
COLOR AND LIGHT.

The word unto the nations came
And shone o'er many a darkened spot;
The pure white lustre of its flame
The darkness comprehended not;

Till broken into colored light,
 Within the prism of the mind,
 It traced upon the murky night
 A rainbow arch with hues defined.

And where the narrowed sunbeams turned
 To colors all distinct, yet blended,
 The soul of man within him burned, —
 The darkness dimly comprehended.

When shall the pure ethereal fire
 Glow with a white interior heat?
 When shall the Truth of God inspire
 The shaping mind with light complete?

Never, — until a second youth
 Renews the earth; then may we see
 The primal Light, — the uncolored Truth,
 And gather life eternally.

MY THOUGHTS.

Many are the thoughts that come to me
 In my lonely musing;
 And they drift so strange and swift,
 There's no time for choosing
 Which to follow, for to leave
 Any, seems a losing.

When they come, they come in flocks,
 As on glancing feather,
 Startled birds rise one by one
 In autumnal weather,
 Waking one another up
 From the sheltering heather.

Some so merry that I laugh,
 Some are grave and serious.
 Some so trite, their least approach
 Is enough to weary us: —
 Others fit like midnight ghosts,
 Shrouded and mysterious.

There are thoughts that o'er me steal,
 Like the day when dawning;
 Great thoughts winged with melody
 Common utterance scorning,
 Moving in an inward tune,
 And an inward morning.

Some have dark and drooping wings,
 Children all of sorrow;
 Some are as gay, as if to-day
 Could see no cloudy morrow, —
 And yet like light and shade they each
 Must from the other borrow.

One by one they come to me
 On their destined mission;
 One by one I see them fade
 With no hopeless vision;
 For they've led me on a step
 To their home Elysian.

THE RIDDLE.

“Ye bards, ye prophets, ye sages,
 Read to me if ye can,
 That which hath been the riddle of ages,
 Read me the riddle of MAN!”

Then came the bard with his lyre
 And the sage with his pen and scroll,
 And the prophet with his eye of fire,
 To unriddle a human soul.

And the soul stood up in its might,
 Its stature they could not scan,
 And it rayed out a dazzling mystic light,
 And shamed their wisest plan.

Yet sweetly the bard did sing,
 And learnedly talked the sage,
 And the seer flashed by with his lightning wing,
 Soaring beyond his age.

Of life-fire snatched from Jove;
 Of a forfeited age of gold;
 Of providence and deathless love
 The chanting minstrel told.

The sage of wisdom spoke,
 Of doctrines, books, and schools,
 And how when they broke from learning's yoke,
 All men were turned to fools.

And the prophet told of heaven,
 And the golden age to come, —
 “Ye must follow the sun through the gates of even,
 And he will see you home.”

Many a dream they saw,
 And many a creed did build;
 Each in its turn was truth and law,
 While they who sought were filled.

But the soul stood up, still freed
 From the prison of each plan, —
 He was a riddle they could not read,
 This simple-seeming man.

He stood in his mystery still,
 Of ever-changing light;

Many, yet one, he baffled their skill,
And put their dreams to flight.

His feet on the earth were planted,
His head o'er the stars rose dim,
And ever unto himself he chanted
A half articulate hymn.

In words confused and broken,
He chanted his mystic dream,
And but half of the half his lips had spoken,
Floated on Time's dull stream.

They, who heard of the song which he
Sang on from time to time,
Gave it the name Philosophy,
And echoed the olden rhyme.

But their systems all are vain,
And the overflowing soul
Sweeps lyre and song to the dark inane,
And blots the old sage's scroll.

And man, the great riddle, is still
Unread to the dreamer's eye, —
We are ever afloat, as we ply our skill,
On the sea of mystery.

THE OCEAN.

————— "In a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
That brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore." —

WORDSWORTH.

Tell me, brother, what are we,
Spirits bathing in the sea
Of Deity!
Half afloat, and half on land,
Wishing much to leave the strand,
Standing, gazing with devotion,
Yet afraid to trust the ocean, —
Such are we.

Wanting love and holiness,
To enjoy the wave's caress;
Wanting faith and heavenly hope,
Buoyantly to bear us up;
Yet impatient in our dwelling,
When we hear the ocean swelling,
And in every wave that rolls

We behold the happy souls
Peacefully, triumphantly
Swimming on the smiling sea,
Then we linger round the shore,
Lovers of the earth no more.

Once, — 't was in our infancy,
We were drifted by this sea
To the coast of human birth,
To this body and this earth :
Gentle were the hands that bore
Our young spirits to the shore;
Gentle lips that bade us look
Outward from our cradle-nook
To the spirit-bearing ocean
With such wonder and devotion,
As, each stilly sabbath day,
We were led a little way,
Where we saw the waters swell
Far away from inland dell,
And received with grave delight
Symbols of the Infinite : —
Then our home was near the sea ;
" Heaven was round our infancy ;"
Night and day we heard the waves
Murmuring by us to their caves ;
Floated in unconscious life
With no later doubts at strife,
Trustful of the Upholding Power,
Who sustained us hour by hour.

Now we've wandered from the shore,
Dwellers by the sea no more ;
Yet at times there comes a tone
Telling of the visions flown,
Sounding from the distant sea
Where we left our purity :
Distant glimpses of the surge
Lure us down to ocean's verge ;
There we stand with vague distress,
Yearning for the measureless,
By half-wakened instincts driven,
Half loving earth, half loving heaven,
Fearing to put off and swim,
Yet impelled to turn to Him,
In whose life we live and move,
And whose very name is Love.

Grant me courage, Holy One,
To become indeed thy son,
And in thee, thou Parent-Sea,
Live and love eternally.