

Which took the wont of other days,
and wound
Along the valley. Now the nodding
star
Of even, and the deep, the dewy
hour
Held all the sleeping circle of the
hills ;
Nor any cloud the stainless heavens
obscured,
Save where, o'er Hörsel folded in
the frown
Of all his wicked woods, a fleecy
fringe
Of vapor veiled the slowly sinking
moon.
There, in the shade, the stillness,
o'er his harp
Leaning, of love, and life, and death
he sang
A song to which from all her æry
caves
The mountain echo murmured in
her sleep.
But, as the last strain of his solemn
song
Died off among the solitary stars,
There came in answer from the
folded hills
A note of human woe. He turned,
he looked
That way the sound came o'er the
lonely air ;
And, seeing, yet believed not that
he saw,
But, nearer moving, saw indeed
hard by,
Dark in the darkness of a neighbor-
ing hill,
Lying among the splintered stones
and stubs
Flat in the fern, with limbs diffused
as one
That, having fallen, cares to rise no
more,
A pilgrim ; all his weeds of pilgrim-
age
Hanging and torn, his sandals
stained with blood
Of bruised feet, and, broken in his
hand,

His wreathed staff.
And Wolfram wistfully
Looked in his face, and knew it not.
" Alas !
Not him," he murmured, " not my
friend !" And then,
" What art thou, pilgrim ? whence
thy way ? how fall'n
In this wild glen ? at this lone hour
abroad
When only Grief is stirring ?" Unto
whom
That other, where he lay in the long
grass,
Not rising, but with petulant ges-
ture, " Hence !"
Whate'er I am, it skills not. Thee I
know
Full well, Sir Wolfram of the Wil-
lowbrook.
The well-beloved Singer !"
Like a dart
From a friend's hand that voice
through Wolfram went :
For Memory over all the ravaged
form
Wherefrom it issued, wandering,
failed to find
The man she mourned ; but Wol-
fram, to the voice
No stranger, started smit with pain,
as all
The past on those sharp tones came
back to break
His heart with hopeless knowledge.
And he cried,
" Alas, my brother !" Such a
change, so drear,
In all so unlike all that once he was
Showed the lost knight Tannhäuser,
where he lay
Fallen across the split and morselled
crag
Like a dismantled ruin. And Wol-
fram said,
" O lost ! how comest thou, unab-
solved, once more
Among these valleys visited by
death,
And shadowed with the shadow of
thy sin ?"

Whereto in scorn Tannhäuser, " Be
at rest,
O fearful in thy righteousness ! not
thee,
Nor grace of thine, I seek."
Speaking, he rose
The spectre of a beauty waned away ;
And, like a hollow echo of himself
Mocking his own last words, he mur-
mured, " Seek !
Alas ! what seek I here, or any-
where ?
Whose way of life is like the crum-
bled stair
That winds and winds about a
ruined tower,
And leads nowhither !"
But Wolfram cried, " Yet turn !
For, as I live, I will not leave thee
thus.
My life shall be about thee, and my
voice
Lure scared Hope back to find a
resting-place
Even in the jaws of Death. I do
adjure thee,
By all that friendship yet may claim,
declare
That, even though unabsolved, not
uncontrite,
Thy soul no more hath lapsed into
the snare
Of that disastrous sorcery. Bid me
hail,
Seen through the darkness of thy
desolation,
Some light of purer purpose ; since
I deem
Not void of purpose has thou sought
these paths
That range among the places of the
past ;
And I will make defeat of Grief
with such [arm
True fellowship of tears as shall dis-
Her right hand of its scorpions ; nor
in vain
My prayers with thine shall batter at
the gates
Of Mercy, through all antagonisms
of fate

Forcing sharp inlet to her throne in
Heaven."
Wherewith Tannhäuser, turning tear-
less eyes
On Wolfram, murmured mournful-
ly, " If tears
Fiery as those from fallen seraphs
distilled,
Or centuries of prayers for pardon
sighed
Sad, as of souls in purgatorial
glooms,
Might soften condemnation, or re-
store
To her, whom most on earth I have
offended,
The holy freight of all her innocent
hopes
Wrecked in this ruined venture, I
would weep
Salt oceans from these eyes. But I
no more
May drain the deluge from my heart,
no more
On any breath of sigh or prayer re-
build
The rainbow of discovenanted Hope.
Thou, therefore, Wolfram—for her
face, when mine
Is dark forever, thine eyes may still
behold—
Tell her, if thou unblamed may'st
speak of one
Signed cross by the curse of God and
cancelled out,
How, at the last, though in remorse
of all
That makes allegiance void and
valueless,
To me has come, with knowledge of
my loss,
Fidelity to that pure passion, once be-
trayed,
Wherewith I loved, and love her."
There his voice,
Even as a wave that, touching on
the shore
To which it travelled, is shivered
and diffused,

Sank, scattered into spray of waste-
ful sighs,
And back dissolved into the deeper
grief.

To whom, Wolfram, "O answer by
the faith
In which mankind are kindred, art
thou not
From Rome, unhappiest?" "From
Rome? ah me!"
He muttered, "Rome is far off, very
far,
And weary is the way!" But un-
deterred
Wolfram renewed, "And hast thou
not beheld

The face of Christ's High Vicar?"
And again,
"Pass on," he muttered, "what is
that to thee?"

Whereto, with sorrowful voice,
Wolfram, "O all,
And all in all to me that love my
friend!"
"My friend!" Tannhäuser laughed
a bitter laugh

Then sadlier said, "What thou
wouldst know, once known,
Will cause thee to recall that wasted
word

And cancel all the kindness in thy
thoughts;
Yet shalt thou learn my misery, and
learn

The man so changed, whom once
thou calledst 'friend,'
That unto him the memory of him-
self

Is as a stanger." Then, with eyes
that swam
True sorrow, Wolfram stretched his
arms and sought

To clasp Tannhäuser to him: but
the other
Waved him away and with a shout
that sprang

Fierce with self-scorn from misery's
deepest depth,
"Avaunt!" he cried, the ground
whercon I tread

Is ground accurst:

"Yet stand not so far off
But what thine ears, if yet they will,
may take

The tale thy lips from mine have
sought to learn;
Then, sign thyself, and peaceful go
thy ways."

And Wolfram, for the grief that
choked his voice,
Could only murmur "Speak!" But
for a while

Tannhäuser to sad silence gave his
heart;
Then fetched back some far thought,
sighing, and said:—

"O Wolfram, by the love of lovlier
days

Believe I am not so far fallen away
From all I was while we might yet
be friends,

But what these words, haply my
last, are true:

True as my heart's deep woe what
time I felt

Cold on my brow tears wept, and
wept in vain,

For me, among the scorn of altered
friends,

Parting that day for Rome. Re-
member this:

That when, in after years to which
I pass

A by-word, and a mockery, and no
more,

Thou, honored still by honorable
men,

Shalt hear my name dishonored,
thou may'st say,

'Greatly he grieved for that great
sin he sinned.'

"Ever, as up the windy Alpine way,
We halting oft by cloudy convent
doors,

My fellow-pilgrims warmed them-
selves within,

And ate and drank, and slept their
sleep, all night,

I, fasting, slept not; but in ice and
snow

Wept, aye remembering her that
wept for me,

And loathed the sin within me.
When at length

Our way lay under garden terraces
Strewn with their dropping blossoms,

thick with scents,
Among the towers and towns of

Italy,
Whose sumptuous airs along them,
like the ghosts

Of their old gods, went sighing, I
nor looked

Nor lingered, but with bandaged eye-
balls prest,

Impatient, to the city of the shrine
Of my desired salvation. There by

night

We entered. There, all night, for-
lorn I lay

Bruised, broken, bleeding, all my
garments torn,

And all my spirit stricken with re-
morse,

Prostrate beneath the great cathedral
stairs.

So the dawn found me. From a
hundred spires

A hundred silvery chimes rang joy:
but I

Lay folded in the shadow of my
shame,

Darkening the daylight from me in
the dust.

Then came a sound of solemn music
flowing

To where I crouched; voices and
trampling feet;

And, girt by all his crimson car-
dinals,

In all his pomp the sovran Pontiff
stood

Before me in the centre of my
hopes;

Which trembled round him into
glorious shapes,

Golden, as clouds that ring the risen
sun. [fell

And all the people, all the pilgrims,

Low at his sacred feet, confessed
their sins,

And, pardoned, rose with psalms of
jubilee

And confident glad faces.
Then I sprang

To where he paused above me; with
wild hands

Clutched at the skirts I could not
reach; and sank

Shiveringly back; crying, 'O holy,
and high,

And terrible, that hast the keys of
heaven!

Thou that dost bind and dost un-
loose, from me,

For Mary's sake, and the sweet
saints', unbind

The grievous burthen of the curse I
bear.'

And when he questioned, and I told
him all

The sin that smouldered in my blood,
how bred,

And all the strangeness of it, then
his face

Was as the Judgment Angel's; and
I hid

My own; and, hidden from his eyes,
I heard:

"Hast thou within the nets of
Satan lain?

Hast thou thy soul to her perdition
pledged?

Hast thou thy lip to Hell's En-
chatress lent,

To drain damnation from her reek-
ing cup?

Then know that sooner from the
withered staff

That in my hand I hold green leaves
shall spring,

Than from the brand in hell-fire
scorched rebloom

The blossoms of salvation.'

The voice ceased,
And, with it all things from my
sense. I waked

I know not when, but all the place
was dark:

Above me, and about me, and with-
in
Darkness : and from that hour by
moon or sun
Darkness unutterable as of death
Where'er I walk. But death him-
self is near !
O, might I once more see her, un-
seen ; unheard,
Hear her once more ; or know that
she forgives
Whom Heaven forgives not, nor his
own lost peace ;
I think that even among the nether
fires
And those dark fields of Doom to
which I pass,
Some blessing yet would haunt me." Sorrowfully
He rose among the tumbled rocks
and leaned
Against the dark. As one that many
a year,
Sundered by savage seas unsociable
From kin and country, in a desert
isle
Dwelling till half dishumanized, be-
holds
Haply, one eve, a far-off sail go by,
That brings old thoughts of home
across his heart ;
And still the man who thinks—
"They are all gone,
Or changed, that loved me once, and
I myself
No more the same"—watches the
dwindling speck
With weary eyes, nor shouts, nor
waves a hand ;
But after, when the night is left
alone,
A sadness falls upon him, and he
feels
More solitary in his solitudes
And tears come starting fast ; so,
tearful, stood
Tannhäuser, whilst his melancholy
thoughts, [hope,
From following up far off a waning
Back to himself came, one by one,
more sad

Because of sadness troubled.
Yet not long
He rested thus ; but murmured,
"Now, farewell :
I go to hide me darkly in the groves
That she was wont to haunt ; where
some sweet chance
Haply may yield me sight of her,
and I
May stoop, she passed away, to kiss
the ground
Made sacred by her passage ere I
die."
But him departing Wolfram held,
"Vain ! vain !
Thy footstep sways with fever, and
thy mind
Wavers within thy restless eyes.
Lie here,
O unrejected, in my arms, and
rest !"
Now o'er the cumbrous hills began
to creep
A thin and watery light : a whisper
went
Vague through the vast and dusky-
volumed woods,
And, unaccompanied, from a drowsy
copse
Hard by a solitary chirp came cold,
While, spent with inmost trouble,
Tannhäuser leaned
His wan cheek pillowed upon Wol-
fram's breast,
Calm, as in death, with placid lids
down locked.
And Wolfram prayed within his
heart, "Ah, God !
Let him not die, not yet, not thus
with all
The sin upon his spirit !" But
while he prayed
Tannhäuser raised delirious looks,
and sighed,
"Hearest thou not the happy songs
they sing me ?
Seest thou not the lovely floating
forms ?
O fair, and fairer far than fancy
fashioned !

O sweet the sweetness of the songs
they sing !
For thee, . . . they sing . . . the
goddess waits : for thee
With braided blooms the balmy
couch is strewn,
And loosed for thee . . . they sing
. . . the golden zone.
Fragrant for thee the lighted spices
fume
With streaming incense sweet, and
sweet for thee
The scattered rose, the myrtle crown,
the cup,
The nectar-cup for thee ! . . . they
sing. Return,
Though late, too long desired, . . .
I hear them sing,
Delay no more delights too long de-
layed :
Turn to thy rest : . . . they sing . . .
the married doves
Murmur ; the Fays soft-sparking
tapers tend ;
The odors burn the purple bowers
among ;
And love for thee, and Beauty,
waits ! . . . they sing."
"Ah me ! ah madman !" Wolfram
cried, "yet cram
Thy cheated ears, nor chase with
credulous heart
The fair dissembling of that dream.
For thee
Not roses now, but thorns ; nor
myrtle wreath,
But cypress rather and the graveyard
flower
Befitting saddest brows ; nor nectar
poured,
But prayers and tears ! For thee in
yonder skies
An Angel strives with Sin and Death !
for thee
Yet pleads a spirit purer than thine
own :
For she is gone ! gone to the breast
of God !
Thy Guardian Angel, while she
walked the earth.

Thine intercessionary Saint while
now
For thee she sues about the Throne
of Thrones,
Beyond the stars, our star, Eliza-
beth !"
Then Wolfram felt the shattered
frame that leaned
Across his breast with sudden spasms
convulsed.
"Dead ! is she dead ?" Tannhäuser
murmured, "dead !
Gone to the grave, so young ! mur-
dered—by me !
Dead—and by my great sin ! O Wol-
fram, turn
Thy face from mine. I am a dying
man !"
And Wolfram answered, "Dying ?
ah, not thus !
Yet make one sign thou dost repent
the past,
One word, but one ! to say thou hast
abhorred
That false she-devil that, with her
damméd charms,
Hath wrought this ruin ; and I,
though all the world
Roar out against thee, ay ! though
fiends of hell
Howl from the deeps, yet I, thy
friend, even yet
Will cry them 'Peace !' and trust
the hope I hold
Against all desperate odds, and deem
thee saved."
Whereto Tannhäuser, speaking
faintly, "Friend,
The fiend that haunts in ruins
through my heart
Will wander sometimes. In the nets
I trip,
When most I fret the meshes. These
spent shafts
Are of a sickly brain that shoots
awry,
Aiming at something better. Bear
with me.
I die : I pass I know not whither :
yet know

That I die penitent. O Wolfram,
 pray,
 Pray for my soul! I cannot pray
 myself.
 I dare not hope: and yet I would
 not die
 Without a hope, if any hope, though
 faint
 And far beyond this darkness, yet
 may dwell
 In the dear death of Him that died
 for all."
 He whispering thus; far in the
 Aureorean East
 The ruddy sun, uprising, sharply
 smote
 A golden finger on the airy harps
 By Morning hung within her leafy
 bowers;
 And all about the budded dells, and
 woods
 With sparkling-tasselled tops, from
 birds and brooks
 A hundred hallelujahs hailed the
 light.
 The whitehorn glistened from the
 wakening glen:
 O'er golden gravel danced the dawn-
 ing rills:
 All the delighted leaves by copse and
 glade
 Gambolled; and breezy beatings
 came from flocks [dew.
 Far off in pleasant pastures fed with
 But whilst, unconscious of the silent
 change
 Thus stolen around him, o'er the
 dying bard
 Hung Wolfram, on the breeze there
 came a sound
 Of mourning moving down the nar-
 row glen;
 And, looking up, he suddenly was
 'ware
 Of four white maidens, moving in
 the van
 Of four black monks who bore upon
 her bier
 The flower-strewn corpse of young
 Elizabeth.

And after these, from all the castled
 hills,
 A multitude of lieges and lords;
 A multitude of men-at-arms, with
 all
 Their morions hung with mourning;
 and in midst
 His worn cheek channelled with un-
 wonted tears,
 The Landgrave, weeping for Eliza-
 beth.
 These, as the sad procession nearer
 wound,
 And nearer, trampling bare the
 feathery weed
 To where Sir Wolfram rested o'er
 his friend,
 Tannhäuser caught upon his dying
 gaze;
 And caught, perchance, upon the in-
 ward eye,
 Far, far beyond the corpse, the bier,
 and far
 Beyond the widening circle of the
 sun,
 Some sequel of that vision Wolfram
 saw:
 The crowned Spirit by the Jasper
 Gates;
 The four white Angels o'er the walls
 of Heaven,
 The shores where, tideless, sleep the
 seas of Time
 Soft by the City of the Saints of God.
 Forth, with the strength that lastly
 comes to break
 All bonds, from Wolfram's folding
 arm he leapt,
 Clambered the pebbly path, and,
 groaning, fell [last!
 Flat on the bier of love—his bourn at
 Then, even then, while question
 question chased
 About the ruffled circle of that grief,
 And all was hubbub by the bier, a
 noise
 Of shouts and hymns brake in across
 the hills,
 That now o'erflowed with hurrying
 feet; and came,

Dashed to the hip with travel, and
 dewed with haste,
 A flying post, and in his hand he
 bore
 A withered staff o'erflourished with
 green leaves;
 Who,—followed by a crowd of youth
 and eld,
 That sang to stun with sound the
 lark in heaven,
 "A miracle! a miracle from Rome!
 Glory to God that makes the bare
 bough green!"—
 Sprang in the midst, and, hot for
 answer, asked
 News of the Knight Tannhäuser.
 Then a monk
 Of those that, stoled in sable, bore
 the bier
 Pointing, with sorrowful hand, "Be-
 hold the man!"
 But straight the other, "Glory be to
 God!
 This from the Vicar of the fold of
 Christ:
 The withered staff hath flourished
 into leaves,
 The brand shall bloom, though
 burned with fire, and thou
 —Thy soul from sin be saved!" To
 whom, with tears
 That flashed from lowering lids,
 Wolfram replied:
 "To him a swifter message, from a
 source
 Mightier than whence thou comest,
 hath been vouchsafed.
 See these dark hands, blind eyes, and
 bloodless lips,
 This shattered remnant of a once
 fair form,
 Late home of desolation, now the
 husk
 And ruined chrysalis of a regal spirit
 That up to heaven hath parted on
 the wing!
 But thou, to Rome returning with
 hot speed, [Christ
 Tell the high Vicar of the Fold of
 How that lost sheep his rescuing
 hand would reach,

Although by thee unfound, is found
 indeed,
 And in the Shepherd's bosom lies at
 peace."
 And they that heard him lifted up
 the voice
 And wept. But they that stood
 about the hills
 Far off, not knowing, ceased not to
 cry out,
 "Glory to God that makes the bare
 bough green!"
 Till Echo, from the inmost heart of
 all
 That mellowing morn blown open
 like a rose
 To round and ripen to the perfect
 noon,
 Resounded, "Glory! glory!" and
 the rocks
 From glen to glen rang, "Glory unto
 God!"
 And so those twain, severed by Life
 and Sin,
 By Love and Death united, in one
 grave
 Slept. But Sir Wolfram passed into
 the wilds:
 There, with long labor of his hands,
 he hewed
 A hermitage from out the hollow
 rock,
 Wherein he dwelt, a solitary man.
 There, many a year, at nightfall or
 at dawn,
 The pilgrim paused, nor ever paused
 in vain,
 For words of cheer along his weary
 way.
 But once, upon a windy night, men
 heard
 A noise of rustling wings, and at the
 dawn
 They found the hermit parted to his
 peace.
 The place is yet. The youngest pil-
 grim knows,
 And loves it. Three gray rocks;
 and, over these,