

Moses from the land of bondage and despair—(Amen.)
 Daniel from the hungry lions in their lair—(Amen.)
 And the children Three amid the furnace-flame—(Amen.)
 Chaste Sušännä from the slander and the shame—(Amen.)
 David from Goli'ä and the wrath of Saul—(Amen.)
 And the two Apostles from their prison-thrall—(Amen.)
 Thëc'la from her torments—(Amen.)

—So, to show Thy power,
 Rescue this Thy servant in his evil hour.

Geron. Novis'simä hō'ra est ;¹ and I fain would sleep,
 The pain has wearied me. . . . Into Thy hands,
 O Lord, into Thy hands. . . .

The Priest. Profiçis'çëre, ä'n'imä Christiä'nä, de hoc mün'do !²
 Go forth upon thy journey, Christian soul !
 Go from this world ! Go, in the Name of Gōd,
 The omnipotent Father who created thee !
 Go, in the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
 Son of the Living God, who bled for thee !
 Go, in the Name of the Holy Spirit, who
 Hath been pōured out on thee ! Go, in the name
 Of Angels and Archangels ; in the name
 Of Thrones and Dominations ; in the name
 Of Princedoms and of Powers ; and in the name
 Of Cherubim and Seraphim, go förth !
 Go, in the name of Patriarchs and Prophets ;
 And of Apostles and Evangelists,
 Of Martyrs and Confessors ; in the name
 Of holy Mōnks and Hermits ; in the name
 Of holy Virgins ; and all Saints of God,
 Both men and women, go ! Go on thy cōurse ;
 And may thy place to-day be found in peace,
 And may thy dwelling be the holy Mount
 Of Sion :—through the Name of Christ, our Lord.

¹ It is the last hour.

² Depart, O Christian soul, from this world !

IV.

103. THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS.

PART SECOND.

SOUL OF GERONTIUS.

I went to sleep ; and now I am refreshed.
 A strange refreshment : for I feel in me
 An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
 Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
 And ne'er had been before. How still it is !
 I hear no more the busy beat of time,
 No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse ;
 Nor does one moment differ from the next.
 I had a dream ; yes : some one softly said,
 "He's gone" ; and then a sigh went round the room.
 And then I surely heard a priestly voice
 Cry "Subvëni'te" ;¹ and they knelt in prayer.
 I seem to hear him still ; but thin and low,
 And fainter and more faint the accents come,
 As at an ever-widening interval.
 Ah ! whence is this ? What is this severance ?
 This silence pours a solitariness
 Into the very essence of my soul ;
 And the deep rest, so soothing and so sweet,
 Hath something too of sternness and of pain.
 For it drives back my thoughts upon their spring
 By a strange introversion,² and perforce
 I now begin to feed upon myself,
 Because I have nought else to feed upon.

Am I alive or dead ? I am not dead,
 But in the body still ; for I possess
 A sort of confidence, which clings to me,
 That each particular organ holds its place
 As heretofore, combining with the rest
 Into one symmetry, that wraps me round,
 And makes me man ; and surely I could move,

¹ Come to his aid.

² In tro ver'sion, turning inward upon one's self.

Did I but will it, every part of me,
 And yet I can not to my sense bring hōme,
 By very trial, that I have the power.
 'Tis strange ; I can not stir a hand or foot,
 I can not make my fingers or my lips
 By mutual pressure witness each to each,
 Nor by the eyelid's instantaneous stroke
 Assure myself I have a body still.
 Nor do I know my very attitude,
 Nor if I stand, or lie, or sit, or kneel.

So much I know, not knowing how I know,
 That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,
 Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
 Or I or it is rushing on the wings
 Of light or lightning on an onward course,
 And we e'en now are million miles apart.
 Yet, . . . is this per'emptory severance
 Wrought out in lengthening mēasurements of space,
 Which grow and multiply by speed and time?
 Or am I trāv'ersing infinity
 By endless subdivision, hūrrying back
 From finite toward infinitesimal,
 Thus dying out of the expanded world ?

Another marvel : some one has me fāst
 Within his ample pālm ; 'tis not a grāsp
 Such as they use on earth, but all around
 Over the surface of my subtle being,
 As though I were a sphere, and capable
 To be accosted thus, a uniform
 And gentle pressure tells me I am not
 Self moving, but bōrne forward on my way.
 And hark ! I hear a singing ; yet in sooth
 I can not of that music rightly say
 Whether I hear or touch or taste the tone.
 Oh what a heart-subduing melody !

Angel.

My work is done,
 My tāsks is o'er,

And so I come,
 Taking it home,
 For the crown is won,
 Alleluia,
 For evermore.

My Father gave
 In charge to me
 This child of ēarth
 E'en from its birth
 To serve and save,
 Alleluia,
 And saved is he.

This child of clay
 To me was given,
 To rear and train
 By sorrow and pain
 In the nārrōw way,
 Alleluia,
 From earth to heaven.

Soul. It is a member of that family
 Of wondrous beings, who, ere the worlds were made,
 Millions of ages back, have stood around
 The throne of God :—he never has known sin ;
 But through those cycles all but infinite,
 Has had a strōng and pure celestial life,
 And bore to gaze on th' unveiled face of God,
 And drank from the eternal Fount of truth,
 And served Him with a keen ecstatic love.
 Hark ! he begins again.

Angel. O Lord, how wonderful in depth and height,
 But most in man, how wonderful Thou art !
 With what a love, what sōft persuasive might
 Victorious o'er the stubborn fleshly heart,
 Thy tale¹ complete of saints Thou dōst provide,
 To fill the throne which angels lōst by pride !

¹ Tale, a number counted off.

He lay a gröveling babe upon the ground,
Polluted in the blood of his first sire,
With his whole essence shattered and unsound,
And, coiled around his heart a demon dire,
Which was not of his nature, but had skill
To bind and form his opening mind to ill.

Then was I sent from heaven to set right
The balance in his soul of truth and sin,
And I have waged a long relentless fight,
Resolved that death-environed spirit to win,
Which from its fallen state, when all was löst,
Had been repurchased at so dread a cöst.

Oh what a shifting parti-colored scene
Of hope and fear, of triumph and dismay,
Of recklessness and penitence, has been
The history of that dreary, life-long fray!
And oh the grace to nerve him and to lead,
How patient, prompt, and lavish at his need!

O man, strange com'posite of heaven and earth!
Majesty dwarfed to baseness! fragrant flower
Running to poisonous seed! and seeming worth
Cloaking corruption! weakness mastering power!
Who never art so near to crime and shame
As when thou hast achieved some deed of name,

How should ethê'real natures comprehend
A thing made up of spirit and of clay,
Were we not tasked to nurse it and to tend,
Linked one to one throughout its mortal day?
More than the Seraph in his height of place,
The Angel-guardian knows and loves the ransomed race.

Soul. Now know I surely that I am at length
Out of the body: had I part with earth,
I never could have drunk those accents in,
And not have worshipped as a god the voice
That was so musical; but now I am

So whole of heart, so cälm, so self-possessed,
With such a full content, and with a sense
So apprehensive and discriminant,
As no temptation can intoxicate.
Nor have I even terror at the thought
That I am clasped by such a saintliness.

Angel. All praise to Him, at whose sublime decree
The last are first, the first become the last;
By whom the suppliant prisoner is set free,
By whom proud first-borns from their thrones are cast;
Who raises Mary to be Queen of heaven,
While Lucifer is left, condemned and unforgiven.

V.

104. THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS.

PART THIRD.

SOUL. I will address him. Mighty one, my Lord,
My Guardian Spirit, all hail!

Angel. All hail, my child!
My child and brother, hail! what wouldst thou?

Soul. I would have nothing but to speak with thee
For speaking's sake. I wish to hold with thee
Conscious communion; though I fain would know
A maze of things, were it but meet to ask,
And not a curiousness.

Angel. You can not now
Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.

Soul. Then I will speak. I ever had believed
That on the moment when the struggling soul
Quitted its mortal case, förthwith it fell
Under the awful Presence of its Göd,
There to be judged and sent to its own place.
What lets¹ me now from going to my Lord?

¹ Lets, hinders; prevents; impedes as by obstacles. This use of the verb *to let* is almost obsolete, except in poetry.

Angel. Thou art not let ; but with extremest speed
 Art hurrying to the Just and Holy Judge :
 For scarcely art thou disembodied yet.
 Divide a moment, as men measure time,
 Into its million-million-millionth part,
 Yet even less than that the interval
 Since thou didst leave the body ; and the priest
 Cried "Subvenite," and they fell to prayer ;
 Nay, scarcely yet have they begun to pray.
 For spirits and men by different standards mete
 The less and greater in the flow of time.
 By sun and moon, primeval ordinances—
 By stars which rise and set harmoniously—
 By the recurring seasons, and the swing,
 This way and that, of the suspended rod
 Precise and punctual, men divide the hours,
 Equal, continuous, for their common use.
 Not so with us in th' immaterial world ;
 But intervals in their succession
 Are measured by the living thought alone,
 And grow or wane with its intensity.
 And time is not a common property ;
 But what is long is short, and swift is slow,
 And near is distant, as received and grasped
 By this mind and by that, and every one
 Is standard of his own chronology,
 And memory lacks its natural resting-points
 Of years and centuries and periods.
 It is thy very energy of thought
 Which keeps thee from thy God.

Soul.

Dear Angel, say,

Why have I now no fear of meeting Him ?
 Along my earthly life, the thought of death
 And judgment was to me most terrible.
 I had it *àye* before me, and I saw
 The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix.
 Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled ;
 And at this balance of my destiny,

Now close upon me, I can forward look
 With a serenest joy.

Angel.

It is because
 Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear.
 Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so
 For thee the bitterness of death is past.
 Also, because already in thy soul
 The judgment is begun. That day of doom,
 One and the same for the collected world—
 That solemn consummation for all flesh,
 Is, in the case of each, anticipate
 Upon his death ; and, as the last great day
 In the particular judgment is rehearsed,
 So now too, ere thou comest to the throne,
 A presage falls upon thee, as a ray
 Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot.
 That calm and joy uprising in thy soul
 Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense,
 And heaven begun.

Soul.

But hark ! upon my sense
 Comes a fierce hubbub, which would make me fear,
 Could I be frightened.

Angel.

We are now arrived
 Close on the judgment court ; that sullen howl
 Is from the demons who assemble there.
 It is the middle region, where of old
 Satan appeared among the sons of God,
 To cast his gibes and scoffs at holy Job.
 So now his legions throng the vestibule,
 Hungry and wild, to claim their property,
 And gather souls for hell. Hist to their cry !

Soul. How sour and how uncouth a dissonance !

Angel. It is the restless panting of their being ;
 Like beasts of prey, who, caged within their bars,
 In a deep hideous purring have their life,
 And an incessant pacing to and fro.

Soul. How im'potent they are ! and yet on earth
They have repute for wondrous power and skill ;
And books describe how that the very face
Of the Evil One, if seen, would have a force
Even to freeze the blood, and choke the life
Of him who saw it.

Angel. In thy trial-state
Thou hadst a traitor nestling close at hōme,
Connatural, who with the powers of hell
Was leagued, and of thy senses kept the keys,
And to that deadliest foe unlocked thy heart.
And therefore is it, in respect of man,
Those fallen ones show so majestic.
But when some child of grace, angel or saint,
Pure and upright in his integrity
Of nature, meets the demons on their raid,
They scud away as cowards from the fight.
Nay, oft hath holy hermit in his cell,
Not yet disburdened of mortality,
Mōcked at their threats and warlike overtures ;
Or, dying, when they swarmed, like flies, around,
Defied them, and departed to his Judge.

Soul. I see not those false spirits ; shall I see
My dearest Māster when I reach His throne ?
Or hear, at least, His awful judgment-word
With personal intonation, as I now
Hear thee, not see thee, Angel ? Hitherto
All has been darkness since I left the earth ;
Shall I remain thus sight-bereft all through
My penance-time ? if so, how comes it then
That I have hearing still, and taste, and touch,
Yet not a glimmer of that princely sense
Which binds ide'as in one, and makes them live ?

Angel. Nor touch, nor taste, nor hearing hast thou now ;
Thou livest in a world of signs and types,
The prēsenta'tion of most holy truths,
Living and strong, which now encompass thee.

A disembodied soul, thou hast by right
No converse with aught else beside thyself ;
But, lest so stern a solitude should load
And break thy being, in mercy are vouchsafed
Some lower mēasures of perception,
Which seem to thee as though through channels brought,
Through ear, or nerves, or palate, which are gone.
And thou art wrapped and swāthed around in dreams,
Dreams that are true, yet enigmatical ;
For the belongings of thy present state,
Save through such symbols, come not home to thee.
And thus thou tell'st of space and time and size,
Of fragrant, solid, bitter, musical,
Of fire, and of refreshment after fire ;
As (let me use similitude of earth,
To aid thee in the knowledge thou dost ask)—
As ice, which blisters, may be said to burn.
Nor hast thou now extension, with its parts
Corrél'ative—long habit cōzens¹ thee—
Nor power to move thyself, nor limbs to move.
Hast thou not heard of those who, after loss
Of hand or foot, still cried that they had pains
In hand or foot, as though they had it still ?
So is it now with thee, who hast not lost
Thy hand or foot, but all which made up man.
So will it be, until the joyous day
Of resurrection, when thou wilt regain
All thou hast lost, new-made and glorified.
How, even now, the consummated Saints
See God in heaven, I may not explicate ;
Meanwhile let it suffice thee to possess
Such means of converse as are granted thee,
Though till that Beatific Vision thou art blind ;
For e'en thy purgatory, which comes like fire,
Is fire without its light.

Soul. His will be done!
I am not worthy e'er to see again

¹ Coz'ens, cheats ; deludes.

The face of day ; far less His countenance,
Who is the very sun. Nãth'less,¹ in life,
When I looked forward to my purgatory,
It ever was my sölace to believe,
That, ere I plunged amid th' avenging flame,
I had one sight of Him to strengthen me.

Angel. Nor rash nor vain is that presentiment ;
Yes—for one moment thou shalt see thy Lord.
Thus will it be: what time thou art arraigned
Before the dread tribunal, and thy lot
Is càst forever, should it be to sit
On His right hand, among His pure elect,
•Then sight, or that which to the soul is sight,
As by a lightning-flash, will come to thee,
And thou shalt see, amid the dark profound,
Whom thy soul loveth, and would fain approach—
One moment ; but thou knowest not, my child,
What thou dost àsk : that sight of the Most Fair
Will gladden thee, but it will pierce thee too.

Soul. Thou speakest darkly, Angel ; and an awe
Falls on me, and a fear lest I be rash.

Angel. There was a mortal,² who is now above
In the mid glory: he, when near to die,
Was given communion with the Crucified—
Such, that the Måster's very wõunds were stamped
Upon his flesh ; and, from the agony
Which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace,
Learn that the flame of the Everlasting Love
Dõth burn, ere it transform.

¹ Nãth'less, nevertheless.

² Mortal, St. Francis of Assisi.
The feast of his Stigmata, which
commemorates the fact that the

marks of the five wounds of our
Lord were miraculously imprinted
on his flesh, is celebrated by the
Church on the 17th of August.

VI.

105. THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS.

PART FOURTH.

ANGEL. We now have pãssed the gate, and are within
The House of Judgment ; and whereas on earth
Temples and palaces are formed of parts
Costly and rare, but all material,
So in the world of spirits nought is found,
To mould withal and form into a whõle,
But what is immaterial ; and thus
The smallest põrtions of this edifice,
Cornice, or frieze, or balustrade, or stair,
The very pavement is made up of life—
Of holy, blessed, and immortal beings,
Who hymn their Maker's praise continually.

Soul. The sound is like the rushing of the wind—
The summer wind—among the löfty pines ;
Swelling and dying, echoing round about,
Now here, now distant, wild and beautiful ;
While, scattered from the branches it has stirred,
Descend ecstastic odors.

Angel. They sing of thy approaching agony,
Which thou so eagerly didst question of:
It is the face of the Incarnate God
Shall smite thee with that keen and subtle pain ;
And yet the memory which it leaves will be
A sówereign fëb'rifüge¹ to heal the wõund ;
And yet withal it will the wound provoke,
And aggravate and widen it the more.

Soul. Thou speakest mysteries ; still methinks I know
To disengage the tangle of thy words :
Yet rather would I hear thy angel voice
Than for myself be thy interpreter.

¹ Fëb'ri füge, a medicine used to relieve fever.