

to answer their continually balked desires. These are called, in the language of their world, Poets. Of late, passing near it, I was arrested by the music one of them was drawing from an ivory lute. I hovered nearer and nearer; he seemed to feel my approach, for his music grew to more imploring sweetness. But as I was about to descend and embrace him, he drew from the chords some full notes of triumph, drooped his head, and died.

I shall never forget the fair, sad picture. He sat beneath a noble oak, and had bound his head with a chaplet of its leaves. His feet were bare and bleeding; his robes, once of shining white, all torn and travel-stained. His face was still beautiful; the brow calmly noble; but over the cheeks many tears had flowed; they were wan, thin, and marked by the woes of earth. His head leaned forward on the ivory lute, from which drooped a chaplet of faded roses and broken laurel leaves.

I saw that he had been so wasted by famine, that the approach of sympathy was too much for his frail frame. I tasted the springs round about; every one was brackish. I broke the fruit from the trees, and its very touch put fever in the veins. Then I wept my first tears for the perished nightingale; and flew to bring some balsam for this suffering race.

I may not return, for not oftener than once in a hundred years is it permitted one of our order to visit this sorrowful sphere. But thou, my bird, who, like the aloe and the amaranth, art a link between it and us, do thou carry this kernel and plant among them one germ of true life. It is the kernel of the fruit which satisfied my thirst for all eternity, and if thou canst plant it on earth, will produce a tree large enough for the whole race.

Swift sped the golden wing on this best mission. But where to plant the kernel! It needed a rich soil, and the mountains were too cold; a virgin soil, and neither plain nor valley had kept themselves unprofaned, but brought forth weeds and poison as well as herbs and flowers. Even the desert sands had not forborne, but cheated the loneliness with flowers of gaudy colors, but which crumbled at the touch.

The Phoenix flew from region to region, till even his strong wings were wearied. He could not rest, for if he

pauses on the earth he dies. At last he saw amid a wide sea a little island, with not a blade of vegetation on it. He dropt here the kernel, and took refuge as swiftly as possible in another sphere.

Ah, too hasty Phoenix! He thought the island a volcanic birth, but it was the stony work of the coral insects, and as yet without fertility. The wind blew the precious seed into the sea.

There it lies, still instinct with divine life, for this is indestructible. But unless some being arise, bold enough to dive for it amid the secret caves of the deep sea, and wise enough to find a proper soil in which to plant it when recovered, it is lost to the human race forever. And when shall we have another Poet able to call down another Angel, since He died of his love, and even the ivory lute is broken.

CLOUDS.

YE clouds! — the very vagaries of grace
 So wild and startling, fanciful and strange,
 And changing momentarily, yet pure and true,
 Distorted never, marring beauty's mould:
 But now, — ye lay a mass, a heaped up mass
 Of interwoven beams, blue, rose, and green,
 Not blended, but infused in one soft hue,
 That yet has found no name. A sudden thrill,
 A low, sweet thrill of motion stirred the air,
 Perhaps a tremor of self-conscious joy,
 That the contiguous breezes, moving slow,
 Transmitted each to each: — instant as thought,
 Yet imperceptibly, your form dissolved
 Into a curtain of so fine a stain,
 The young sky-spirits that behind it clung,
 Betrayed their glancing shapes: a moment more,
 Solid and steep and piled like earthly mount,
 With juts for climber's foot, upholding firm,
 And long smooth top, where he may gladly fling
 His palpitating form, and proudly gaze
 Upon a world below, and humbly up,
 For Heaven is still beyond.

Stretches now
 The gathering darkness on the silent West,

Smooth-edged yet tapering off in gloomy point,
 With that long line of sultry red beneath,
 As if its tightly vested bosom bore
 The lightning close concealed.
 Ye fair and soft and ever varying Clouds!
 Where in your golden circuit, find ye out
 The Armory of Heaven, rifling thence
 Its gleaming swords? — Ye tearful Clouds!
 Feminine ever, light or dark or grim,
 I fear ye not, I wonder and admire,
 And gladly would I charter this soft wind,
 That now is here, and now will undulate
 Your yielding lines, to bear me softly hence,
 That I might stand upon that golden edge,
 And bathe my brow in that delicious gloom,
 And leaning, gaze into the sudden gap
 From whence the Lightning passes!

Night has come, and the bright eyes of stars,
 And the voice-gifted wind, and severed wide,
 Ye flee, like startled spirits through the sky
 Over and over to the mighty North,
 Returnless race, forgetting and forgot
 Of that red, western cradle whence ye sprung!

As wild, as fitful, is the gathering mass
 Of this eventful world, — enlarging heaps
 Of care and joy and grief we christen Life.
 Like these, they shine full oft in green and gold,
 Or brightly ravishing foam: — utterly fond,
 We seek repose, confiding on their breast,
 And lo, they sink and sink, most noiseless sink,
 And leave us in the arms of nothingness.
 Like these, they pass, in ever-varying form,
 As glancing angels, or assassin grim,
 Sharp-gleaming daggers, 'neath concealing garb!

Might we but dwell within the upper Heaven!
 In the immensity of soul, — the realm
 Of stars serene, and suns and cloudless moons,
 Ranging delighted, while far down below
 The Atmosphere of life concocts its shapes
 Evil or beautiful, and smile on all,
 As gorgeous pictures spread beneath the feet.

Oh Thou, supreme infinitude of Thought!
 Thou, who art height and depth! whither is Life,
 And what are we, but vanishing shadows all
 O'er the eternal ocean of thy Being!
 It is thy will, the sunbeam of thy will
 That perviates and modifies the air
 Of mortal life, in which the spirit dwells:
 Thou congregatest these joys and hopes and griefs,
 In thee they beam or gloom. Eternal Sun!

Let them not come between my soul and thee;
 Let me rejoice in thy o'erflooding light,
 Fill up my being's urn, until a Star,
 Once kindled, ne'er extinct, my soul may burn
 In the pure light of an excelling love,
 Giving out rays, as lavishly as given!

“THE FUTURE IS BETTER THAN THE PAST.”

Not where long-passed ages sleep,
 Seek we Eden's golden trees,
 In the future, folded deep,
 Are its mystic harmonies.

All before us lies the way,
 Give the past unto the wind;
 All before us is the Day,
 Night and darkness are behind.

Eden with its angels hold,
 Love and flowers and coolest sea,
 Is not ancient story told,
 But a glowing prophecy.

In the spirit's perfect air,
 In the passions tame and kind,
 Innocence from selfish care
 The real Eden we shall find.

It is coming, it shall come,
 To the patient and the striving,
 To the quiet heart at home,
 Thinking wise and faithful living.

When all error is worked out,
 From the heart and from the life;
 When the Sensuous is laid low,
 Through the Spirit's holy strife;

When the Soul to Sin hath died,
 True and beautiful and sound;
 Then all earth is sanctified,
 Upsprings Paradise around.

Then shall come the Eden days,
 Guardian watch from Seraph-eyes;
 Angels on the slanting rays,
 Voices from the opening skies.