

THE POET.

He touched the earth, a soul of flame,
His bearing proud, his spirit high,
Filled with the heavens from whence he came,
He smiled upon man's destiny.

Yet smiled as one who knew no fear,
And felt a secret strength within,
Who wondered at the pitying tear
Shed over human loss and sin.

Lit by an inward brighter light
Than aught that round about him shone,
He walked erect through shades of night,
Clear was his pathway — but how lone!

Men gaze in wonder and in awe
Upon a form so like to theirs,
Worship the presence, yet withdraw,
And carry elsewhere warmer prayers.

Yet when the glorious pilgrim guest,
Forgetting once his strange estate,
Unloosed the lyre from off his breast
And strung its chords to human fate;

And gaily snatching some rude air,
Carrolled by idle passing tongue,
Gave back the notes that lingered there,
And in Heaven's tones earth's low lay sung;

Then warmly grasped the hand that sought
To thank him with a brother's soul,
And when the generous wine was brought,
Shared in the feast and quaffed the bowl;—

Men laid their hearts low at his feet,
And sunned their being in his light,
Pressed on his way his steps to greet,
And in his love forgot his might.

And when, a wanderer long on earth,
On him its shadow also fell,
And dimmed the lustre of a birth,
Whose day-spring was from heaven's own well;

They cherished even the tears he shed,
Their woes were hallowed by his woe,
Humanity, half cold and dead,
Had been revived in genius' glow.