

POEMS OF MANHOOD.

LENORE.

Ah, broken is the golden bowl! the spirit flown forever!
Let the bell toll!--a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river.
And, Guy de Vere, hast thou no tear?--weep now or never more!
See! on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore!
Come! let the burial rite be read--the funeral song be sung!--
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young--
A dirge for her, the doubly dead in that she died so young.

"Wretches! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her--that she died!
How shall the ritual, then, be read?--the requiem how be sung
By you--by yours, the evil eye,--by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young?"

Peccavimus; but rave not thus! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong!

The sweet Lenore hath "gone before," with Hope, that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy bride--
For her, the fair and débonnaire, that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes--
The life still there, upon her hair--the death upon her eyes.

"Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of old days!
Let no bell toll!--lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damned Earth.
To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven--
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven--
From grief and groan to a golden throne beside the King of Heaven."

1844.

TO ONE IN PARADISE,

Thou wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine--
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!"--but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
"No more--no more--no more"--
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams--
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams!

Alas! for that accursed time
They bore thee o'er the billow,
From love to titled age and crime,
And an unholy pillow!
From me, and from our misty clime,
Where weeps the silver willow!

1835

THE COLISEUM.

Type of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length--at length--after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst,
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie,
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now--I feel ye in your strength--
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where the mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!

Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the horned moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones!

But stay! these walls--these ivy-clad arcades--
These mouldering plinths--these sad and blackened shafts--
These vague entablatures--this crumbling frieze--
These shattered cornices--this wreck--this ruin--
These stones--alas! these gray stones--are they all--
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me?

"Not all"--the Echoes answer me--"not all!
Prophetic sounds and loud, arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men--we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent--we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone--not all our fame--
Not all the magic of our high renown--
Not all the wonder that encircles us--
Not all the mysteries that in us lie--
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,

Clothing us in a robe of more than glory."

THE HAUNTED PALACE.

In the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace--
Radiant palace--reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion--
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This--all this--was in the olden
Time long ago),
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A winged odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tuned law,
Bound about a throne where, sitting

(Porphyrogene!)

In state his glory well befitting,

The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing

Was the fair palace door,

Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,

And sparkling evermore,

A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty

Was but to sing,

In voices of surpassing beauty,

The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,

Assailed the monarch's high estate.

(Ah, let us mourn!--for never morrow

Shall dawn upon him desolate !)

And round about his home the glory

That blushed and bloomed,

Is but a dim-remembered story

Of the old time entombed.

And travellers, now, within that valley,

Through the red-litten windows see

Vast forms, that move fantastically

To a discordant melody,

While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh--but smile no more.

1838.

THE CONQUEROR WORM.

Lo! 'tis a gala night

 Within the lonesome latter years!

An angel throng, bewinged, bedight

 In veils, and drowned in tears,

Sit in a theatre, to see

 A play of hopes and fears,

While the orchestra breathes fitfully

 The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,

 Mutter and mumble low,

And hither and thither fly--

 Mere puppets they, who come and go

At bidding of vast formless things

 That shift the scenery to and fro,

Flapping from out their Condor wings

 Invisible Wo!

That motley drama--oh, be sure

 It shall not be forgot!

With its Phantom chased for evermore,

 By a crowd that seize it not,

Through a circle that ever returneth in

To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!
A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!--it writhes!--with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And the angels sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out--out are the lights--out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

1838

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SILENCE.

There are some qualities--some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a twofold Silence--sea and shore--
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!

DREAMLAND.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule--
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE--out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the dews that drip all over;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters--lone and dead,
Their still waters--still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread

Their lone waters, lone and dead,--
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,--

By the mountains--near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,--
By the gray woods,--by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,--
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls,--
By each spot the most unholy--
In each nook most melancholy,--

There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the past--
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by--
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth--and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'Tis a peaceful, soothing region--
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'Tis--oh, 'tis an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not--dare not openly view it;

Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only.

Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

TO ZANTE.

Fair isle, that from the fairest of all flowers,

Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!

How many memories of what radiant hours

At sight of thee and thine at once awake!

How many scenes of what departed bliss!

How many thoughts of what entombed hopes!

How many visions of a maiden that is

No more--no more upon thy verdant slopes!

No more! alas, that magical sad sound

Transforming all! Thy charms shall please no more--

Thy memory no more! Accursed ground

Henceforward I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,

O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!

"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!"

HYMN.

At morn--at noon--at twilight dim--
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and wo--in good and ill--
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

NOTES.

20. LENORE

"Lenore" was published, very nearly in its existing shape, in 'The Pioneer' for 1843, but under the title of "The Pæan"--now first published in the POEMS OF YOUTH--the germ of it appeared in 1831.

21. TO ONE IN PARADISE

"To One in Paradise" was included originally in "The Visionary" (a tale now known as "The Assignment"), in July, 1835, and appeared as a separate poem entitled "To Ianthe in Heaven," in Burton's 'Gentleman's Magazine' for July, 1839. The fifth stanza is now added, for the first time, to the piece.

22. THE COLISEUM

"The Coliseum" appeared in the Baltimore 'Saturday Visitor' ('sic') in 1833, and was republished in the 'Southern Literary Messenger' for August 1835, as "A Prize Poem."

23. THE HAUNTED PALACE

"The Haunted Palace" originally issued in the Baltimore 'American Museum' for April, 1838, was subsequently embodied in that much admired tale, "The Fall of the House of Usher," and published in it in Burton's 'Gentleman's Magazine' for September, 1839. It reappeared in that as a separate poem in the 1845 edition of Poe's poems.

24. THE CONQUEROR WORM

"The Conqueror Worm," then contained in Poe's favorite tale of "Ligeia," was first published in the 'American Museum' for September, 1838. As a separate poem, it reappeared in 'Graham's Magazine' for January, 1843.

25. SILENCE

The sonnet, "Silence," was originally published in Burton's 'Gentleman's Magazine' for April,

26. DREAMLAND

The first known publication of "Dreamland" was in 'Graham's Magazine' for June, 1844.

37. TO ZANTE

The "Sonnet to Zante" is not discoverable earlier than January, 1837, when it appeared in the 'Southern Literary Messenger'.

28. HYMN

The initial version of the "Catholic Hymn" was contained in the story of "Morella," and published in the 'Southern Literary Messenger' for April, 1885. The lines as they now stand, and with their present title, were first published in the 'Broadway Journal for August', 1845.