

Sharp in retort, Sir Wilfrid of the Hills :

“Up, minstrels ! rally to the cry
Of outraged Love and Loyalty ;
Drive on this slanderer, all the throng,

And slay him in a storm of song.
O lecher ! shall I sing to thee
Of Love's untainted purity,
Of simple Faith, and tender Ruth,
Of Chastity and loyal Truth ?

As well sing Day's resplendent birth

To the blind mole that delves the earth,

As seek from gross hearts, sloughed in sin,

Approval of pure Love to win !
Rather from thee I'll wring applause

For Love, the Avenger of his cause ;

Great Love, the chivalrous and strong,

To whose wide grasp all arms belong,

The lance, the battle-axe, and thong,—

And eke the mastery in song.

“Love in my heart in all the pride
Of kingdom sits, and at his side,
To do the bidding of his lord,
Martial Valor holds the sword ;
He strikes for honor, in the name
Of Virtue and fair woman's fame,
And bids me shed my dearest blood

To avenge asperséd maidenhood :
Who soils her with licentious lie,
Him will I hew both hip and thigh,

Or in her cause will dearly die.
But thou, who in thy flashy song
Hast sought to do *all* Honor wrong,

Pass on,—I will not stoop my crest

To smite thee, nor lay lance in rest.

Thy brawling words, of riot born,
Are worthy only of my scorn ;
Thus at thy ears this song I fling,
Which in thy heart may plant its sting,
If ruined Conscience yet may wring
Remorse from such a guilty thing.”

Scarce from his lips had parted the last word

When, through the rapturous praise that rang around,

Fierce from his seat, uprising, red with rage,

With scornful lip, and contumelious eye,

Tannhäuser clanged among the chords, and sang :

“Floutest thou me, thou grisly Bard ?

Beware, lest I the just reward
On thy puffed insolence bestow,
And cleave thee with my falchion's blow,—

When I in song have laid thee low,
I serve a Mistress mightier far
Than tinkling rill, or twinkling star,

And, as in my great Passion's glow
Thy passion-dream will melt like snow,

So I, Love's champion, at her call,
Will make thee shrink in field or hall,

And roll before me like a ball.

“Thou pauper-minded pedant dim,

Thou starveling-soul, lean heart and grim,

Wouldst thou of Love the praises hymn ?

Then let the gaunt hyena howl
In praise of Pity ; let the owl
Whoop the high glories of the noon,

And the hoarse chough becraak the moon!

What canst thou prate of Love ? I trow

She never graced thy open brow,
Nor flushed thy cheek, nor blossomed fair

Upon thy parted lips ; nor e'er
Bade unpent passion wildly start
Through the forced portals of thy heart

To stream in triumph from thine eye,

Or else delicious death to die

On other lips, in sigh on sigh.

“Of Love, dispenser of all bliss,
Of Love, that crowns me with a kiss,

I here proclaim me champion-knight ;

And in her cause will dearly fight
With sword or song, in hall or plain,

And make the welkin ring again
With my fierce blows, or fervent strain.

But for such Love as thou canst feel,

Thou wisely hast abjured the steel,
Averse to lay thy hand on hilt,
Or in her honor ride a tilt :

Tame Love full tamely may'st thou jilt,

And keep bone whole, and blood unspilt.”

Out flushed Sir Wilfrid's weapon,
and out leapt

From every angry eye a thousand darts

Of unsheathed indignation, and a shout

Went up among the rafters, and the Hall

Swayed to and fro with tumult ; till the voice

Of our liege lord roared “Peace !” and, midst the clang

Of those who parted the incenséd bards,

Sounded the harp of Wolfram.
Calm he stood.

He only calm of all the brawling crowd,

Which yet, as is its wont, contagion caught

From neighboring nobleness, and a stillness fell

On all, and in the stillness soft he sang :

“O, from your sacred seats look down,

Angels and ministers of good ;
With sanctity our spirits crown,

And crush the vices of the blood !

“Open our hearts and set them free,

That heavenly light may enter in ;
And from this fair society

Obliterate the taint of sin.

“Thee, holy Love, I bid arise
Propitious to my votive lay ;

Shine thou upon our darkened eyes,

And lead us on the perfect way ;

“As, in the likeness of a Star,
Thou once arosest, guidance meet,

And led'st the sages from afar
To sit at holy Jesu's feet :

“So guide us, safe from Satans snares,

Shine out, sweet Star, around, above,

Till we have scaled the mighty stairs,

And reached thy mansions, Heavenly Love !”

Then, while great shouts went up of “Give the prize

To Wolfram,” leapt Tannhäuser from his seat,

Fierce passion flaming from his lustrous orbs.

And, as a sinner, desperate to add
Depth to damnation by one latest crime,

Dies boastful of his blasphemies—
even so,

Tannhäuser, conscious of the last disgrace

Incur'd by such song in such company,
Intent to vaunt the vastness of his sin,
Thus, as in ecstasy, the song renewed :

"Goddess of Beauty, thee I hymn,
And ever worship at thy shrine ;
Thou, who on mortal senses dim
Descending, makest man divine.

"Who hath embraced thee on thy throne,
And pastured on thy royal kiss,
He, happy, knows, and knows alone,
Love's full beatitude of bliss.

"Grim bards, of Love who nothing know,
Now cease the unequal strife between us ;
Dare as I dared ; to Hörsel go,
And taste Love on the lips of Venus."

Uprose on every side and rustled down
The affrighted dames ; and, like the shuddering crowd
Of party-colored leaves that flits before
The gust of mid October, all at once
A hundred jewelled shoulders, huddling, swept
The hall, and slanted to the doors, and fled
Before the storm, which now from shaggy brows
'Gan dart indignant lightnings. One alone
Of all that awe-struck womanhood remained,
The Princess. She, a purple harebell frail,
That, swathed with whirlwind, to the bleak rock clings
When half a forest falls before the blast,
Rooted in utter wretchedness, and robed

In mockery of splendid state, still sat ;
Still watched the waste that widened in her life ;
And looked as one that in a nightmare hangs
Upon an edge of horror, while from beneath
The creeping billow of calamity
Sprays all his hair with cold ; but hand or foot
He may not move, because the formless Fear
Gapes vast behind him. Grief within the void
Of her stark eyes stood tearless : terror blanched
Her countenance ; and, over cloudy brows,
The shaken diamond made a restless light,
And trembled as the trembling star that hangs
O'er Cassiopeia' the windy north.

But now, from farthest end to end of all
The sullen movement swarming underneath,
Uprolled deep hollow groans of growing wrath.
And, where erewhile in rainbow crescent ranged
The bright-eyed beauties of the court, fast thronged
Faces inflamed with wrath, that rose and fell
Tumultuously gathering from between
Sharp-slanting lanes of steel. For every sword
Flashed bare upon a sudden ; and over these,
Through the wide bursten doors the sinking sun
Streamed lurid, lighting up that steely sea ;
Which, spotted white with foamy plumes, and ridged
With glittering iron, clashed together and closed

About Tannhäuser. Careless of the wrath
Roused by his own rash song, the singer stood ; [fooled
Rapt in remembrance, or by fancy
A visionary Venus to pursue,
With eyes that roamed in rapture the blank air.
Until the sharp light of a hundred swords
Smote on the fatal trance, and scattered all
Its fervid fascination. Swift from sheath
Then leapt the glaive and glittered in his hand,
And warily, with eye upon the watch,
Receding to the mighty main support
That, from the centre, propped the ponderous roof,
There, based against the pillar, fronting full
His sudden foes, he rested resolute,
Awaiting assault.

But, hollow as a bell,
That tolls for tempest from a storm-clad tower,
Rang through the jangling shock of arms and men
The loud voice of the Landgrave. Wide he swept
The solemn sceptre, crying "Peace!" then said :

"Ye Lieges of Thuringia ! whose just scorn,
In judgment sitting on your righteous brows,
Would seem to have forecast the dubious doom
Awaiting our decision ; ye have heard,
Not wrung by torture from your reluctant lips,
Nor yet breathed forth with penitential pain
In prayer for pardon, nay, but rather fledged
And barbed with boasted insolence, such a crime

Confest, as turns to burning coals of wrath
The dewy eyes of Pity, nor to Hope
One refuge spares, save such as rests perchance
Within the bounteous bosom of the Church ;
Who, caring for the frailty of her flock,
Holds mercy measureless as heaven is high.
Shuddering, ourselves have listened to what breaks
All bonds that bound to this unhappy man
The covenanted courtesies of knights,
The loyalties of lives by faith knit fast
In spiritual communion. What behooves,
After deliberation, to award
In sentence, I to your high council leave,
Undoubting. What may mitigate in aught
The weight of this acknowledged infamy
Weigh with due balance. What to justice stern
Mild-minded mercy yet may reconcile
Search inly. Not with rashness, not in wrath,
Invoking from the right hand of high God
His dread irrevocable angel, Death ;
Yet not unwary how one spark of hell,
If unextinguished, down the night of time
May, like the wreckers' beacon from the reefs,
Lure many to destruction : nor indeed
Unmindful of the doom by fire or steel
This realm's supreme tribunals have reserved
For those that, dealing in damnation, hold
Dark commerce with the common foe of man.

Weigh you in all its circumstance
this crime :
And, worthily judging, though your
judgment be
As sharp as conscience, be it as con-
science clear."

He ended : and a bitter interval
Of silence o'er the solemn hall con-
gealed,
Like frost on a waste water, in a
place
Where rocks confront each other.
Marshalled round,
Black-bearded cheek and chin, with
hand on heft
Bent o'er the pommels of their
planted swords
A dreary cirque of faces ominous,
The sullen barons on each other
stared
Significant. As, ere the storm de-
scends
Upon a Druid grove, the great trees
stand
Looking one way, and stiller than
their wont,
Until the thunder, rolling, frees the
wind
That rocks them altogether; even so,
That savage circle of grim-gnarled
men,
Awhile in silence storing stormy
thoughts,
Stood breathless; till a murmur
moved them all,
And louder growing, and louder,
burst at last
To a universal irrepressible roar
Of voices roaring, "Let him die the
death!"
And, in that roar released, a hundred
swords
Rushed forward, and in narrowing
circle sloped
Sharp rims of shining horror round
the doomed,
Undaunted minstrel. Then a pite-
ous cry;
And from the purple baldachin down
sprang

The princess, gleaming like a ghost,
and slid
Among the swords, and standing in
the midst
Swept a wild arm of prohibition
forth.
Cowering, recoiled the angry, baffled
surge,
Leaving on either side a horrid hedge
Of rifted glare, as when the Red Sea
waves
Hung heaped and sundered, ere they
roaring fell
On Egypt's chariots. So there came
a hush;
And in the hush her voice, heavy
with scorn :

"Or shall I call you men? or beasts?
who seem
No nobler than the bloodhound and
the wolf
Which scorn to prey upon their
proper kind!
Christians I will not call you! who
defraud
That much-misapprehended holy
name
Of reverence due by such a deed as,
done,
Will clash against the charities of
Christ,
And make a marred thing and a
mockery
Of the fair face of Mercy. You
dull hearts,
And hard! have ye no pity for your-
selves?
For man no pity? man whose com-
mon cause
Is shamed and saddened by the stain
that falls
Upon a noble nature! You blind
hands,
Thrust out so fast to smite a fallen
friend!
Did ye not all conspire, whilst yet he
stood [forth
The stateliest soul among you, to set
And fix him in the foremost ranks
of men?"

Content that he, your best, should
bear the brunt,
And head the van against the scorn-
ful fiend
That will not waste his weapons on
the herd,
But saves them for the noblest.
And shall Hell
Triumph through you, that triumph
in the shame
Of this eclipse that blots your bright-
est out,
And leaves you dark in his extin-
guished light?
O, who that lives but hath within
his heart
Some cause to dread the suddenness
of death?
And God is merciful; and suffers us,
Even for our sins' sake; and doth
spare us time,
Time to grow ready, time to take
farewell!
And send us monitors and min-
isters—
Old age, that steals the fullness from
the veins;
And griefs, that take the glory from
the eyes;
And pains, that bring us timely news
of death;
And tears, that teach us to be glad
of him.
For who can take farewell of all his
sins
Of such a sudden summons to the
grave?
Against high Heaven hath this man
sinned, or you?
O, if it be against high Heaven, to
Heaven
Remit the compt! lest, from the
armory
Of the Eternal Justice ye pluck
down,
Heedless, that bolt the Highest yet
withholds
From this low-fallen head,—how
fallen! how low!
Yet not so fallen, not so low fallen,
but what

Divine Redemption, reaching every-
where,
May reach at last even to this
wretchedness,
And, out of late repentance, raise it
up
With pardon into peace."
She paused: she touched,
As with an angel's finger, him
whose pride
Obdurate now had yielded, and he
laid
Vanquished by Pity, broken at her
feet.
She, lingering, waited answer, but
none came
Across the silence. And again she
spake:
"O, not for him alone, and not for
that
Which to remember now makes life
for me
A wilderness of homeless griefs, I
plead
Before you; but, O Princes, for
yourselves;
For all that in your nobler nature
stirs
To vindicate Forgiveness and en-
large
The lovely laws of Pity! Which of
you,
Here in the witness of all-judging
God,
Stands spotless? Which of you will
boast himself
More miserably injured by this
man
Than I, whose heart of all that lived
in it
He hath untenanted? O, horrible!
Unheard of! from the blessed lap of
life [sins,
To send the soul, asleep in all her
Down to perdition! Be not yours
the hands
To do this desperate wrong in sight
of all
The ruthless faces of the Saints in
Heaven."

She passionately pleading thus, her
voice
Over their hearts moved like that
earnest wind
That, laboring long against some
great nigh cloud,
Sets free, at last, a solitary star,
Then sinks ; but leaves the night
not all forlorn
Ere the soft rain o'ercomes it.

This long while
Wolfram, whose harp and voice were
overborne
By burly brawlers in the turbulence
That shook that stormy senate,
stood apart
With vainly-vigilant eye, and writhen
hands,
All in mute trouble : too gentle to-
approve,
Too gentle to prevent, what passed :
and still
Divided himself 'twixt sharpest
grief
To see his friend so fallen, and a
drear
Strange horror of the crime whereby
he fell.
So, like a headland light that down
dark waves
Shines o'er some sinking ship it fails
to save,
Looked the pale singer down the
lurid hall.
But when the pure voice of Eliza-
beth
Ceased, and clear-lighted all with
noble thoughts
Her face glowed as an angel's, the
sweet Bard,
Whose generous heart had scaled
with that loved voice
Up to the lofty levels where it
ceased,
Stood forth, and from the dubious
silence caught
And carried up the purpose of her
prayer ; [heart,
And drew it out, and drove it to the
And clenched it with conviction in
the mind.

And fixed it firm in judgment.
From deep muse
The Landgrave started, toward
Tannhäuser strode,
And, standing o'er him with an eye
wherein
Salt sorrow and a moody pity
gleamed,
Spake hoarse of utterance :
" Arise ! go forth !
Go from us, mantled in the shames
which make
Thee, stranger whom mine eye
henceforth abhors,
The mockery of the man I loved,
and mourn.
Go from these halls yet holy with
the voice
Of her whose intercession for thy
sake,—
If any sacred sorrow yet survive
All ruined virtues,—in remorse shall
steep
The memory of her wrongs. For
thee remains
One hope, unhappiest ! reject it not.
There goeth a holy pilgrimage to
Rome,
Which not yet from the borders of
our land
Is parted ; pious souls and meek,
whom thou
Haply may'st join, and of those holy
hands,
Which sole have power to bind or
loose, receive
Remission of thy sin. For save
alone
The hand of Christ's high Vicar
upon earth
A hurt so heinous what may heal ?
What save
A soul so fallen ? Go forth upon
thy ways,
Which are not ours : for we no more
may mix
Congenial minds in converse sweet,
no more [hear
Together pace these halls, nor ever
Thy harp as once when all was pure
and glad,

Among the days which have been.
All thy paths
Henceforth be paths of penitence
and prayer,
Whilst over ours thy memory mov-
ing makes
A shadow, and a silence in our talk.
Get thee from hence, O all that now
remains
Of one we honored ! Till the hand
that holds
The keys of heaven hath oped for
thee the doors
Of life in that far distance, let mine
eye
See thee no more. Go from us !"

Even then,
Even whilst he spake, like some
sweet miracle,
From darkening lands that glim-
mered through the doors
Came, faintly heard along the filmy
air
That bore it floating near, a choral
chant
Of pilgrims pacing by the castle
wall ;
And " *salvum me fac Domine*" they
sung
Sonorous, in the ghostly going out
Of the red-litten eve along the land.
Then, like a hand across the heart
of him
That heard it moved that music from
afar,
And beckoned forth the better hope
which leads
A man's life up along the rugged
road
Of high resolve. Tannhäuser mov-
ed, as moves
The folded serpent smitten by the
spring
And stirred with sudden sunlight,
when he casts
His spotted skin, and, renovated,
gleams
With novel hues. One lingering
long look,

Wild with remorse and vague with
vast regrets,
He lifted to Elizabeth. His thoughts
Were then as those dumb creatures
in their pain
That makes a language of a look.
He tossed
Aloft his arms, and down to the
great doors
With drooped brows striding, groaned
" To Rome, to Rome !"
Whilst the deep hall behind him
caught the cry
And drove it clamorous after him,
from all
Its hollow roofs reverberating
" Rome !"
A fleeting darkness through the
lurid arch ;
A flying form along the glare be-
yond ;
And he was gone. The scowling
Eve reached out
Across the hills a fiery arm, and
took
Tannhäuser to her, like a sudden
death.
So ended that great battle of the
Bards,
Whereof some rumor to the end of
time
Will echo in this land.
And, voided now
Of all his multitudes, the mighty
Hall,
Dumb, dismally dispageanted, laid
bare
His ghostly galleries to the mournful
moon ;
And Night came down, and Silence,
and the twain
Mingled beneath the starlight.
Wheeled at will
The flutter-winged bat round lonely
towers
Where, one by one, from darkening
casements died
The taper's shine ; the howlet from
the hills

Whooped ; and Elizabeth, alone
with Night
And Silence, and the Ghost of her
slain youth,
Lay lost among the ruins of that
day.

As when the buffeting gusts, that
adverse blow
Over the Caribbean Sea, conspire
Conflicting breaths, and, savagely
begot,
The fierce tornado rotatory wheels,
Or sweeps centripetal, or, all forces
joined,
Whirls circling o'er the maddened
waves, and they
Lift up their foaming backs beneath
the keel
Of some frail vessel, and, careering
high
Over a sunken rock, with a sudden
plunge
Confound her, — stunned and
strained, upon the peak
Poising one moment, ere she for-
ward fall
To float, dishelmed, a wreck upon
the waves :
So rose, engendered by what furious
blasts
Of passion, that fell hurricane that
swept
Elizabeth to her doom, and left her
now
A helmless hull upon the savage
seas
Of life, without an aim, to float for-
lorn.

Longwhile, still shuddering from the
shock that jarred
The bases of her being, piteous
wreck
Of ruined hopes, upon her couch she
lay,
Of life and time oblivious ; all her
mind,
Locked in a rigid agony of grief,
Clasping, convulsed, its unwept woe ;
her heart

Writhing and riven ; and her bur-
thened brain
Blind with the weight of tears that
would not flow.
But when, at last, the healing hand
of Time
Had wrought repair upon her shat-
tered frame ;
And those unskilled physicians of
the mind—
Importunate, fond friends, a host of
kin—
Drew her perforce from solitude, she
passed
Back to the world, and walked its
weary ways
With dull mechanic motions, such as
make
A mockery of life. Yet gave she
never,
By weeping or by wailing, outward
sign
Of that great inward agony that she
bore ;
For she was not of those whose
sternest sorrow
Outpours in plaints, or weeps itself
in dew ;
Not passionate she, nor of the happy
souls
Whose grief comes tempered with
the gift of tears.

So, through long weeks and many a
weary moon,
Silent and self-involved, without a
sigh,
She suffered. There, whence con-
solation comes,
She sought it—at the foot of Jesu's
cross,
And on the bosom of the Virgin-
spouse,
And in communion with the blessed
Saints.
But chief for him she prayed whose
grievous sin
Had wrought her desolation ; God
besought
To touch the leprous soul and make
it clean ;

And sued the Heavenly Pastor to re-
call
The lost sheep, wandering from the
pleasant ways,
Back to the pasture of the paths of
peace.
So thrice a day, what time the blush-
ing morn
Crimsoned the orient sky, and when
the sun
Glared from mid-heaven or weltered
in the west,
Fervent she prayed ; nor in the night
forewent
Her vigils ; till at last from prayer
she drew
A calm into her soul, and in that
calm
Heard a low whisper—like the breeze
that breaks
The deep peace of the forest ere the
chirp
Of earliest bird salutes the advent
Day—
Thrill through her, herald of the
dawn of Hope.

Then most she loved from forth her
leafy tower
Listless to watch the irrevocable
clouds
Roll on, and daylight waste itself
away
Along those dreaming woods, whence
evermore
She mused, "He will return ;" and
fondly wove
Her webs of wistful fantasy till the
moon
Was high in heaven, and in its light
she kneeled,
A faded watcher through the weary
night,
A meek, sweet statue at the silver
shrines,
In deep, perpetual prayer for him
she loved.
And from the pitying Sisterhood of
Saints
Haply that prayer shall win an angel
down

To be his unseen minister, and draw
A drowning conscience from the
depths of Hell.

Time put his sickle in among the
days.
Blithe Summer came, and into
dimples danced
The fair and fructifying Earth, anon
Showering the gathered guerdon of
her play
Into the lap of Autumn ; Autumn
stored
The gift, piled ready to the palsied
hand
Of blind and begging Winter ; and
when he
Closed his well-provendered days,
Spring lightly came
And scattered sweets upon his sul-
len grave.
And twice the seasons passed, the
sisters three
Doing glad service for their hoary
brother,
And twice twelve moons had waxed
and waned, and twice
The weary world had pilgrimed
round the sun,
When from the outskirts of the land
there came
Rumor of footsore penitents from
Rome
Returning, jubilant of remitted sin.

So chanced it, on a silent April eve
The westering sun along the Wart-
burg vale
Shot level beams, and into glory
touched
The image of Madonna,—where it
stands
Hard by the common way that climbs
the steep,—
The image of Madonna, and the face
Of meek Elizabeth turned towards
the Queen
Of Sorrows, sorrowful in patient
prayer ;
When, through the silence and the
sleepy leaves,

A breeze blew up the vale, and on
the breeze
Floated a plaintive music. She that
heard,
Trembled; the prayer upon her
parted lips
Suspended hung, and one swift hand
she pressed
Against the palpitating heart whose
throbs
Confused the cunning of her ears.
Ah God!
Was this the voice of her returning
joy?
The psalm of shriven pilgrims to
their homes
Returning? Ay! it swells upon the
breeze
The "*Nunc Dimittis*" of glad souls
that sue
After salvation seen to part in peace.
Then up she sprung, and to a neigh-
boring copse
Swift as a startled hind, when the
ghostly moon
Draws sudden o'er the silvered
heather-bells
The monstrous shadow of a cloud,
she sped;
Pausing, low-crouched, within a
maze of shrubs,
Whose emerald slivers fringed the
rugged way
So broad, the pilgrim's garments as
they passed
Would brush the leaves that hid her.
And anon
They came in double rank, and two
by two,
With cumbered steps, with haggard
gait that told
Of bodily toil and trouble, with be-
soiled
And tattered garments; nathless
with glad eyes,
Whence looked the soul disburthened
of her sin,
Climbing the rude path, two by two
they came.
And she, that watched with what in-
tensest gaze

Them coming, saw old faces that she
knew,
And every face turned skywards,
while the lips
Poured out the heavenly psalm, and
every soul
Sitting seraphic in the upturned eyes
With holy fervor rapt upon the song.
And still they came and passed, and
still she gazed;
And still she thought, "Now comes
he!" and the chant
Went heavenwards, and the filed pil-
grims fared
Beside her, till their tale wellnigh
was told.
Then o'er her soul a shuddering hor-
ror crept,
And, in that agony of mind that
makes
Doubt more intolerable than despair,
With sudden hand she brushed aside
the sprays,
And from the thicket leaned and
looked. The last [ken
Of all the pilgrims stood within the
Of her keen gaze,—save him all
scanned, and he
No sooner scanned than cancelled
from her eyes
By vivid lids swept down to lash
away
Him hateful, being other than she
sought.
So for a space, blind with dismay,
she paused,
But, he approaching, from the
thicket leapt,
Clutched with wrung hands his robe,
and gasped, "The Knight
That with you went, returns not?"
In his psalm
The fervid pilgrim made no pause,
yet gazed
At his wild questioner, intelligent
Of her demand, and shook his head
and passed.
Then she, with that mute answer
stabbed to the heart,
Sprung forward, clutched him yet
once more, and cried,

"In Mary's name, and in the name
of God,
Received the knight his shrift?"
And, once again,
The pilgrim, sorrowful, shook his
head and sighed,
Sighed in the singing of his psalm,
and passed.
Then prone she fell upon her face,
and prone
Within her mind Hope's shattered
fabric fell,—
The dear and delicate fabric of frail
Hope
Wrought by the simple cunning of
her thoughts,
That, laboring long, through many
a dreamy day
And many a vigil of the wakeful
night,
Piecemeal had reared it, patiently,
with pain,
From out the ruins of her ancient
peace.
O ancient Peace! that never shalt
return;
O ruined hope! O Fancy! over-
fond,
Futile artificer that build'st on air,
Marred is thy handiwork, and thou
shalt please
With plastic fantasies her soul no
more.
So lay she cold against the callous
ground,
Her pale face pillowed on a stone,
her eyes
Wide open, fixed into a ghastly stare
That knew no speculation; for her
mind
Was dark, and all her faculty of
thought
Compassionately cancelled. But she
lay
Not in the embrace of loyal Death,
who keeps
His bride forever, but in treacherous
arms
Of Sleep that, sated, will restore to
Grief

Her, snatched a sweet space from
his cruel clutch,
So lay she cold against the callous
ground,
And none was near to heed her as
the sun,
About him drawing the vast-skirted
clouds,
Went down behind the western hill
to die.
Now Wolfram, when the rumor
reached his ears
That, from their quest of saving
grace returned,
The pilgrims all within the castle-
court
Were gathered, flocked about by
happy friends,
Passed from his portal swiftly, and
ran out
And joined the clustering crowd.
Full many a face,
Wasted and wan, he recognized, and
clapsed
Full many a lean hand clutching at
his own,
Of those who, stretched upon the
grass, or propped
Against the boulder-stones, were
pressed about
By weeping women, clamorous to
unbind
Their sandal-thongs and bathe the
bruised feet.
Then up and down, and swiftly
through and through,
And round about, skirting the
crowd, he hurried,
With greetings fair to all; till, filled
with fear,
Half-hopeless of his quest, yet har-
boring hope,
He paused perplexed besides the
castle gates.
There, at his side, the youngest of
the train,
A blue-eyed pilgrim tarried, and to
him
Turned Wolfram questioning of
Tannhäuser's fate,

And learnt in few words how, his
sin pronounced
Deadly and irremediable, the knight
Had faded from before the awful
face
Of Christ's incenséd Vicar; and
none knew
Whither he wandered, to what
desolate lands,
Hiding his anguish from the eyes of
men.
Then Wolfram groaned, and clasped
his hands, and cried,
"Merciful God!" and fell upon his
knees
In purpose as of prayer,—but, sud-
denly,
About the gate the crowd moved,
and a cry
Went up for space, when, rising, he
beheld
Four maids who on a pallet bore the
form
Of wan Elizabeth. The whisper
grew
That she had met the pilgrims, and
had learned
Tannhäuser's fate, and fallen beside
the way.
And Wolfram, in the ghastly torch-
light, saw
The white face of the Princess
tuned to his,
And for a space their eyes met;
then she raised
One hand towards Heaven, and
smiled as who should say,
"O friend, I journey unto God;
farewell!"
But he could answer nothing; for
his eyes
Were blinded by his tears, and
through his tears
Dimly, as in a dream, he saw her
borne
Up the broad granite steps that
wind within
The palace; and his inner eye, en-
tranced,
Saw in a vision four great Angels
stand,
Expectant of her spirit, at the foot
Of flights of blinding brilliancy of
stairs
Innumerable, that through the riven
skies
Scaled to the City of the Saints of
God.
Then, when thick night fell on his
soul, and all
The vision fled, he solitary stood
A crazéd man within the castle-
court;
Whence issuing, with wild eyes and
wandering gait
He through the darkness, groaning,
passed away.
All that lone night, along the
haunted hills,
By dizzy brinks of mountain pre-
cipices,
He fled, aimless as an unused
wind
That wastes itself about a wilder-
ness.
Sometimes from low-browed caves,
and hollow crofts,
Under the hanging woods there
came and went
A voice of wail upon the midnight
air,
As of a lost soul mourning; and
the voice
Was still the voice of his remem-
bered friend.
Sometimes (so fancy mocked the
fears she bred!)
He heard along the lone and eery
land
Low demon laughers; and a sullen
strain
Of horror swelled upon the breeze;
and sounds
Of wizard dance, with shawm and
timbrel, flew
Ever betwixt waste air and wander-
ing cloud
O'er pathless peaks. Then, in the
distance tolled,
Or seemed to toll, a knell: the
breezes dropped:

And, in the sudden pause, that
passing bell
With ghostly summons bade him
back return
To where, till dawn, a shade among
the shades
Of Wartburg, watching one lone
tower, he saw
A light that waned with all his
earthly hopes.
The calm Dawn came and from the
eastern cliff,
Athwart the glistening slopes and
cold green copse,
Called to him, careless of a grief
not hers;
But he, from all her babbling birds,
and all
Her vexing sunlight, with a weary
heart
Drew close the darkness of the glens
and glades
About him, flying through the forest
deeps.
And day and night, dim eve and
dewy dawn,
Three times returning, went un-
cared for by;
And thrice the double twilights rose
and fell
About a land where nothing seemed
the same,
At eve or dawn, as in the time gone
by.
But, when the fourth day like a
stranger slipped
To his unhonored grave, God's
Angel passed
Across the threshold of the Land-
grave's hall,
And in his bosom bore to endless
peace
The weary spirit of Elizabeth.
Then, in that hour when Death with
gentle hand
Had drooped the quiet eyelids o'er
the eyes
That Wolfram loved, to Wolfram's
heart there came
A calmness like the calmness of a
grave
Walled safe from all the noisy walks
of men
In some green place of peace where
daisies grow.
His tears fell in the twilight with the
dews,
Soft as the dews that with the twi-
light fell,
When, over scarred and weather-
wounded walls,
Sharp-jaggéd mountain cones, and
tangled quicks,
Eve's spirit, settling, laid the land
to sleep
In skyey trance. Nor yet less soft
to fuse
Memory with hope, and earth with
heaven, to him,
Athwart the harsher anguish of that
day,
There stole with tears the tender hu-
man sense
Of heavenly mercy. Through that
milder mood,
Like waifs that float to shore when
storms are spent,
Flowed to his heart old memories of
his friend,
O'erwoven with the weed of other
griefs,
Of other griefs for her that grieved
no more—
And of that time when, like a blaz-
ing star
That moves and mounts between the
Lyre and Crown,
Tannhäuser shone; ere sin came,
and with sin
Sorrow. And now if yet Tannhäu-
ser lived
None knew: and if he lived, what
hope in life?
And if he lived no more, what rest
in death?
But every way the dreadful doom of
sin.
Thus, musing much on all the mys-
tery
Of life, and death, and love that will
not die, [way;
He wandered torth, incurious of the