
NEED OF A DIVER.

“Far o'er the track of dreary, stormy ages,
Kind winds one blossom wafted from the tree
Of life that grew in Eden, and this, cast
Into their garden, made it what you see,
A bloom upon the face of hard Necessity.”—MS.

THE PHOENIX darted on glittering wing in quest of our earth. For an Angel had placed in his beak a kernel from the fruit of the tree of Life, and said, Not far from the sun of yonder system is one poor world, where this tree is not known. Its inhabitants deck themselves with blooms that wither, they feed on fruits that never satisfy. Feeding they famish, living they die. Many among them are too degraded even to dream of a better life. But there are others who with sweet laments that pierce the skies, accuse their destiny, and call upon an ineffable love

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.
