

ODE TO BEAUTY.

Who gave thee, O Beauty !
The keys of this breast ;
To thee who betrayed me
To be ruined or blest ?
Say when in lapsed ages
Thee knew I of old ;
Or what was the service,
For which I was sold ?
When first my eyes saw thee,
I found me thy thrall,
By magical drawings,
Sweet tyrant of all !

Love drinks at thy banquet
Remediless thirst ;
Thou intimate stranger !
Thou latest and first !

Lavish, lavish promiser !
Nigh persuading gods to err ;
Guest of million painted forms
Which in turn thy glory warms,
The frailest leaf, the mossy bark,
The acorn's cup, the rain drop's arc,
The shining pebble of the pond,
Thou inscribest with a bond,
In thy momentary play,
Would bankrupt nature to repay.

Ah ! what avails it
To hide or to shun
Whom the Infinite One
Hath granted his throne ?
The heaven high over
Is the deep's lover.

The sun and sea,
 Informed by thee,
 Before me run
 And draw me on,
 Yet fly me still,
 As Fate refuses
 To me the heart Fate for me chooses.
 Is it that my opulent soul
 Was mingled from the generous whole,—
 Sea-valleys and the deep of skies
 Furnished several supplies,
 And the sands whereof I'm made
 Draw me to them self-betrayed.
 I turn the proud portfolios,
 Which hold the grand designs
 Of Salvator, of Guercino,
 And Piranesi's lines ;
 I hear the lofty pœans
 Of the masters of the shell,
 Who heard the starry music
 And recount the numbers well ;
 Olympian bards who sung
 Divine Ideas below,
 Which always find us young,
 And always keep us so.
 Oft in streets or humblest places
 I detect far-wandered graces,
 Which from Eden wide astray
 In lowly homes have lost their way.

Thee gliding through the sea of form,
 As the lightning through the storm,
 Somewhat not to be possessed,
 Somewhat not to be caressed,
 No feet so fleet could ever find,
 No perfect form could ever bind.
 Thou, eternal fugitive,
 Hovering over all that live,
 Quick and skilful to inspire

Sweet extravagant desire,
 Starry space and lily bell
 Filling with thy roseate smell,
 Wilt not give the lips to taste
 Of the nectar which thou hast.

All that's good and great, with thee
 Stands in deep conspiracy,
 Thou hast bribed the dark and lonely
 To report thy features only,
 And the cold and purple morning
 Itself with thoughts of thee adorning ;
 The leafy dell, the city mart,
 Equal trophies of thine art ;
 E'en the flowing azure air
 Thou hast touched for my despair ;
 And if I languish into dreams,
 Again I meet the ardent beams.
 Queen of things ! I dare not die
 In Being's deeps past ear and eye,
 Lest there I find the same deceiver
 And be the game of Fate forever.
 Dread Power, but dear ! if God thou be,
 Unmake me quite, or give thyself to me !