The shield.

The old man said, "Take thou this shield, my son, Long tried in battle, and long tried by age, Guarded by this thy father did engage, Trusting to this the victory they have won.

Forth from the tower Hope and Desire had built, In youth's bright morn I gazed upon the plain, - Thence came to the world's darkness now, Many a stain Marked where the blood of brave men had been spilt.

With spirit strong I buckled to the fight, What sudden chill rushes through every vein! Those fatal arms oppress me — all in vain My fading limbs seek their accustomed might. Forged were those arms for men of other mould, Our hands they fetter, crush our spirits free, I throw them on the ground and suddenly Comes back my strength — returns my spirit bold.

I stand alone, unarmed, — yet not alone, Who heeds no law but what within he finds, Trusts his own vision, not to other minds, His rights with thee — Father, aid thou thy son."

Source: The Dial (July 1840) pp. 121