

TANNHÄUSER ; *

OR,

THE BATTLE OF THE BARDS.

A portion of this poem was written by another hand.

<p>THIS is the Land, the happy valleys these, Broad breadths of plain, blue-veined by many a stream, Umbrageous hills, sweet glades, and forests fair, O'er which our good liege, Landgrave Herman, rules. This is Thuringia : yonder, on the heights, Is Wartburg, seat of our dear lord's abode, Famous through Christendom for many a feat Of deffest knights, chief stars of chivalry, At tourney in its courts ; nor more renowned For deeds of Prowess than exploits of Art, Achieved when, vocal in its Muses' hall, The minstrel-knights their glorious jousts renew, And for the laurel wage harmonious war. On this side spreads the Chase in wooded slopes And sweet acclivities ; and, all be- yond,</p>	<p>The open flats lie fruitful to the sun Full many a league ; till dark against the sky, Bounding the limits of our lord's do- main, The Hill of Hörsel rears his horrid front. Woe to the man who wanders in the vast Of those unhallowed solitudes, if Sin, Quickening the lust of carnal appe- tite, Lurk secret in his heart : for all their caves Echo weird strains of magic, direful- sweet, That lap the wanton sense in bliss- ful ease ; While through the ear a reptile mu- sic creeps, And, blandly-busy, round about the soul Weaves its fell web of sounds. The unhappy wight Thus captive made in soft and silken bands Of tangled harmony, is led away— Away adown the ever-darkening caves,</p>
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* The reader is solicited to adopt the German pronunciation of TANNHÄUSER, by sounding it as if it were written, in English, Tannhoiser.

<p>Away from fairness and the face of God, Away into the mountain's mystic womb, To where, reclining on her impious couch All the fair length of her lascivious limbs, Languid in light from roseate tapers flung, Incensed with perfumes, tended on by fays. The lustful Queen, waiting damna- tion, holds Her bestial revels. The Queen of Beauty once, A goddess called and worshipped in the days When men their own infirmities adored, Deeming divine who in themselves summed up The full-blown passions of human- ity. Large fame and lavish service had she then, Venus ycleped, of all the Olympian crew Least continent of Spirits and most fair. So reaped she honor of unwistful men, Roman, or Greek, or dwellers on the plains Of Egypt, or the isles to utmost Ind ; Till came the crack of that tremen- dous Doom That sent the false gods shivering from their seats, Shattered the superstitious dome that beared Heaven's face to man, and on the lurid world Let in effulgence of untainted light. As when, laid bare beneath the del- ver's toil On some huge bulk of buried masonry In hoar Assyria, suddenly revealed A chamber, gay with sculpture and the pomp</p>	<p>Of pictured tracery on its glowing walls, No sooner breathes the wholesome heavenly air Then fast its colored bravery fades, and fall Its ruined statues, crumbled from their crypts, And all its gauds grow dark at sight of day ; So darkened and to dusty ruin fell The fleeting glories of a Pagan faith, Bared to Truth's influences bland, and smit Blind by the splendors of the Beth- lehem Dawn. Then from their shattered temple in the minds Of men, and from their long familiar homes, Their altars, fanes, and shrines, the sumptuous seats Of their mendacious oracles, out- slunk The wantons of Olympus. Forth they fled, Forth from Dodona, Delos, and the depths Of wooded Ida ; from Athenæ forth, Cithæron, Paphos, Thebes, and all their groves Of oak or poplar, dismally to roam About the new baptized earth ; ex- iled, Bearing the curse, yet suffered for a space, By Heaven's clear sapience and in- scrutable ken, To range the wide world, and assay their powers To unregenerate redeemed man- kind : If haply they by shadows and by shows, Phantasmagoria, and illusions wrought Of sight or sound by sorcery, may draw Unwary men, or weak, into the nets Of Satan their great Captain. She renowned</p>
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"The fairest," fleeing from her Cyprian isle,
 Swept to the northwards many a league, and lodged
 At length on Hörsel, into whose dark womb
 She crept confounded. Thither soon she drew
 Lewd Spirits to herself, and there abides,
 Holding her devilish orgies; and has power
 With siren voices crafty to compel
 Into her wanton home unhappy men
 Whose souls to sin are prone. The pure at heart
 Nathless may roam about her pestilent hill
 Untainted, proof against perfidious sounds
 Within whose ears an angel ever sings
 Good tidings of great joy. Nor even they,
 Whose hearts are gross, and who inflamed with lust
 Enter, entrapped by sorceries, to her cave,
 Are damned beyond redemption. For a while,
 Slaves of their bodies, in the sloughs of Sin,
 They roll contented, wallowing in the arms
 Of their libidinous goddess. But, erelong,
 Comes loathing of the sensual air they breathe,
 Loathing of light unhallowed, sickening sense
 Of surfeited enjoyment; and their lips,
 Spurning the reeky pasture, yearn for draughts
 Of rock-rebounding rills, their eyes for sight
 Of Heaven, their limbs for lengths of dewy grass:
 What time sharp Conscience pricks them, and awake

Starts the requicken'd soul with all her powers,
 And breaks, if so she will, the murderous spell,
 Calling on God. God to her rescue sends
 Voiced seraphims that lead the sinner forth
 From darkness unto day, from foul embrace
 Of that bloat Queen into the mother-lap
 Of earth, and the caressent airs of Heaven;
 Where he, by strong presistency of prayer,
 By painful pilgrimage, by lengths of fast
 That tame the rebel flesh, by many a night
 Of vigil, days of deep repentant tears,
 May cleanse his soul of her adulterate stains,
 May from his sin-incrusted spirit shake
 The leprous scales,—and, purely at the feet
 Of his redemption falling, may arise
 Of Christ accepted. Whoso doubts the truth,
 Doubting how deep divine Compassion is,
 Lend to my tale a willing ear, and learn.

Full twenty summers have fled o'er the land,
 A score of winters on our Landgrave's head
 Have showered their snowy honors, since the days
 When in his court no nobler knight was known,
 And in his halls no happier bard was heard,
 Than bright Tannhäuser. Warrior, minstrel, he
 Throve for a while within the general eye,
 As some king-cedar, in Crusader

The stateliest growth of Lebanonian groves:
 For now I sing him in his matchless prime,
 Not, as in latter days, defaced and marred
 By secret sin, and like the wasted torch
 Found in the dank grass at the ghastly dawn,
 After a witches' revel. He was a man
 In whom prompt Nature, as in those soft climes
 Where life is indolently opulent, Blossomed unbid to graces barely won
 From tedious culture, where less kindly stars
 Cold influence keep; and trothful men, who once
 Looked in his lordly, luminous eyes, and scanned
 His sinewous frame, compact of pliant power,
 Aver he was the fairest-favored knight
 That ever, in the light of ladies' looks,
 Made gay these goodly halls. Oh! deeper dole, [fair,
 That so august a Spirit, spher'd so Should from the starry sessions of his peers
 Decline, to quench so bright a brilliancy
 In Hell's sick spume. Ay me, the deeper dole!
 From yonder tower the wheeling lapwing loves
 Beyond all others, that o'ertops the pines,
 And from his one white, wistful window stares
 Into the sullen heart o' the land,—erewhile
 The wandering woodman oft, at night-fall, heard
 A sad, wild strain of solitary song
 Float o'er the forest. Whoso heard it, paused

Compassionately, crossed himself, and sighed,
 "Alas! poor Princess, to thy piteous moan
 Heaven send sweet peace!" Heaven heard, and now she lies
 Under the marble, 'mid the silent tombs,
 Calm with her kindred; as her soul above
 Rests with the saints of God.

The brother's child
 Of our good lord the Landgrave was this maid,
 And here with him abode; for in the breach
 At Ascalon, her sire in Holy Land
 Had fallen, fighting for the Cross. These halls
 Sheltered her infancy, and here she grew
 Among the shaggy barons, like the pale,
 Mild-eyed, March-violet of the North, that blows
 Bleak under bergs of ice. Full fair she grew,
 And all men loved the rare Elizabeth;
 But she, of all men, loved one man the most,
 Tannhäuser, minstrel, knight, the man in whom
 All mankind flowered. Fairer growth indeed,
 Of knighthood never blossomed to the eye;
 But, furled beneath that florid surface, lurked
 A vice of nature, breeding death, not life;
 Such as where some rich Roman, to delight
 Luxurious days with labyrinthian walks
 Of rose and lily, marble fountains, forms
 Wanton of Greece or Nymph, and winding frieze
 With sculpture rough, hath decked the summer haunts

Of his voluptuous villa,—there, festooned
 With flowers, among the Graces and the Gods,
 The lurking fever glides.
 A dangerous skill,
 Caught from the custom of those troubadours
 That roam the wanton South, too near the homes
 Of the lost gods, had crept in careless use
 Among our northern barás; to play the thief
 Upon the poets of a pagan time,
 And steal, to purfle their embroidered lays,
 Voluptuous trappings of lascivious lore.
 Hence had Tannhäuser, from of old, indulged
 In song too lavish license to mislead
 The sense among those fair but phantom forms
 That haunt the unhallowed past: wherefrom One Shape
 Forth of the cloudy circle gradual grew
 Distinct, in dissolute beauty. She of old,
 Who from the idle foam uprose, to reign
 In fancies all as idle,—that fair Venus,
 Whose temples are the veins in youth.

Now more and ever more she mixed herself
 With all his moods, and whispered in his walks;
 Or through the misty minster, when he kneeled
 Meek on the flint, athwart the incense-smoke
 She stole on sleeping sunbeams, sprinkled sounds
 Of cymbals through the silver psalms, and marred
 His adoration: most of all, when'er
 He sought to fan those fires of holy love

That, sleeping oftenest, sometimes leapt to flame,
 Kindled by kindred passion in the eyes
 Of sweet Elizabeth, round him rose and rolled
 That miserable magic; and, at times,
 It drove him forth to wander in the waste
 And desert places, there where prayerless man
 Is most within the power of prowling fiends.
 Time put his sickle in among the days.
 Outcropped the coming harvest; and there came
 An evening with the Princess, when they twain
 Together ranged the terrace that o'erlaps
 The great south garden. All her simple hair
 A single sunbeam from the sleepy west
 O'erfloated; swam her soft blue eyes suffused
 With tender ruth, and her meek face was moved
 To one slow, serious smile, that stole to find
 Its resting-place on his.

Then, while he looked
 On that pure loveliness, within himself
 He faintly felt a mystery like pure love;
 For through the arid hollows of a heart
 Sered by delirious dreams, the dewy sense
 Of innocent worship stole. The one great word
 That long had hovered in the silent mind
 Now on the lip half settled; for not yet
 Had love between them been a spoken sound
 For after speech to lean on: only here

And there, where scattered pauses strewed their talk,
 Love seemed to o'erpoise the silence, like a star
 Seen through a tender trouble of light clouds.
 But, in that moment, some mysterious touch,
 A thought—who knows?—a memory—something caught
 Perchance from flying fancies, taking form
 Among the sunset clouds, or scented gusts
 Of evening through the gorgeous glooms, shrunk up
 His better angel, and at once awaked
 The carnal creature sleeping in the flesh.
 Then died within his heart that word of life
 Unspoken, which, if spoken, might have saved
 The dreadful doom impending. So they twain
 Parted, and nothing said: she to her tower,
 There with meek wonder to renew the calm
 And customary labor of the loom; and he into the gradual-creeping dark
 Which now began to draw the rooks to roost
 Along the windless woods.

His soul that eve
 Shook strangely if some flickering shadow stole
 Across the slopes where sunset, sleeping out
 The day's last dream, yet lingered low. Old songs
 Were sweet about his brain, old fancies fair
 O'erflowed with lurid life the lonely land;
 The twilight trooped with antic shapes, and swarmed
 Above him, and the deep mysterious woods [doom.
 With mystic music drew him to his

So rapt, with idle and with errant foot
 He wandered on to Hörsel, and those glades
 Of melancholy fame, whose poisonous glooms,
 Decked with the gleaming hemlock, darkly fringe
 The Mount of Venus. There, a drowsy sense
 Of languor seized him; and he sat him down
 Among a litter of loose stones and blocks
 Of broken columns, overrun with weed,
 Remnants of heathen work that sometime propped
 A pagan temple.

Suddenly, the moon,
 Slant from the shoulder of the monstrous hill,
 Swung o'er a sullen lake, and softly touched
 With light a shattered statue in the weed.
 He lifted up his eyes, and all at once
 Bright in her baleful beauty, he beheld
 The goddess of his dreams. Beholding whom,
 Lost to his love, forgetful of his faith,
 And fevered by the stimulated sense
 Of reprobate desire, the madman cried:
 "Descend, Dame Venus, on my soul descend!
 Break up the marble sleep of those still brows
 Where beauty broods! Down all my senses swim,
 As yonder moon to yonder love-lit lake
 Swims down in glory!"

Hell the horrid prayer
 Accorded with a curse. Scarce those wild words
 Were uttered, when like mist the marble moved,
 Flusht with false life. Deep in a sleepy cloud

He seemed to sink beneath the sumptuous face
 Leaned o'er him,—all the whiteness,
 all the warmth,
 And all the luxury of languid limbs,
 Where violet vein-streaks, lost in
 limpid lengths
 Of snowy surface, wander faint and
 fine ;
 Whilst cymballed music, stolen from
 underneath,
 Creeps through a throbbing light that
 grows and glows
 From glare to greater glare, until it
 gluts
 And gulfs him in.
 And from that hour, in court,
 And chase, and tilted tourney, many
 a month,
 From mass in holy church, and mirth
 in hall,
 From all the fair assemblage of his
 peers,
 And all the feudatory festivals,
 Men missed Tannhäuser.
 At the first, as when
 From some great oak his goodliest
 branch is lopped,
 The little noisy birds, that built
 about
 The foliage, gather in the gap with
 shrill
 And querulous curiosity ; even so,
 From all the twittering tongues that
 thronged the court
 Rose general hubbub of astonish-
 ment,
 And vext surmise about the absent
 man :
 Why absent ? whither wandered ? on
 what quest
 Of errant prowess ?—for, as yet,
 none knew
 His miserable fall. But time wore
 on,
 The wonder wore away ; round ab-
 sence crept
 The weed of custom, and the absent
 one
 Became at last a memory, and no
 more.

One heart within that memory lived
 aloof ;
 One face, remembering his, forgot to
 smile ;
 Our Landgrave's niece the old
 familiar ways
 Walked like a ghost with unfamiliar
 looks.
 Time put his sickle in among the
 days.
 The rose burned out ; red Autumn
 lit the woods ;
 The last snows, melting, changed to
 snowy clouds ;
 And Spring once more with incan-
 tations came
 To wake the buried year. Then did
 our liege,
 Lord Landgrave Herman,—for he
 loved his niece,
 And lightly from her simple heart
 had won
 The secret of lost smiles, and why
 she drooped,
 A wilted flower,—thinking to dispel,
 If that might be, her mournfulness,
 let cry
 By heralds that, at coming Whitsun-
 tide,
 The minstrel-knights in Wartburg
 should convene
 To hold high combat in the craft of
 song,
 And sing before the Princess for the
 prize.
 But, ere that time, it fell upon a day
 When our good lord went forth to
 hunt the hart,
 That he with certain of his court,
 'mid whom
 Was Wolfram,—once Tannhäuser's
 friend, himself
 Among the minstrels held in high re-
 nown,—
 Came down the Wartburg valley,
 where they deemed
 To hold the hart at siege, and
 found him not :

But found, far down, at bottom of
 the glade,
 Beneath a broken cross, a lonely
 knight
 Who sat on a great stone, watching
 the clouds.
 And Wolfram, being a little in the
 van
 Of all his fellows, eager for the
 hunt,
 Hurriedly ran to question of the
 knight
 If he had viewed the hart. But when
 he came
 To parley with him, suddenly he
 gave
 A shout of great good cheer ; for, all
 at once,
 In that same knight he saw, and
 knew, though changed,
 Tannhäuser, his old friend and
 fellow-bard.
 Now, Wolfram long had loved
 Elizabeth
 As one should love a star in heaven,
 who knows
 The distance of it, and the reachless-
 ness.
 But when he knew Tannhäuser in
 her heart
 (For loving eyes, in eyes beloved, are
 swift
 To search out secrets) not the less
 his own
 Clave unto both ; and, from that
 time, his love
 Lived like an orphan child in
 charity,
 Whose loss came early, and is gently
 borne,
 Too deep for tears, too constant for
 complaint.
 And, therefore, in the absence of his
 friend
 His inmost heart was heavy, when
 he saw
 The shadow of that absence in the
 face
 He loved beyond all faces upon
 earth.

So that when now he found that
 friend again
 Whom he had missed and mourned,
 right glad was he
 Both for his own and for the
 Princess' sake :
 And ran and fell upon Tannhäuser's
 neck,
 And all for joy constrained him to
 his heart,
 Calling his fellows from the neigh-
 boring hills,—
 Who, crowding, came, great hearts
 and open arms
 To welcome back their peer. The
 Landgrave then,
 When he perceived his well-belovéd
 knight,
 Was passing glad, and would have
 questioned him
 Of his long absence. But the man
 himself
 Could answer nothing ; staring with
 blank eyes
 From face to face, then up into the
 blue
 Bland heavens above ; astonished, and
 like one
 Who, suddenly awaking out of sleep
 After sore sickness, knows his friends
 again,
 And would peruse their faces, but
 breaks off
 To list the frolic bleating of the
 lamb
 In far-off fields, and wonder at the
 world
 And all its strangeness. Then, while
 the glad knights
 Clung round him, wrung his hands,
 and dinned his ears
 With clattering query, our fair lord
 himself
 Unfolded how, upon the morrow
 morn,
 There should be holden festive in
 his halls
 High meeting of the minstrels of
 the land,
 To sing before the Princess for the
 prize :

Whereto he bade him with, "O sir,
be sure
There lives a young voice that shall
tax your wit
To justify this absence from your
friends.
We trust, at least, that you have
brought us back
A score of giants' beards, or dragons'
tails,
To lay them at the feet of our fair
niece.
For think not, truant, that Eliza-
beth
Will hold you lightly quitted."
At that name,
Elizabeth, he started as a man
That hears on foreign shores, from
alien lips,
Some name familiar to his father-
land ;
And all at once the man's heart inly
yearns
For brooks that bubble, and for
woods that wave
Before his father's door, while he
forgets
The forms about him. So, Tann-
häuser mused
A little space, then faltered : "O my
liege,
Fares my good lady well ?—I pray
my lord
That I may draw me hence a little
while,
For all my mind is troubled : and,
indeed,
I know not if my harp have lost his
skill,
But, skilled, or skillless, it shall find
some tone
To render thanks to-morrow to my
lord ;
To whose behests a bondsman, in so
far
As my poor service holds, I will
assay
To sing before the Princess for the
prize."
Then, on the morrow morn, from far
and near

Flowed in the feudatory lords. The
hills
Broke out ablaze with banners, and
rung loud
With tingling trumpet notes, and
neighing steeds.
For all the land, elate with lusty
life,
Buzzed like a beehive in the sun ;
and all
The castle swarmed from bridge to
barbican
With mantle and with mail, whilst
minster bells
Rang hoarse their happy chimes, till
the high noon
Clanged from the towers. Then,
o'er the platform stoled
And canopied in crimson, lightly
blew
The sceptred heralds on the silver
trump
Intense sonorous music, sounding
in
The knights to hall. Shriek clinked
the corridors
Through all the courts with clashing
heels, or moved
With silken murmurs, and elastic
sounds
Of lady laughters light ; as in they
flowed
Lord, Liegeman, Peer, and Prince,
and Paladin,
And dame and damsel, clad in dimp-
ling silk
And gleaming pearl ; who, while
the groaning roofs
Re-echoed royal music, swept adown
The spacious hall, with due obei-
sance made
To the high dais, and on glittering
seats
Dropped one by one, like flocks of
burnished birds
That settle down with sunset-painted
plumes
On gorgeous woods. Again from
the outer wall
The intermitted trumpet blared ; and
each

Pert page, a-tiptoe, from the benches
leaned
To see the minstrel-knights, gold-
filleted,
That entered now the hall : Sir
Mandeville,
The Swan of Eismach ; Wilfrid of
the Hills ;
Wolfram, surnamed of Willow-
brook ; and next
Tannhäuser, christened of the Gold-
en Harp ;
With Walter of the Heron-chase ;
and Max,
The seer ; Sir Rudolph, of the
Ravencrest ;
And Franz, the falconer. They en-
tered, each
In order, followed by a blooming boy
That bore his harp, and, pacing for-
ward, bowed
Before the Landgrave and Elizabeth.
Pale sat the Princess in her chair of
state, [lied
Perusing with fixed eyes, that all be-
Her throbbing heart, the carven
architrave,
Whereon the intricate much-vexed
design
Of leaf and stem disintertwined itself
With infinite laboriousness, at last
Escaping in a flight of angel forms ;
As though the carver's thought had
been to show
The weary struggle of the soul to free
Her flight from earth's bewilder-
ment, and all
That frets her in the flesh. But
when, erewhile,
The minstrels entered, and Tann-
häuser bowed
Before the dais, the Landgrave, at
her side,
Saw, as he mused what theme to
give for song,
The pallid forehead of Elizabeth
Flush to the fair roots of her golden
hair,
And thought within himself : "Our
knight delays
To own a love that aims so near our
throne ;
Hence, haply, this late absence from
our court,
And those bewildered moods which
I have marked :
But since love lightly catches, where
it can,
At any means to make itself ap-
proved,
And since the singer may to song
confide
What the man dares not trust to
simple speech,
I, therefore, so to ease two hearts at
once,
And signify our favor unto both,
Will to our well-belovéd minstrels
give
No theme less sweet than Love :
for, surely, he
That loves the best, will sing the
best, and bear
The prize from all." Therewith the
Landgrave rose,
And all the murmuring Hall was
hushed to hear.
"O well-belovéd minstrels, in my
mind
I do embrace you all, and heartily
Bid you a lavish welcome to these
halls.
Oft have you flooded this fair space
with song,
Waked these voiced walls, and vocal
made yon roof,
As waves of surging music lapped
against
Its resonant rafters. Often have
your strains
Ennobled souls of true nobility,
Rapt by your perfect pleadings in the
cause
Of all things pure unto a purer sense
Of their exceeding loveliness. No
power
Is subtler o'er the spirit of man than
Song—
Sweet echo of great thoughts, that,
in the mind

Of him who hears congenial echoes
waking,
Remultiplies the praise of what is
good.
Song cheers the emulous spirit to
the top
Of Virtue's rugged steep, from
whence, all heights
Of human worth attained, the mor-
tal may
Conjecture of God's unattainable,
Which is Perfection.—Faith, with
her sisters twain
Of Hope and Charity, ye oft have
sung,
And loyal Truth have lauded, and
have wreathed
A coronal of music round the brows
Of stainless Chastity; nor less have
praised
High-minded Valor, in whose right-
eous hand
Burns the great sword of flaming
Fortitude,
And have stirred up to deeds of high
emprize
Our noble knights (yourselves among
the noblest)
Whether on German soil for me,
their prince,
Fighting, or in the Land of Christ
for God.
Sing ye to-day another theme; to-day
Within our glad society we see,
To fellowship of loving friends re-
stored,
A long-missed face; and hungerly
our ears
Wait the melodious murmurs of a
harp
That wont to feed them daintily.
What drew
Our singer forth, and led the fairest
light
Of all our galaxy to swerve astray
From his fixed orbit, and what now
re-spheres,
After deflection long, our errant orb,
Implies a secret that the subtle power
Of Song, perchance, may solve. Be
then your theme

As universal as the heart of man,
Giving you scope to touch its deepest
depths,
Its highest heights, and reverently
to explore
Its mystery of mysteries. Sing of
Love:
Tell us, ye noble poets, from what
source
Springs the prime passion; to what
goal it tends!
Sing it how brave, how beautiful,
how bright,
In essence how ethereal, in effect
How palpable, how human yet di-
vine.
Up! up! loved singers, smite into
the chords,
The lists are opened, set your lays in
rest,
And who of Love best chants the
perfect praise,
Him shall Elizabeth as conqueror
hail
And round his royal temples bind
the bays.”
He said, and sat. And from the
middle-hall
Four pages, bearers of the blazoned
urn
That held the name-scrolls of the
listed bards,
Moved to Elizabeth. Daintily her
hand
Dipped in the bowl, and one drawn
scroll delivered
Back to the pages, who, perusing,
cried:
“Sir Wolfram of the Willow-brook,
—begin.”
Up rose the gentle singer—he whose
lays,
Melodious-melancholy, through the
Land
Live to this day—and, fair obeisance
made,
Assumed his harp and stood in act
to sing.

Awhile, his dreamy fingers o'er the
chords
Wandered at will, and to the roof
was turned
His meditative face; till, suddenly,
A soft light from his spiritual eyes
Broke, and his canticle he thus be-
gan:—

“Love among the saints of God,
Love within the hearts of men,
Love in every kindly sod
That breeds a violet in the glen;
Love in heaven, and Love on earth,
Love in all the amorous air;
Whence comes Love? ah! tell
me where
Had such a gracious Presence
birth?
Lift thy thoughts ω Him, all-
knowing,
In the hallowed courts above;
From His throne, forever flowing,
Springs the fountain of all Love:
Down to earth the stream de-
scending
Meets the hills, and murmurs then,
In a myriad channels wending,
Through the happy haunts of men.
Blesséd ye, earth's sons and daugh-
ters,
Love among you flowing free;
Guard, oh! guard its sacred waters,
Tend on them religiously:
Let them through your hearts
steal sweetly,
With the Spirit, wise and bland,
Minister unto them meetly,
Touch them not with carnal hand.
“Maiden, fashioned so divinely,
Whom I worship from afar,
Smile thou on my soul benignly
Sweet, my solitary star:
Gentle harbinger of gladness,
Still be with me on the way;
Only soother of my sadness,
Always near, though far away:
Always near, since first upon me
Fell thy brightness from above,
And my troubled heart within me

Felt the sudden flow of Love;
At thy sight that gushing river
Paused, and fell to perfect rest,
And the pool of Love forever
Took thy image to its breast.

“Let me keep my passion purely
Guard its waters free from blaine,
Hallow Love, as knowing surely
It returneth whence it came;
From all channels, good or evil,
Love, to its pure source enticed,
Finds its own immortal level
In the charity of Christ.
“Ye who hear, behold the river,
Whence it cometh, whither goes;
Glory be to God, the Giver,
From whose grace the fountain
flows,
Flows and spreads through all cre-
ation,
Counter-charm of every curse,
Love, the waters of Salvation,
Flowing through the universe?”

And still the rapt bard, though his
voice had ceased,
And all the Hall had murmured into
praise,
Pursued his plaintive theme among
the chords,
Blending with instinct fine the intri-
cate throng
Of thoughts that flowed beneath his
touch to find
Harmonious resolution. As he
closed,
Tannhäuser rising, fretted with de-
lay,
Sent flying fingers o'er the strings,
and sang:—

“Love be my theme! Sing her
awake,
My harp, for she hath tamely
slept
In Wolfram's song, a stagnant
lake
O'er which a shivering star hath
crept.

"Awake, dull waters, from your sleep,
Rise, Love, from thy delicious well,
A fountain!—yea, but flowing deep
With nectar and with hydromel ;

"With gurgling murmurs sweet,
that teach
My soul a sleep-distracting dream,
Till on the marge I lie, and reach
My longing lips towards the stream ;

"Whose waves leap upwards to the brink
With drowning kisses to invite
And drag me, willing, down to drink
Delirious draughts of rare Delight ;

"Who careless drink, as knowing well
The happy pastime shall not tire,
For Love is inexhaustible,
And all-unfailing my Desire.

"Love's fountain-marge is fairly spread
With every incense-flower that blows,
With flossy sedge, and moss that grows
For fervid limbs a dewy bed ;

"And fays and fairies flit and wend
To keep the sweet stream flowing free,
And on Love's languid votary
The little elves delighted tend ;

"And bring him honey-dews to sip,
Rare balms to cool him after play,
Or with sweet unguents smooth away
The kiss-crease on his ruffled lip ;

"And lilywhite his limbs they lave,
And roses in his cheeks renew,
That he, refreshed, return to glue
His lips to Love's caressent wave ;

"And feel, in that immortal kiss,
His mortal instincts die the death,
And human fancy fade beneath
The taste of unimagined bliss !

"Thus, gentle audience, since your ear
Best loves a metaphoric lay,
Of mighty Love I warble here
In figures, such as Fancy may :

"Now know ye how of Love I think
As of a fountain, failing never,
On whose soft marge I lie, and drink
Delicious draughts of Joy forever."

Abrupt he ceased, and sat. And for a space,
No longer than the subtle lightning rests

Upon a sultry cloud at eventide,
The Princess smiled, and on her parted lips
Hung inarticulate applause ; but she
Sudden was 'ware that all the hall was mute

With blank disapprobation ; and her smile
Died, and vague fear was quickened in her heart
As Walter of the Heron-chase began :—

"O fountain ever fair and bright,
He hath beheld thee, source of Love,
Who sung thee springing from above,
Celestial from the founts of Light ;

"But he who from thy waters rare
Hath thought to drain a gross delight,
Blind in his spiritual sight,
Hath ne'er beheld thee, fountain fair !

"Hath never seen the silver glow
Of thy glad waves, crystalline clear,
Hath never heard within his ear
The music of thy murmurous flow.

"The essence of all Good thou art,
Thy waters are immortal Ruth,
Thy murmurs are the voice of Truth,
And music in the human heart :

"Thou yieldest Faith that soars on high,
And Sympathy that dwells on earth ;
The tender trust in human worth,
The hope that lives beyond the sky.

"Oh ! waters of the living Word,
Oh ! fair vouchsafed us from above,
Oh ! fountain of immortal Love,
What song of thee erewhile I heard !

"Learn, sacrilegious bard, from me
How all ignoble was thy strain,
That sought with trivial song to stain
The fountain of Love's purity ;

"That fountain thou hast never found,
And shouldst thou come with lips of fire
To slake the thirst of brute Desire,
'Twould shrink and shrivel to the ground :

"Who seeks in Love's pure stream to lave
His gross heart, finds damnation near :

Who laves in Love his spirit clear
Shall win Salvation from the wave."

And now again, as when the plaintive lay
Of Wolfram warbled to harmonious close,
The crowd grew glad with plaudits ; and again
Tannhäuser, ruffled, rose his height, and smote
Rude in the chords his prelude of reply :—

"What Love is this that melts with Ruth,
Whose murmurs are the voice of Truth ?

Ye dazed singers, cease to dream,
And learn of me your human theme :
Of that great Passion at whose feet

The vassal-world lies low,
Of Love the mighty, Love the sweet,
I sing, who reigns below ;
Who makes men fierce, tame, wild, or kind,

Sovran of every mood,
Who rules the heart, and rules the mind,
And courses through the blood :
Slave of that levis Power I sing,
Dispenser of all good,
Whose pleasure-fountain is the spring
Of sole beatitude.

"Sing ye of Love ye ne'er possessed
In wretched tropes—a vain employment !
I sing the passion in my breast,
And know Love only in Enjoyment."

To whom, while all the rustling hall was moved
With stormy indignation, stern up-rose,