
SILENCE AND SPEECH.

A LITTLE pleasant bubbling up
From the unfathomable ocean,
A little glimmering from the unmeasured sun,
A little noise, a little motion —
Such is human speech :
I to thee would teach
A truth diviner, deeper
Than this empty strife —
For thou art the keeper
Of the wells of life.

Godlike Silence ! I would woo thee —
Leave behind this thoughtless clamor,
Journey upward, upward to thee,
Put on thy celestial armor.
Let us speak no more,
Let us be divinities ;
Let poor mortals prate and roar ;
Know we not how small it is
To be ever uttering,
Babbling and muttering ?

Thou canst never tell the whole
Of thine unmanageable soul.
Deeper than thy deepest speech,
Wiser than thy wisest thought,
Something lies thou canst not reach,
Never to the surface brought.

Masses without form or make,
Sleeping gnomes that never wake,
Genii bound by magic spells,
Fairies and all miracles,
Shapes unclassed and wonderful,
Huge and dire and beautiful,
Dreams and hopes and prophecies
Struggling to ope their eyes,
All tibat is most vast and dim,
All that is most good and bad,
Demon, sprite, and cherubim,
Spectral troops and angels glad,
Things that stir not, yet are living,
Up to the light forever striving
Thoughts whose faces are averted,
Guesses dwelling in the dark,
Instincts not to be diverted
From their ever-present mark—
Such thy inner soul, O man,
Which no outward eye may scan,
Wonderful, most wonderful—
Terrible and beautiful!
Speak not, reason not— but live;
Reins to thy true nature give,
And in each unconscious act
Forth will shine the hidden Fact.

Yet this smooth surface thou must break,
Thou must give as well as take.

Why this silence long and deep?
Dost thou wake, or dost thou sleep?
Up and speak— persuade and teach!
What so beautiful as speech?
Sing us the old song,
Be our warbling bird,
Thou hast sealed thy lips too long,
And the world must all go wrong,
If it hath no spoken word.

Out with it— thou hast it!
We would feel it, taste it.
Be our Delphic oracle,
Let the Memnon-statue sing,
Let the music rise and swell,
We will enter the ring

Where the silent Ones dwell,
And we will compel
The powers that we seek
Through us to sing— through us to speak.
And hark— Apollo's lyre!
Young Mercury, with words of fire!
And Jove— the serene Air— hath thundered,
As when by old Prometheus
The lightning stolen for our use
From out his sky was plundered!

Man to his SOUL draws near,
And silence now hath all to fear,
Her realm is invaded
Her temple degraded—
For Eloquence like a strong and turbid river
Is flowing through her cities. On forever
The mighty waves are dashing, and the sound
Disturbs the deities profound.
God through man is speaking,
And hearts and souls are waking,
Each to each his visions tells,
And all rings out like a chime of bells.
THE WORD— THE WORD— thou hast it now!
Silence befits the gods above,
But Speech is the star on manhood's brow,
The sign of truth— the sign of love.

C.