

TO THE IDEAL.

Oh! what avails it thus to dream of thee,
Thou life above me, and aspire to be
A dweller in thy air serene and pure;
I wake and must this lower life endure.

Look no more on me with sun-radiant eyes,
Mine droop so dimmed, in vain my weak sense tries
To find the color of this world of clay, —
Its hue has faded, its light died away.

In charity with life, how can I live?
What most I want, does it refuse to give.
Thou, who hast laid this spell upon my soul,
Must be to me henceforth a hope and goal.

Away, thou vision! Now must there be wrought
Armor from life in which may yet be fought
A way to thee, — thy memory shall inspire,
Although thy presence is consuming fire.

As one who may not linger in the halls,
And fair domains of his ancestral home,
Goes forth to labor, yet resolves those walls
Redeemed shall see his old age cease to roam.

So exile I myself, thou dream of youth,
Thou castle where my wild thoughts wandered free.
Yet bear a heart, which through its love and truth,
Shall earn a right to throb its last with thee.

To work! with heart resigned and spirit strong,
Subdue by patient toil Time's heavy wrong;
Through nature's dullest, as her brightest ways
We will march onward, singing to thy praise.

Yet when our souls are in new forms arrayed,
Like thine, immortal, by immortal aid,
And with forgiving blessing stand beside
The clay in which they toiled and long were tried.

When comes that solemn "undetermined" hour,
Light of the soul's light! present be thy power;
And welcome be thou, as a friend who waits
With joy, a soul unsphered at heaven's gates.