Vespers.

VESPERS.

I.

SERENEST evening! whether fall
       In arrowy gold thy sunset beams,
Or dimmer radiance maketh all
       Like landscapes seen in dreams,
I joy apart with thee to walk,
I joy with thee alone to talk.
With speech is thy clear blue endowed,
Thy archipelagoes of cloud:
Of sweetest music and most rare,
I hear the utterances there,
And nightly does my being rise
To fonder converse with thy skies.
My home I from thy mists create,
Or, with thy fires incorporate,
Am lightly to the zenith swinging,
Or pouring glory on the woods,
The sunset's blessed floods.

Mine is the beauty of the hour,
Mine most, when most I feel its power.

II.

Behold the vast array of tents
       For me to sentinel to night;
An instant, — this magnificence
       Has faded out of sight.
The tents are struck: the warriors' march
Subsides along the stately arch.
I saw the sword their leader drew
       Beneath the banner's crimson edge;
'T was lightning to the common view,
To me a solemn pledge,

Unbroken as the smile of Him
Who rules those cloudy cherubim.
The sun, His mirrored smile, not yet
Upon the loving earth, has set;
Happy in his caressing fold,
The cottage roofs are domes of gold.
To sip the misty surf he stoops,
Ontarios of light he scoops
In sombrest turfs, and still for me
Alone his shining seems to be.
Mine are his thousand rays that burn,
I love, and I appropriate;
Who loves enough, creates return,
Nor can be desolate.