

A MEETING WITH DESPAIR

As evening shaped I found me on a moor

Which sight could scarce sustain:

The black lean land, of featureless contour,

Was like a tract in pain.

"This scene, like my own life," I said, "is one

Where many glooms abide;

Toned by its fortune to a deadly dun -

Lightless on every side.

I glanced aloft and halted, pleasure-caught

To see the contrast there:

The ray-lit clouds gleamed glory; and I thought,

"There's solace everywhere!"

Then bitter self-reproaches as I stood

I dealt me silently

As one perverse--misrepresenting Good

In graceless mutiny.

Against the horizon's dim-discerned wheel

A form rose, strange of mould:

That he was hideous, hopeless, I could feel

Rather than could behold.

"'Tis a dead spot, where even the light lies spent

To darkness!" croaked the Thing.

"Not if you look aloft!" said I, intent

On my new reasoning.

"Yea--but await awhile!" he cried. "Ho-ho! -

Look now aloft and see!"

I looked. There, too, sat night: Heaven's radiant show

Had gone. Then chuckled he.