feel the gentle winnowing of wings
About me—the soft south wind's dove-like wings—
When all the wide expanse of crinkled sea
Expands before me, there no sail in sight,
(With faces ruddy in the light of evening
Forth come the shrimpers with their shoulder'd nets
To dredge the shallows) then my heart no more
Can rest contented ; suddenly reveal'd,
I see the vastness of the world and man,
The ample scope of life ; my nature longs
For some broad sphere of action, speech, and
thought,
To seek for which the sea's voice urges forth.



THE SEA-FOWL.

Across the wide and high
Vault of the evening sky
One sea-fowl wings his solitary flight,
Seekest thou, Bird, thy nest,
Or wilt thou journey west,
Where yonder sun descends and clouds burn bright?

What can compare with thee,
Thou rover of the sea,
So valiant-hearted? Lo, thy breast is bare
To the wild wind, and thou
With thine undaunted brow
Darest the dangers of the sea and air!

The mellow sunbeams shine
On those white wings of thine
As thou dost voyage o'er the salt sea-foam;
In port for wind and tide
The anchor'd ships abide,
Thou only can'st uncheck'd, untiring roam.

Soul-strength which will not fail,
Though wind and storm assail,
This, this supports thee ! On one purpose true
Its energies unspent
Are ever kept intent,
And so thou soarest onward through the blue.

Thou dost not pause nor tire,
A subtle inward fire
Is burning in thy heart and in thy brain ;
While mine eyes droop and ache,
Which follow in thy wake,
My thoughts pursue thee vainly o'er the main.

Now art thou lost at length,
God give thy pinions strength !
Fair flight be thine, sweet rest on distant shore !
Thou cam'st I know not whence,
Thou hast departed hence,
In life and time I may not see thee more.

But souls which dare like thee
The sea winds and the sea
Have depths and heights unknown to things that die ;
They change but still must be,
And being will be free,
And they are kindred to eternity !

AURELIA ;

THE SPIRITUAL CHRYSALIS.

“Men and beasts wilt thou preserve, O Lord.”—*Ps.* xxxv.

“The worm that we crush beneath our feet may, in the course of ages, become a supreme Buddha.”

SPENCE HARDY'S *Manual of Buddhism.*

As I sail'd idly o'er the sea this day
The land-wind bore a butterfly far out
Above my head, its frail wings beating vainly ;
Could my stretch'd hand have reach'd it, I had borne
The blithesome insect gladly back to shore ;
It pass'd, blown onward, in the sunlight lost
And distance. Like a death-trap gleam'd the sea
Beneath it, and the dancing waves drew down
(As magnets draw) those drooping, wearied wings.
I will not say the creature sank indeed,
For anchor'd boats rock'd idly out at sea,
Where the poor, pitiful, bewilder'd thing
Might rest in truth, though not return to shore :
I think the sea received it, the light wings
Were bruised and buffeted and broken there.

God knows I love the life He grants to me,
And sacred hold for this the meanest life

Which is not harmful, so a pang pass'd through
My heart for this sea-drifted butterfly !
My soul in fancy to herself assumed
That feeble shape and beat in fancy there
On every wind dependent ; watch'd in fright
The swirling tide beneath her, felt the salt
And cold sea-spray her tiny wings benumb,
And sinking, shrinking, saw those shining waves
Leap up to meet her ; and the death therein
Because so foreign to a field-born life
For that seem'd dreadful. But to-night I stand
With all my spirit by the wind made strong,
And I see eastward a gigantic cloud
Of awful blackness fill the midnight sky ;
The high grey sea beats sullenly, its crests
Of seething foam a white, weird light give out ;
As now that sea swells, on the wide beach chafing,
My nature swells within me, and therein
The night makes light, the cold makes warmth, the noise
Of breakers surging on the sand and stones
Makes in my soul a silence, where the voice
Of inspiration speaketh clear and loud.

A sorrow suffer'd is a progress made,
Pain magnifies the nature which endures,
And I believe, beyond all pain and grief,
Death greatens life. Friends, if the martyr's pangs
Exalt beyond all measure and enthrone

The stedfast spirit through its tortures true,
May we not hold that hard, untimely deaths,
In some peculiar, undetermined way,
Do compensate the nature wrung thereby ?
Who proves it error ? Does the bird whose nest
Is scorch'd about her in a burning wood,
Yet who'll not leave the five white eggs within,
Win nothing from endurance ? No new sense
From that new, terrible, and splendid scene
Unfolding round her ? The bird's soul (believe it !)
Goes forth inform'd from those singed plumes of hers
With some new sense indelibly endow'd
And greaten'd by it. The drown'd insect too,
Did that win nothing from the shining waste
Of waves about it ? It is plain thereon
The sun-born insect faced immensity,
The visage of the vast and awful truth
Of solemn life intense this wind's light toy
Faced once and perish'd. From the sea-drench'd shell
The animating principle thereof
Hath now gone forth intensified, enlarged.

I thank thee, Lord, Who in the soul hast sown
Imperishable seeds of perfect life,
That no life dies, howe'er minute or mean,
But multiplies its nature in the flesh
And individual strength by death renews
How every crevice of the earth is fill'd

With plenitude of being, which indeed
May strive and suffer but it grows through all,
And every germ and point the centre is
Of circles wid'ning to infinity !
The end of life is, therefore, still more life,
Want widens, loss increases, torture crowns,
Grief strengthens, renovating death reclaims.
Face death then calmly, be it thine or mine,
Look onward, upward, both for beast and man,
Aye even this sea-drifted butterfly !



TO ONE IN AVALON.

I saw thee serving on a winter morn,
When all within the church was dark and dim,
And in the pauses of the priest's deep chant
One voice divine o'er all the choir behind
Rang out like Michael's voice.
And when the mist began to lift without
And all the windows whiten'd, thy pure face,
Thy saintly face, through clouds of incense shone,
And as that voice rose o'er the rest supreme,
And hush'd the hearers' hearts, till no foot moved,
Nor bead was told, nor leaf of missal turn'd,
So shone thy virgin beauty there supreme,
One form divine o'er all adoring there
Erect as Michael stood Then dream'd I thus.

The Plague had stricken in the stifling town
 Its thousands down ;
And all day long the sun, with blazing eye,
 Burn'd in the brazen sky ;
There was no wind in any lane or street,
 The fervid heat

Of flints and flagstones scorch'd the passer's feet ;
And in the daytime pallid, in the night
 Baleful and bright,
The ghastly comet circled in the height.

At length it sank ; the spell which held the breeze
Was broken then ; a shiver through the trees
 As though a dreamer pass'd ;
The storm's wild spirit o'er the panting town
Through welcome clouds, long pray'd for, now look'd down ;
And, in the pauses of the rising blast,
 The sultry rain fell fast ;
In vivid flashes leap'd and danced on high
The steel-blue lightning through the broken sky.

Through all the week the rain and tempest reign'd,
And then the vapours lifting left unstain'd
 Heaven's shining height ;
The cold, clear air restored by slow degrees
Man's vanish'd vigour, and the dread disease
 Ceased in a single night ;
And I went forth one morning in the sun,—
Through cleansed and shining streets again went forth,—
A bracing wind was blowing from the North,
 The Plague was done.

My steps were turn'd to seek the House of Prayer,
The scatter'd worshippers, in twos and threes
 Assembled there,

Thank'd God for life, still trembling on their knees ;
But in the chancel, serving, there wast thou,
With the same light upon thy pale, broad brow,
The same calm face, the same collected mien,

 All in thy white array'd ;
There was no trouble in thy face, thine eyes,
Still on thy book directed, neither turn'd
To left nor right ; there was no motion seen
In thy mild lips—the soul adoring pray'd
Alone in thee ; in thee no fever burn'd
Of fear or grief. . . . The stricken victim's cries,
The sudden illness in the open road,
The dreadful silence where the pest abode,
The desolation and the reign of death,
Pass'd like a horror of the night alone
Before thy modest mien reserved and stately ;
The incense rose, no more the Plague's foul breath,
I heard the silver Mass-Bell sweetly ringing,
I heard the Credo that the choir was singing,

 No more the death-bell's tone,
No more the voice of mourning heard so lately ;
And for the spotted, drawn, and fever'd cheek,
The shrunken body as an infant's weak,
Erect I saw thee in thy wonted place,
A youth in vigour and a maid in grace,

 With smooth and shining face,
With auburn hair, with visage smooth and fair,
And faintly bloom'd the Rose of Beauty there.

My soul was kindled in this breast of mine,
I say my soul rose at the sight of thee
 Inform'd with fire divine,
And spoke in secret thus :—The pure of heart,
 Alike in deed unstain'd,
Insure their nature's immortality !
Because thy spirit is so pure and high
 Thou didst not change nor die ;
Because thy body from the world apart
 Is set for sacred services,
 And thou dost daily school
 Thy youthful nature's impulses,
And in thy veins dost keep the pulses cool,
 Thou hast true life attain'd !
Beneath thy feet the passion and the flush
Of fever pass, and thou art poised o'er all,
The tumult spared, the battle and the crush,
Art free to follow on the soul's high call ;
I say thou livest in thy peace unceasing,
And life expanding makes that peace increasing !

Immortal Nature, what is pure like thee
I know is wedded to Eternity ;
I know such spirits through the starry spaces
Subsist for ever with increasing graces !
O ever thus do thou reserved apart
Thy chaste thoughts cherish in thine inmost heart,
May they, though stain'd, who love to see thee pure

For that be pardon'd and in that endure,
May he that sought betimes the House of Prayer
And found thee serving when the Plague was there,
Thy gentle picture ever keep within
To save his spirit from the Plague of Sin !



THE HIGHER LIFE.

Where would'st thou seek it? In what spheres afar,
That life unlike to thine?
Say, hast thou dream'd of some more perfect star,
Bright, beautiful, divine,
Some star wherein thy soul shall find
Those hopes so proud and high,
Whose blooms unfolding in thy youthful mind
By some sad chance did early fade and die?
If such thy thought, God grant thy soul at last
Some painful path whereby that end to reach—
That end of act, of aspiration vast,
And strength and scope for each.
But, ah, too oft thine earthly dreams incline
To some luxurious state of idle ease,
And things of sense debasing things divine,
Thou dreamest dimly of enchanted seas,
Of amaranthine bowers,
Of pleasant sunlight and of shady trees,
And soft repose on flowers!

Thou thinkest at the best—My years of toil
Are labour all in vain,
Since tempests rend and spoil,
Or on a barren soil
Rotteth mine early grain ;
But in that land invisible, unknown,
Crude fruits transplanted may to prime have grown,
All blighted flowers have blown ;
Rest will be mine, more craved as years increase ,
And that best boon, long sought, eternal Peace !

Ah, we must seek some loftier goal to gain,
We must not shrink from pain,
Nor cry for peace and rest,
Who would that higher life attain,
The beautiful, the blest !
To all true seekers comes a voice to-day,
A Voice of Majesty, a Word of Splendour,
Which bids us rise, forsake our former way,
And all ourselves surrender.
It doth not tell us in the eternal years
The place to us assign'd,
Nor whisper—"God will wipe away thy tears !"
To calm the anxious mind ;
It holds not out the hope of bliss to come,
Throne, crown, or starry home,
Nor blessing on our deed,
Nor help in sorest need,

Man's soul alone supports him in such service high.

It shows the Perfect Way,

It shows the path to-day,

The path from night, the path to light,

Sole refuge in the Soul's distress

From vanity and littleness.

It shows the method of the life divine,

The life unlike to ours,

It is the Spirit of that steep incline

Which leads the hero not to languid bowers,

But to the source of strength where he renews his
powers.

The soul is tired alike of loss and gain,

The sense is deadened to delight and pain ;

The heart alone still aches with dull desire :

What can new life inspire ?

Thou mystic Voice, ring out through earth and sky,

Proclaim the holy end !

Bid man to self by self-devotion die,

And so to life ascend.

Cry out—" O spirit of a lineage high,

Strong human soul, for man thy life expend,

And so achieve Eternity ! "

The stars in silence shed their tranquil light,

While slowly seaward sinks the moon from sight,

And dream-like creeping nigher

On watchful eyes long gazing far away,
 The rising day
(The dawn symbolic, the bright, the perfect day)
Breaks in the east a tide of scarlet fire
(A cleansing, sacred, vivifying flame
 To purge the world from shame,
 The world's desire)
In silence sweeping o'er the shores of night.

And, lo, the soul from out the life of sense
 Ascends with starry head !
To self indeed the soul is dead
 Yet thrills with life intense.
 It climbs the rocky stair,
 It breathes the mountain air,
Ascending brightens, as it brightens grows,
 More feels, more loves, more knows,
 Till with gigantic powers—
 Humanity for thee—
The perfect spirit like a titan towers
 King of the earth and sea !

The vision fades, the light recedes,
The mystic voice remains and pleads
 In every human breast !
Let it be heard, the heart is stirr'd,
 Is not its teaching best ?

It tells us on this earthly sphere
To labour hard, to labour here ;
Not for ourselves, O friends, it bids us go,
But because tears fall fast,
And faith and hope have pass'd,
And all around our path man wastes in want and woe !

And since beyond must be
Realms which no eye can see,
There may we find the soul
Free from all flesh control,
Free from the bonds of flesh,
Free to begin afresh !
Use cannot blind it then—
No, nor the words of men—
But some large sphere of action, not of rest,
Will bring new aims and higher,
Thoughts that will still aspire,
While in a nobler mission will the nobler man be blest.

THE END.

