

There comes a black gondola slowly
To the Palace in festival there :
And the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Has mouted the black marble stair.

There was nothing but darkness, and
midnight,
And tempest, and storm, in the
breast

Of the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi,
As his foot o'er the black marble
prest :—

The glimmering black marble stair
Where the weed in the green ooze
is clinging,

That leads to the garden so fair,
Where the nightingales softly are
singing,—

Where the minstrels new music
are stringing,
And the dancers for dancing prepare.

There rustles a robe of white satin :
There's a footstep falls light by the
stair :

There rustles a robe of white satin :
There's a gleaming of soft golden
hair :

And the Lady Irene Ricasoli
Stands near the cypress-tree
there,—

Near Mnemosyne's statue so fair,—
The Lady Irene Ricasoli,
With the light in her long golden
hair.

And the nightingales softly are sing
ing
air ;

In the mellow and moonlighted
And the minstrels their viols are
stringing ;

And the dancers for dancing pre-
pare.

"Siora," the Count said unto her,
"The shafts of ill-fortune pursue
me ;

The old grief grows newer and newer,
The old pangs are never at rest ;
And the foes that have sworn to
undo me

Have left me no peace in my
breast.

They have slandered, and wronged,
and maligned me :

Though they broke not my sword
in my hand,

They have broken my heart in my
bosom [manned.

And sorrow my youth has un-
But I love you, Irene, Irene,

With such love as the wretched
alone

Can feel from the desert within them
Which only the wretched have
known !

And the heart of Rinaldo Rinaldi
Dreads, Lady, no frown but your
own.

To others be all that you are, love—
A lady more lovely than most ;

To me—be a fountain, a star, love,
That lights to his haven the lost ;

A shrine that with tender devotion,
The mariner kneeling, doth deck

With the dank weeds yet dripping
from ocean,

And the last jewel saved from the
wreck.

"None heeds us, beloved Irene !
None will mark if we linger or fly.

Amid all the mad masks in you revel,
There is not an ear or an eye,—

Not one,—that will gaze or will
listen ;

And, save the small star in the sky
Which, to light us, so softly doth

glisten,
There is none will pursue us, Irene.

O love me, O save me, I die !
I am thine, O be mine, O beloved !

"Fly with me, Irene, Irene !
The moon drops : the morning is
near,

My gondola waits by the garden
And fleet is my own gondolier !"

What the Lady Irene Ricasoli,
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone,

Where she leaned, 'neath the black
cypress-tree,

To the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi
Replied then, it never was known.

And known, now, it never will be.

But the moon hath been melted in
morning :

And the lamps in the windows are
dead :

And the gay cavaliers from the ter-
race,

And the ladies they laughed with,
are fled ;

And the music is husht in the viols :
And the minstrels, and dancers,

are gone ;
And the nightingales now in the
garden, [one :

From singing have ceased, one by
But the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi

Still stands, where he last stood,
alone,

'Neath the black cypress-tree, near
the water,

By Mnemosyne's statue in stone.
O'er his spirit was silence and mid-
night,

In his breast was the calm of de-
spair.

He took, with a smile, from a casket
A single soft curl of gold hair,—

A wavy warm-curl of gold hair,
And into the black-bosomed water

He flung it athwart the black stair.
The skies they were changing above

him ;
The dawn, it came cold on the air ;
He drew from his bosom a kerchief—

"Would," he sighed, "that her
face was less fair !

That her face was less hopelessly
fair."

And folding the kerchief, he covered
The eyes of Mnemosyne there.

THE LAST MESSAGE.

FLING the lattice open,
And the music plain you'll hear ;
Lean out of the window,

And you'll see the lamplight clear.

There, you see the palace
Where the bridal is to-night.

You may shut the window.
Come here, to the light.

Take this portrait with you,
Look well before you go.
She can scarce be altered
Since a year ago.

Women's hearts change lightly,
(Truth both trite and olden !)
But blue eyes remain blue ;
Golden hair stays golden.

Once I knew two sisters :
One was dark and grave
As the tomb ; one radiant
And changeful as the wave.

Now away, friend, quickly !
Mix among the masks :
Say you are the bride's friend,
If the bridegroom asks.

If the bride have dark hair,
And an olive brow,
Give her this gold bracelet ;—
Come and let me know.

If the bride have bright hair,
And a brow of snow,
In the great canal there
Quick the portrait throw :

And you'll merely give her
This poor faded flower.
Thanks ! now leave your stilet
With me for an hour.

You're my friend : whatever
I ask you now to do,
If the case were altered,
I would do for you.

And you'll promise me, my mother
Shall never miss her son,
If anything should happen
Before the night is done.

VENICE.

THE sylphs and ondines,
And the sea-kings and queens,
Long ago, long ago, on the waves
built a city,
As lovely as seems
To some bard, in his dreams,
The soul of his latest love-ditty.

Long ago, long ago,—ah ! that was
 long ago
 Thick as gems on the chalices
 Kings keep for treasure,
 Were the temples and palaces
 In this city of pleasure ;
 And the night broke out shining
 With lamps and with festival,
 O'er the squares, o'er the
 streets ;
 And the soft sea went, pining
 With love, through the musical,
 Musical bridges, and marble
 retreats
 Of this city of wonder, where dwelt
 the ondines,
 Long ago, and the sylphs, and the
 sea-kings and queens,
 —Ah ! that was long ago !
 But the sylphs and ondines,
 And the sea-kings and queens
 Are fled under the waves :
 And I glide, and I glide
 Up the glimmering tide
 Through a city of graves.
 Here will I bury my heart,
 Wrapt in the dream it dream-
 ed ;
 One grave more to the many !
 One grave as silent as any ;
 Scriptured about with art,—
 For a palace this tomb once
 seemed.
 Light lips have laughed there,
 Bright eyes have beamed.
 Revel and dance ;
 Lady and lover !
 Pleasure hath quaffed there :
 Beauty hath gleamed,
 Love wooed Romance.
 Now all is over !
 And I glide, and I glide
 Up the glimmering tide,
 'Mid forms silently passing, as silent
 as any,
 Here, 'mid the waves,
 In this city of graves,
 To bury my heart—one grave more
 to the many !

ON THE SEA.

COME ! breathe thou soft, or blow
 thou bold,
 Thy coming be it kind or cold,
 Thou soul of the heedless ocean
 wind ;—
 Little I rede and little I reckon,
 Though the mast be snapt on the
 mizzen-deck,
 So thou blow her last kiss from my
 neck,
 And her memory from my mind !
 Comrades around the mast,
 The welkin is o'ercast :
 One watch is wellnigh past—
 Out of sight of shore at last !
 Fade fast, thou falling shore,
 With that fair false face of yore,
 And the love, and the life, now o'er !
 What she sought, that let her have—
 The praise of traitor and knave,
 The simper of coward and slave,
 And the worm that clings and
 stings—
 The knowledge of nobler things.
 But here shall the mighty sea
 Make moan with my heart in me,
 And her name be torn
 By the winds in scorn,
 In whose march we are moving free.
 I am free, I am free, I am free !
 Hark ! how the wild waves roar !
 Hark ! how the wild winds rave !
 Courage, true hearts and brave,
 Whom Fate can afflict no more !
 Comrades, the night is long.
 I will sing you an ancient song
 Of a tale that was told
 In the days of old,
 Of a Baron blithe and strong,—
 High heart and bosom bold,
 To strive for the right with wrong !
 “ Who left his castled home,
 When the Cross was raised in Rome,
 And swore on his sword
 To fight for the Lord,
 And the banners of Christendom.
 To die or to overcome !

“ In hauberk of mail, and helmet of
 steel,
 And armor of proof from head to
 heel,
 O, what is the wound which he shall
 feel ?
 And where the foe that shall make
 him reel ?
 True knight on whose crest the cross
 doth shine !
 They buckled his harness, brought
 him his steed—
 A stallion black of the land's best
 breed—
 Belted his spurs, and bade him God-
 speed
 'Mid the Paynim in Palestine.
 But the wife that he loved, when she
 poured him up
 A last deep health in her golden cup,
 Put poison into the wine.
 “ So he rode till the land he loved
 grew dim,
 And that poison began to work in
 him,
 A true knight chanting his Chris-
 tian hymn,
 With the cross on his gallant crest.
 Eastward, aye, from the waning
 west,
 Toward the land where the bones of
 the Saviour rest,
 And the Battle of God is to win :
 With his young wife's picture upon
 his breast,
 And her poisoned wine within.
 “ Alas ! poor knight, poor knight !
 He carries the foe he cannot fight
 In his own true breast shut up.
 He shall die or ever he fight for the
 Lord,
 And his heart be broken before his
 sword.
 He hath pledged his life

To a faithless wife,
 In the wine of a poisoned cup !”

Comrade, thy hand in mine !
 Pledge me in our last wine,
 While all is dark on the brine.
 My friend, I reckon not now
 If the wild night-wind should blow
 Our bark beyond the poles :—
 To drift through fire or snow,
 Out of reach of all we know—
 Cold heart, and narrow brow,
 Smooth faces, sordid souls !
 Lost, like some pale crew
 From Ophir, in golden galleys,
 On a witch's island ! who
 Wander the tamarisk alleys,
 Where the heaven is blue,
 And the ocean too,
 That murmurs among the valleys.
 “ Perisht with all on board !”
 So runs the vagrant fame—
 Thy wife weds another lord,
 My children forget my name,
 While we count new stars by night.
 Each wanders out of sight
 Till the beard on his chin grows
 white
 And scant grow the curls on his
 head.
 One paces the placid hours
 In dim enchanted bowers,
 By a soft-eyed Panther led
 To a magical milk-white bed
 Of deep, pale poison-flowers.
 With ruined gods one dwells,
 In caverns among the fells,
 Where, with desolate arms out-
 spread,
 A single tree stands dead,
 Smitten by savage spells,
 And striking a silent dread
 From its black and blighted head
 Through the horrible, hopeless,
 sultry dells
 Of Elephantia, the Red.