

eBook

The Arctic Queen

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The Arctic Queen

THE ARCTIC QUEEN.

PART FIRST.

OENE, of all the chilly Arctics, queen,
Ascended to her everlasting throne
Built on the steadfast centre of the world,
And waited for the middle hour of night,
Now swiftly coming, to convene her court.
Set in an ocean of perpetual calm
Was the fair island honoured by her reign;
Slowly around her rolled the Frigid Zone,
Dim in the mystic moonlight far away,---
A silvery ring, circling her nearer realm
With the pale lustre of its snowy walls,
Defending from all storm and sudden change
The sea which bathed the island's level shores.
She sat upon her throne, and none might tell
Whether her limbs the lambent lustre cast
Upon the pearls of which it was composed,
Or they cast beauty on her glowing form.
Around her feet a pavement spread, inlaid
Of squares of roseate sea-shells, set about
With purple gems, unknown in other lands;---
Thence, winding paths, sprinkled with golden sand,
Ran out, through bowers of flowers and fields of green
To meet the sea.

Low in the South the Moon
Shone full against the island. The North-star,
Sparkling and blazing like a silver sun,
Stood at the Zenith, as a lamp hung out
From heaven to charm the endless Arctic night;---
And thus a soft profusion of pure light,
More exquisite than sunshine, fell abroad.
Unnipped by daintiest frosts, in every field
Flowers crowded thick; and trees, not tall nor rude,
With slender stems upholding feathery shade,
Nodded their heads and hung their pliant limbs
In natural bowers, sweet with delicious gloom.

Queen OENE sent her luminous glance afar:
Fine rays of tintless light played round her head,
Crowning her beauty with mysterious glory.
She gazed away, beyond the tranquil sea,

To distant mountains of unchanging snow,
And still beyond, to where full many a tower
And fortress reared their walls of gleaming ice
On the dim verges of her vast domains.

Scarcely had she in silence throned herself,
Ere from the trees, or flower-coves of the shore,
Or gliding in from idling on the sea,
Her maids of honor came, a virgin train,
Like a bright constellation clustering round
The central star, most glorious of them all.
One, in a crimson blossom, torn away
From its far moorings, nestled at her ease,
Was seen slowly to skim the silver lake;
While the huge flower seemed of itself propelled,
Save that, by chance, a flushed and saucy face,
Peeped from the waves, showing a little imp
Who tugged at its stout stem with willful toil.
KOLONA's limbs and bosom roseate glowed
As the slant moonlight through the crimson flower
Bathed her with blushes; but, when on the strand
She lightly sprang, flinging her tresses back,
A southern maiden would have deemed her pale.
Too rich for pallor was the polished glow
Of her lithe figure; while, in either cheek,
The red veins glimmered; dark blue were her eyes;
Her tresses, like deep shadows, made more fair
The light which they enhanced, glancing within.

The first to touch the white feet of the Queen
And place herself at her right hand, was she.
Others came soon; all bright, all beautiful,
With deep blue eyes, and sweet mouths set in smiles.
Long chains of jewels rare were, round their necks,
Twined many times; these, flickering, rose and fell
With the soft breath their full, graced bosoms drew.
From waist to knee of each a tunic dropped
In many folds, woven in changing hues
Of birds' gay plumage, and fringed deep with gems,
Which they with artless and unenvying pride,
Would fain have made, each, most magnificent.

They gathered round their Queen, as midnight neared.
Suddenly, with the hour, there came a change
Over the moonlight and the courtly scene.
OENE upon the pavement pressed her feet,
And out the North-Lights sprang, to do her will,
From secret caverns underneath its pearls.

O'er all the land she bade them come and go;
Each battlemented iceberg on the deep
Of other seas, and every snowy hall,
And every citadel by frosts upreared,
Were lighted with wild splendors, as the troupes
Of messengers rushed swiftly to and fro.
The people of the Arctics knew their Queen
Summoned her subjects to the Presence then
By wavering tints which played beneath the Star,
And the great speed with which the North-Lights flew.
They hurried even to the Temperate Zone.
A band of phantom spirits took wings and flew
Far to the southern sky, a fluttering crowd.
A warrior, yellow garbed, with fiery spear,
Bestrode a frantic steed, and looked not back
Till he alighted on a distant hill.
With scintillant flames some perched on towers remote
Or bore green banners o'er the mirroring sea,
Or flitted through dim valleys, bright and fast,
Casting their flickering shadows down the deep
And awful solitudes of Arctic lands.

Such of her people as had aught to ask
Of favor or redress, from air and earth,
Came now, bringing petitions, councils, gifts.
Some slid on twinkling star-beams through the air,
Some sailed in shallops over the light waves,
And all who came had presents for their Queen,---
Rare tints which they had caught just as the Moon
Peered o'er the shoulder of the mighty Thug.---
Those dwelling in the caverns of the sea
Brought up the gayest jewels they could find,
And pearls from underneath their low-based bergs
Deep in the green waves, that, with thunderous sound,
Did lull the giants of the North to sleep.

There came, as time rolled by, from the far verge
Of her vast realm, the rugged guardian ghouls,
Stationed in fortresses and waging war
On all encroachers from the hated South.
These had wild forms and gaunt; their dress was rude---
Skins of the white bear fastened to their loins.
They bore long, glistening spears, and deadly clubs
Wrenched from the spines of monsters of the sea.
Their gifts were rude as they, and yet their Queen
Unbent the radiant quiet of her brow,
Gazing with favor on these proofs of valor.
Tales of achievements dread, of battles, deaths,

Had they to speak, while, with pleased ear intent,
Their sovereign listened.

One warrior ghoul
With crispy locks and frosty eyes, and breath
Chiller than death's,---naked, as scorning e'en
To wear the trophies of his fierce renown--
Before the Presence stood, and told in haste,---
As half impatient of the wish to boast,
Yet proud to serve so well---how he was called
WOLE, guardian of old Thug;---how from the South
Came, ploughing slowly through the unwilling sea,
A ship, crowded with mortals from that land;
How, boldly, in defiance of commands
Sent out by skirmishing Frosts, they still drew near,
Passing the outer line of her domains;
Daring to come, with their invading eyes,
Where never mortals else had looked and lived.
He told,---and here he glanced, upon his friends,
Eyes of bright scorn---how the imperious ship
Passed safely Tug and Dor, though all the guards
Shot barbs of ice, and filled the air with fine,
Invisible needles, piercing their pained flesh,
And tore their stiffening sails with sharp-teethed winds;
How, still, the ship pressed on where He kept watch,
Ready to do new service for his Queen:
How, as it closer came, he fixed his eyes
Relentlessly upon it, till nor hand,
Nor foot, nor eyelid of the fated crew
Had power to stir, nor even the sails to flap,
While banded winds which he sent forth, still drove
The doomed ones onward to the eager shore,
Where every soul had perished, one by one.

"Thou hast done well, old WOLE," Queen OENE said.

Stepping a pace in front of her companions,
With bashful cheek, but with a kindling eye---
"'Tis not for one like me to have a thought
In thy rare presence, Queen," KOLONA said,---
"Yet I would dare to tell thee what I saw
Only a moon ago, when a wild freak
Possessed me to go voyaging alone,
Across the sea, to find what curious things
The other shore might hold. My lily bark,
Being too frail for such a venturous cruise
I borrowed GONDOR's boat of nautilus' shells,
Put up my lua-leaf sail and swiftly sped

Across the ocean, till this level isle
Grew smaller than a star. The air grew cold:---
I almost shivered in my bird's-down mantle;
But when I neared the opposing shore, the sight
Of all its snowy scenery, repaid me.
Coasting along at leisure, on a cliff
Which overhung the sea, I saw appear
A being, whom I knew at once as Man.---
One of that mortal race which we have kept
Forever, since our chronicles began,
With war assiduous, from our inner realms,
Still undefiled by their invading feet.
The choking hurry of my noisy heart
Told me the truth. At first I would have fled,
But, being unperceived by him, I lingered,---
Inquisitive and wilful that I am.
Thenceforth, sweet Queen, I never can forget
The face of this one man which I have seen.
Triumph was on his brow, and yet not that
So much as doubt and earnest questioning.
Something arose into his eyes and shone
Which must have been his Soul; it searched the deep,
The earth, the sky, with bright and troubled gaze;
And then, glanced forward with so still a look,
It seemed that it, perforce, would vanish space,
And bring our secret world within its ken;
Yet, with no cruelty or wantonness,
Such as we hear gleamed from the cunning eyes
Of those fierce hordes who, centuries ago,
Came in their boats and strove to conquer us.
Knowledge was what it craved, with truth it burned;
A majesty we cannot name, expressed
Its power within his features. Then I felt
That, could I bring him to thy gracious feet
He would reveal to us that mystery
The dream of which so oft hath troubled us,
Breaking upon us, like the light of Heaven,
Too high for us to fix its source---that spoke
Of an eternal, comprehensive Life,
The thought of which doth haunt us. In return
We could bestow the knowledge which he craved,
And link his name with ours through all the earth,
Fearless of harm from one who only craves
The crown of Genius for his soul-lit brow.
Almost I rowed my shallop to his feet;
Almost I offered to convey him hither,
Yet feared so much, O, Queen, thy just displeasure,
That I forbore.

"Long time he, gazing, stood;
And when he turned, 'twas with so deep a sigh
The sound awakened in me strange regret,
Endless reproach, and grief before unknown.
Art angry with thy maiden, peerless Queen?"

Over the lustrous forehead of OENE
A shadow came, and deepened in her eyes.

"I might have slain thee both, if thou hadst ventured;
For it is part of our ancestral law,
The most immutable, to guard ourselves,
With our severest powers, from envious Man.
Yet, as thou sayest, he might have fed our hearts
With sweet immortal food---aye, given us souls,
If such things be,---worth half my priceless realms.
No more---no more! KOLONA! take thy place!"

As a soft flower shrinks from the coming night,
Amid protecting leaves, KOLONA shrank,
Amid her tresses, from her sovereign's eyes,
So gloomy yet so kind; and mutely stood
Amid the bright and coyly wondering train.

A band of sprites, armed with sharp, silver spears,
With pearl-encrusted garb and gleaming sandals,
Dwelling low down the land, even amid men,
The Queen's advance guard, giving due alarm
Of all attacks, taking short flights by night,
And reconnoitering the southern world,---
Had sent a group to counsel with their Queen.
These, now, had much to say of an adventure
Which took them almost to the Tropic Zone:---
How they had blighted fruit; and mildews cast
Over the fields; and blasted flowering trees;
Nipping the hopes of gaudy butterflies,
Doting on honeyed flowers to fill their mouths;
Chilling the saucy birds within their nests;
Ruining the rainbow hues of many a garden;
Pricking the insect world with their fine spears,
And disappointing mortals of their wish.

Their somewhat boastful discourse these had ceased,
When came in hosts a crowd around the Pole,
Parting on each side to make way for one,
A stranger, craving audience of their Queen.
What saw those weird and piercing eyes, full turned
To meet the coming throng?---a singular sight,

Which filled them with bright anger and surprise!
Up from the sea, along a silvery path,
A mortal came; her girlish feet the first
That ever pressed the veritable Pole;
And not more strange to her was this wild queen,
And all the fairness of these maids of honor,
Than was her sunny beauty unto them.
The fluttering brightness of her golden hair,
The lustrous darkness of her eyes, the warmth
Of tropic tints upon her brow and cheek,
The dimpled fullness of her form, appeared
In vivid contrast with their fairer charms.
She held an offering of gorgeous flowers---
Those most renowned for fragrance---in her hands,
Which, as she reached the platform, she held forth
With a most winning, most beseeching air.
Amazed at such presumption, on the maid,
Queen OENE's brow darkened in sudden wrath.

"Warriors! do ye permit this sight!" she cried.

The lightest breath of that majestic voice
Had ever been with prompt obedience met;
But now, though hoarse and deep as surging sea,
No spear was lowered and no arrow bent.
The Pole-Queen raised aloft her pale right arm;---
She stamped her haughty feet upon the pave,---
And all the Powers of the vast Frigid Zone
Were in commotion terrible:---the earth
Shook till the people reeled, and reeling, fell;
The circle of white gems about the throne
Threw off strange darts of light which smote like steel:
Swift whirling round with inconceivable speed
A host of Northern Lights sprang into air,
And, battling round their Queen, confused and wild,
Blent with each other in the fierce affray.
The frightened stars paled in the distant sky;
And spectres rushed on shadowy steeds of grey
Down the flushed firmament; and shining spears,
Held by invisible hands, whirled high o'erhead.
Pale mortals in the far off Torrid Zone
Saw wonders in the Northern air with fear;
And when an inward trembling shook the Pole
Central through all the earth, in distant lands
The mountains belched forth fire on fated cities.

Behind the throne suddenly arose a shower,
As 'twere of phosphorescent flakes of snow,

Straight upward like a fountain, and then fell
In glowing sparks wide over all the land.
The surging sea dashed its bewildered waves
Against the foreheads of gigantic bergs,
Walking, like drunken men, the noisy deep.
Anon the *Pole* was calm. Uninjured stood
The mortal maid before the great OENE;
While near, a thousand prostrate subjects lay
Slain by an angry sovereign disobeyed.

"Queen of this strange and spectral land, wilt thou
Not show thy favor to a lonesome child
Come wandering all this way, impelled by love?
Not hate, ambition, curiosity,
Have led me to thy fair and fearful presence.
I have no power, am but a weak young girl;
And chance, alone, has thus revealed to me
The mystic glory of this unknown world,
With thy bright self and this enchanted isle,---
This pearl upon the bosom of the deep
So palely, purely fair---undreamed of beauty!
Love is the sole excuse which I can urge
For my intrusion"---here the stranger blushed,
Drooping in silence her embarrassed head.

"Speak on!" imperially the Pole-Queen said,
Charmed in her own despite, by that sweet face;
While LIR-LIR to KOLONA leaned and smiled,
Commending, in a whisper, what she saw:
And a soft flutter through the courtly train
Stirred, like the shimmer of a moonlit breeze
Kissing the waves:---"I will thy message hear!"

And so the maiden, gathering courage, said:
"Far in a blooming isle, in Southern seas,
I had a home, whose walls, of marble cool,
Were chequered by soft shadows, hovering,
Like flocks of birds, about its battlements;
For, all around, were trees, whose glistening leaves
Danced ever, in the sunlight or the moonlight,
To the soft flutes of the Arcadian winds;
And to the sleepy music, drowsily
The gorgeous flowers nodded their lovely heads.
Through the bright days, and in my sleep at night,
I heard the ripples breaking on the sand,
Till their continual murmur grew to be
A thing of course,---like sunshine and fresh air,---
Or like the love which grew into my life,

As color into flowers when they unfold.
The fluttering foliage and the sighing waves
Seemed whispering "BERTHO!" ever in my ear;
For BERTHO was my lover, and my heart
Could find no other meaning in their sound.
I was a princess of that blooming isle;
But BERTHO---he was poor! still, not so poor
As brave, high-souled, and strangely venturesome.
He trusted to the sea to gain his wealth,
As well as knowledge and a manly fame.
Ah! how I wept, when told that we must part!
How much more bitter tears I shed that day
On which he left me, wretched, by the shore,
Watching the gleam of his receding sails!

"Dim grew the golden air from that dark hour.
Like some rich flower, torn from the wooing kiss
Of the warm sun, and hidden in a cell,
I drooped, and lost the redness of my cheeks.
All the wild thrills that used to come and go,
Tumultuous, through my happy heart, and send
The pulses flying through my frame, died out.

"And thus in sadness two long summers passed.
In madness or in wisdom my poor brain
Wrought out a vision in my troubled sleep,
Through which I saw my BERTHO, and he bade
My soul be still and fear not,---I should take
My little boat, in which I used to skirt
The island shores, and loose it on the deep,
Placing myself within it:---It would come,
By force of an unknown and magic current,
(The thought of which, in speculative minds,
Had long been cherished,) straightway to the shore
Of the strange country where, enthralled, he dwelt.
If I still loved him, this would prove my love!

"Straight from my couch I rose, and like a ghost
Stole through the darkness of my father's halls;
Fled to the sea; and in my fragile bark
I heaped a few fresh fruits, and bore a vase
Filled with fresh water,---this was all my store.
I loosed my shallop from the anchoring rock,
And, as it drifted out upon the tide,
I leaned upon the single, slender oar
Whose aid was all I asked upon the deep.
Before my yearning vision lay my home,
Fading away from sight as the full tide

Went murmuring back from its delightful shores.
The loveliest hour of all the twenty-four
Charmed earth and ocean, that eventful time.
Moonlight and morning, softly blending, lay
Upon the land; while down the glassy sea,
Far in the distance, slowly stole a band
Of sunrise glories, smiling, looking back,
And glowing with warm splendors. All the East
Was crimson with their blushes, and the waves
Which followed in their bright and stately way
Wore crests of gold, and purple-shaded robes.
Next came light breezes blowing from the land,
Odorous with roses, sweet with drowsy songs
Of nightingales, and cool with myrtle leaves,
Following down the path the sunrise took.
And next, the stars went dimly down the west,
Crowd upon crowd, in slow and shining cars,
Bright wheeling down their heaven-appointed way.

"All day the sun shadowed himself in clouds;
My cheeks scarce browned beneath his cooled rays.
At night I sank contentedly to sleep,
Upon the silken cushions of my bark;
Then mermaids, who, attracted by my voice,
Had floated round me, underneath the waves,
Not daring to appear, swam near, reached out
Their arms of glowing white, and touched the boat.
Charmed by the helplessness of sleep in me,
They chanted sea-hymns, and I, straightway, dreamed
Of tinkling fountains in my father's halls,
And how my lover sat beside me there,
Murmuring his words of love in my thrilled ear.
They rocked the bark, too, with their lily hands,
As tender mothers rock their cradled babes:
And one wild sea-nymph reached and touched my hair---
I saw her through my dream!----and one unstrung
The pearls from out her own wave-wetted locks,
And flung them by me.

"The fresh morn waked me;
A current, gentle as a musical sound,
Swept the boat onward, as by magic power.
At times I thought, perchance, the nymphs beneath
Propelled it, but when I recalled my dream,
I knew some freak of nature, or some law,
By me uncomprehended, did the work.
At night I heard the naiads, in a tone
As soft as shepherd's reed, sing ocean-songs;

And sometimes, in the day, above the wave
I for a moment saw a lovely face,
Pearled in a clinging mass of shell-wreathed hair,
Peering upon me with strange, smiling eyes.
Gay fishes, in the sunlight gleaming, swam
With playful fires of evanescent hues;
And birds did sometimes rest their weary wings
Upon my shoulder, pecking at the fruit
Which I did share with them, though small my store.

"Thus on and on continuous days I fled;
No wind came now, blowing from flowery shores,
At times to startle me with dreams of home;
No more bewildering songs rose all the night
Around me; nor familiar faces glanced
An instant from the deep; nor long, fair fingers
Hung on the gilded prow.

"The Temperate Zone

Had floated by like a long stream of gold;
The Arctics lay before me, vast and drear;
The sea was green and rough; no gay fish darted
Like silver arrows from the quivering wave;
But monsters, with thick scales and hideous eyes,
Looked sullenly up in stupid wonderment,
While some swam to'ards me, with rapacious maws
Sharp-fanged and bloody, and exulting fins
Flapping with demon slowness their huge sides;---
And still I passed unhurt.

"Once round my boat

For many hours an old sea-dragon hovered.
His huge folds lay like rainbows on the sea,
And his two eyes, like suns, resplendent shone.
He seemed to guard thy realm, O, mighty Queen!
And, with the cunning power of those large eyes,
To awe intruders from thy frozen world.
So fearlessly my gaze repelled his own
I charmed this wary dragon of the North;
The eyes that erst had sparkled goldenly
With a malicious and infatuous brightness,
Grew lost and dreaming in a vacant splendor;
The rainbow lustre of his lengthening folds
Faded to harmless green, till, prone, he lay,
A floating dream of dread, upon the deep;
Then, with the noiseless current drifting on,
I passed your subtle guardian swiftly by;
While only one faint sparkle, green and gold,

Broke from his sluggish sides as I swept past.

"The grandeur of your floating towers of ice
Stole on my sight; the sea rolled rough; the air
Was sharp and clear; and yet this delicate robe
Was all sufficient to resist its power.
Soon, upon every side, I saw tall bergs.
A child of fragrant airs and sunny skies,
Enervate with the South's soft luxuries,
These icebergs burst upon me like a sense
Newly received, revealing God anew.
While in the distance, calmly floating on
Through the broad sunlight, then I loved to dream
That they were palaces upreared by gnomes,
With glittering towers and silver pinnacles,---
That in them were expanded halls of light---
Vast chambers---with such gorgeous, fretted roofs
And shining floors, as wearied human sight;
That fountains filled them with a slumberous sound;
And curtains, wrought of silver-threaded frost,
Were looped with priceless pearls from room to room;---
A home for all the spirits of the Good
Lost in the pitiless sea,---where they would bathe
Their thoughts in heaven's splendor, looking out
The golden windows towards the constant sun,
Shining, unceasing, slant against their brows.

"But, as I nearer drew, I lost that dream
In one more gloomy. They did seem to shape
Themselves to living giants; lifting high
Their frowning foreheads, crowned with fiery crowns.
As lower sank the sun towards the sea,
Gloomier did they grow, with their white hair
And lifted spears, walking with mighty steps
The creaking floor of the unsteady deep.---
Nodding defiantly at one another---
Meeting, with crashing spears and splintered shields,
With hoarse cries, breast to breast, in angry strife;
Their armor shivered at their feet, the sea
Broken beneath their tread and shuddering
At the great shock.

"More thick these terrors grew;
Broad fields stretched out in many a frozen ridge;
While far beyond were paths of printless snow.
The ocean lay behind; and yet my boat
Moved ever onward, up a watery isle,
Opening, like a deep river, through the ice.

A shadowy land spread out on either side,
Where, moveless as some black and brooding bird,
Night hovered, silent, vast, and wonderful.
Thy Heralds, the North-Lights, did startle me
Into new wonder by their glowing shapes,
Swift rushing down the sky, those phantasms wild,
Flushing, and paling in their measureless speed.

"At length I drifted into a new sea,
Where all was calm and warm, and where no tower
Of ragged ice upreared itself. On, on
I floated, while some lovely fantasy
Seemed stealing my true sense---so fair the scene.
Huge lillies, which no tropic land might boast,
Slept on the water---like embodied moonlight;
A mellow lustre bathed all things; sweet birds
With rainbow plumage fluttered through the air,
And this fair island dawned upon my sight.
Soon on the shore rested my vessel's prow,
And I, ascending the bright paths which spread
Through bowers of wond'rous beauty, came to thee,
The central light of all this loveliness.
This is my sin, if thou wilt judge it such.
But love, the fondest that did ever throb
In the warm heart of any mortal maid,
It was, which brought me. It must be, sweet Queen
That somewhere in thy mystical domains
My BERTHO dwells. Do'st know him? Is he well?
And does he for his fond-eyed *Olive* look,
With hollow shadows underneath his brows
From too much watching?"

OENE answered back

The eager pleading of her glance with one
Of chilly calmness, as she thus replied:---

"There is *no living* mortal in my realms,
Save thou alone, the first who ever came.
Thy BERTHO, from a thousand shades of men
Who roam the prisons of our underworld,
Pray, how can we distinguish? Would'st thou search?
Thou hast the liberty. We will not lay
The slightest new obstruction in thy way;
And this is mercy which we did not deem
We should extend towards an enemy.
We do not comprehend that strange excess
Of passion which hath made thee venture here.
But love, at least, is harmless. Go thy ways."

The innocent maidens, gathered round their Queen,
Looked on with interest, as the southern girl
Turned with a mute and trembling lip, away.
Tula, who on KOLONA's shoulder leaned,
Sprang towards her, reaching forth a friendly hand,
Whispering,---"Stay, beautiful, and sup with us;
Our servant spirits have already spread
The Feast of Borealis in the field,"
But, *Olive* shook her head, denying smiles
Deep in her wistful eyes, and went her way.

Court being ended, from her regal throne
OENE descended, passed the glowing steps,
And, like a star that walks the path of heaven
With a long train of light, she and her maids
Glided in lustrous beauty down the way,
And gathered to the Feast.

Above the field,
Hedged round with lillies growing tall and fair,
The North-Lights clustered in a coronal,
And each held forth a lamp, in the still air,
Of purple, blue or green, crimson or rose,
Whose flickering splendors, like soft rainbows, fell
Upon the table, spread with fruits heaped high
On plates of delicate, transparent shells;
While many a dainty, gathered from the sea
Made more profuse the viands.

When round the board
The guests had circled, e'er one ruby drop
Of liquid passed their lips, or food was touched,
The Virgins of the Court, in voices flowing,
Did sing this song in honor of the Feast,
While with a silent and a magical grace,
The North-Lights danced, and waved their flaming lamps:

Lueladar!
O mighty Star!
The flying meteors backward glance
On thee to gaze,
And bright auroras softly dance
In mutest praise;
And, to and fro,
With motion slow
Wave the lamps whence colors flow.
From every chrystal spire
Flames forth thy silver fire;

And glimmering wave, and rugged tower,
And valley snow, and island flower,
And the smooth ice, spread near and far
Thy mirrors are, Lueladar!

Lueladar!
Supremest Star!
The moon goes down beneath the world---
She lives to die!
The banners of the stars are furled,
The comets fly;
The red sun shines,
And still declines,
And after him the darkness pines;
But thou art e'er the same---
No flickering of thy flame---
No sinking down in time to rise
Doth change thy splendor in the skies:
For this we worship thee, afar,
Most glorious Star, Lueladar!

Lueladar!
Eternal Star!
Look with thy bright and burning eye
Upon our feast!
Thy silver robes flow o'er the sky
Our great High Priest!
Our world doth wear
Thy livery fair
From sparkling mount to jewel rare;
And every lightest flake
That drops into the lake;
And all the solemn beauty spread
Across the land, by thee is shed:---
Most magical thy influences are
Thou wond'rous Star, Lueladar!

PART SECOND.

Olive had crossed the mystic sea again,
Which spread its silver circle round the Pole.
Her feet were weary and her thoughts were sad.
Immeasurably tall the icy Thug,---
That wond'rous mountain of whose old renown
The Arctic world thought with exalted hearts---
Stood in her path and seemed to bar her way.
Four months of darkness in the valley slept,
Freezing in silent dreams; the Moon did crown

The hoary brow of the old headland, Thug,
With a dim glory, as of silver locks:--
It held its head aloft and seemed to be
Peering through heaven's roof upon its God.

"Ah, BERTHO! BERTHO!" the young traveller cried,
While rapid tears ran down her grief-touched cheeks:--
"Is there no way save this? My feet refuse
To do the bidding of my heart; no more
This faithful bosom thy delight shall be--
No more thine eyes shall smile into mine own
Till both swim full of bliss---no more thy mouth
Breathe its soft words and kisses on my cheek,
Naming me thine---thine only---thine forever!
Where art thou, BERTHO? BERTHO! Cruel Thug;
Sink thyself in the sea, presumptuous mount,
Till I can pluck my lover from thy breast!"
The echo of her heart did mock her cry;
Long time, she lay, half perished, on the snow,
Till love revived, with its eternal fires,
The warmth of purpose in her chilly breast;
Then, springing to her feet, she shook her curls,
In golden billows from her brows, the while
That a sweet resoluteness on her lip
Settled itself, and triumphed in her eyes:--
"Torrent nor precipice, nor jutting crag--
Night, spirits, ghouls, nor ravenous wild beasts,
Distance, nor time, shall fright me from the way,"
She said, and silently began to climb,
Though avalanches roared from steep to steep
And fear increased with every perilous step.
The Moon alone was kind to the poor child,
Shedding its softest lustre round her feet.
Near half way up the mount she may have passed
When a fierce growl smote on her frightened ear,
As, from the shadows bounding, came a beast,
Grizzly, ferocious, snapping its sharp tusks:--
So close it came she felt the hungry breath
Rushing in fiery vapor from its mouth,
She sprang aside, then fled; but steep the path,
And sinking fainting, to the ground, she sighed--
"This is the last! BERTHO! Ah, me! farewell!"

"Nay, not the last! thou'rt not dead yet, my dear!
Look up, thou fairy, or thou mortal child--
I scarce know which---assure thyself of life.
Look up! look up! It cannot be I see
Before me, in this region of despair,

A veritable mortal?"

By his voice

Recalled to life, the trembling girl arose.
Before her stood a man; and in his hand
A spear that dripped with her pursuer's blood.
With still unconquered terror of the brute
She turned her head.

"Fear nothing, thou sweet child;

But if thou art what now thou dost appear,
A creature of that world from whence I come,
Let me but hear thy voice---but hear one word
Of my blest country's language, and I'll deem
The service I have done thee with this spear
Naught in comparison. Speak, quickly speak!"

"What shall I say, but thank thee for my life?
I am a maiden from far Southern climes
Come searching for my lover. Dost thou know
Where cruel OENE hast my BERTHO hidden?
What do'est *thou* here? It must be thou art come
In search of wife or child,---what other fate
Could lead thee to such barren heights as these?"

"Alas! dear child! there are other springs than love
To move the human heart. Ambition, may be;
Or better, a desire to serve my Queen
And my illustrious country, led me here."

He paused and sighed. She saw his locks were thin;
Some white with years, but more with troubled toil;
And that he stood barefooted in the snow.
The pitying tears began within her eyes
To gather into brightness as she gazed,
Upon the grey, sublime, forlorn old man.
Coldly the moonlight glinted o'er the group
Regarding each the other with surprise:---
She, sad at his abandonment of hope;
He, struck with mingled wonder and delight
To meet this woman, beautiful and young.

"Dear friend," she said, brushing away her tears,
"If thou wilt rest thee on this smoothest rock
And tell me who thou art, and whence did come,
And wherefore lingering here, pleased will I listen."

A smile stole o'er his pale, storm-beaten face.--
 "I know thee now, from mother Eve descended,
 By thy most feminine willingness to hear,
 The sorrows which did claim thy ready tears
 While they were but suspected. Sit thee down.
 Five years it is since, with three stately ships
 And sturdy crews to man them, one proud day
 I sailed away from the great three-linked isle,
 Under my fair Queen's sovereign patronage,
 For the far Frigid Zone---the wild, the fierce,
 The unknown Arctic seas---through their cold depths,
 Their intricate, unmarked, majestic ways,
 To find a North-West Passage: which wise men
 And skillful mariners, learned of the sea,
 Suspected, through the navigator's art
 Might to the world be opened. High my heart
 With courage and ambition swelled its tides,
 Knowledge I had and skill, with enterprise;
 And should I be successful, future times
 Should know my name, and future mariners
 Respect my fame and emulate my deeds.
 But one faint spot was there in my proud heart,
 And that was where my constant wife, at parting,
 Shed sorrowful tears, until they did strike through,
 A fear, into my breast, that nevermore
 That faithful brow should lean to it again.

"To thee, if thou indeed hast safely passed
 The horrors and the beauties of the sea,
 I need not tell the ever-varying scenes
 Of this most fearful voyage.

"Day by day
 I studied in my cabin over charts;
 Or, on the deck, learned of the sea and sky
 The subtle mariner's ever-changeable lore.
 Prosperous we were, till o'er the mystic bounds
 Of OENE's realms I sailed; save now and then
 Some noble sailor of my kindly crews
 With tears we left upon the bloomless shores
 Where birds nor flowers should ever bless his grave.
 On---on---beyond all shores---or sights of dwarfs
 Slaying the rein-deer by their snow-built huts:---
 On, through the thickening perils of the way!
 Methought I held within my brain the clue
 Through that bewildering labyrinth of ice.
 For weeks the Sun, a pale and sinking ghost,
 With feeble eyes had glared upon the Pole.

Nor with his wavering arrows could o'erthrow
Even the airy domes of delicate sprites,
Sitting and decking their ethereal robes
And turning them, sparkling, to his sullen face.

"Now from OENE's dominions, messengers,
Borne by the flying winds, hourly arrived,
Warning me from her shores. At last the Queen,
Gathered together her enormous fleet;
It bore down upon us with such grand array
As I pray heaven never to see again.
An hundred giant ships, whose rainbow sails
And glittering masts towered a thousand feet
Above our tiny vessels, weighed their anchors
And slowly from their harbors drifted out.
We heard the creaking of their cables---heard
The shouting of their fierce and naked crews---
We saw the green sea boil against their keels---
Their viewless banners flapped against our faces---
Their viewless darts pierced us on every side
Till men fell on our decks, a stony heap.
We strove, at least, to make a brave retreat,
Toiling in mute despair, or madly praying
The winds to favor our poor, shattered sails.
They closed around us upon every side.
Two of the largest of their avenging fleet,
Drawing together crushed in the embrace
My stoutest vessel like some frailest shell;
Then swung apart, with laughter on their decks,
Showing me, where my noble friends had been,
Only a seething gulf. The sweat of anguish
Froze into hail upon my pallid brow,
When, with another shriek of agony,
The brother ship went down. At length the winds,
Saving us only from more sudden death,
Drove us upon the rocks beneath this mount.
Five years had wasted all our store of food;
But, seeing monsters like this beast of prey,
Some of the least exhausted boldly forth
Went to destroy them---I amid the rest,---
But stupor and a drowsy sweetness came
Over our eyes, and we lay down to sleep---
Waking to hear the mocking laugh of ghouls,
To find us chained, enslaved,---and, worse than all!
Lost from our corporal bodies---spirits---dead!

"I, as the leader of the intruding band,
Am doomed to wander on this mountain side,

A century, before my restless ghost,
 Freed from the thralldom of weird OENE's power,
 Regains its natural liberty, and soars
 Into the paradise of happy souls.
 This is the punishment those mortals bear,
 Who, venturing into this strange Arctic world,
 Are vanquished by its sovereign. She hath power,
 The source of which I know not, to retain
 The souls of mortals for an hundred years,
 Demanding service which they needs must pay.
 The gloomy caverns underneath this mount,
 And those which in the hearts of icebergs lie,
 And many by the sea, are filled with those
 Who work their ransom out with tedious toil.
 For me---I am not put to any task---
 My punishment to gaze afar and see
 How cruelly all friends from distant shores,
 Who dare attempt my rescue, are restrained.
 Alas; the North-west Passage! When the day
 Glinted o'er this pale land, before my sight
 In devious tracery that Passage lay;
 Mocking me with its undeveloped truth,
 Wealth unappropriated, glory lost!
 Cruel is she who took from me that substance
 With which I might have conquered an escape,
 Leaving me, a forlorn old spirit, sere and grey.
 Musing through barren hours upon the past,
 I think with bitterness on those who once
 Were friends and lovers---Queen, companions, Wife!
 Forgotten! yes, forgotten by them all!
 The luxuries of the world-taxing city,
 The kisses of their children, smiles of men
 Renowned of deeds which have not failed, like mine---
This is the portion of that happier crowd
 Who set me on to dangerous enterprise.
 But ah! the worst part of it all, is this,---
 To be forgotten by my own best friends---
 To be to them as if I ne'er had been!
 My wife---my wife!"---he ended with bowed head.

"Art thou indeed a spirit?" *Olive* asked,
 Shrinking a step aside. Then her kind heart
 O'ercome the transient awe, and stealing close,
 While smiling on him with sweet, wondering eyes,
 Began again:---"But art thou truly he
 Whose name is on the lip of the great world?---
 Of whom the wives and mothers, tearful, speak
 When sound the Northern wind-harps?---whose grand fate,

Hath power to touch, not only hearts of men,
But draw the golden drops from weeping purses?
Oh! be content! if Fame and Love content thee.
For thee, the hearts of mariners beat loud---
For thee, ships chase the pathways of the sea---
By thee the souls of nations, like one chord
Are smote upon, and ring out sympathy;
And men talk on the streets, and by their hearths,
Of him who led to dismal, distant shores
The Crusade of the Nineteenth Century.
In that new world, where generous hearts are found
To flourish on the air of liberty,
A noble merchant fitted out a ship;
And others joined him in his kindly plan,
So deep the interest taken in thy fate.
And oh, for thee, thou princely-fortuned man,
A pale face from a northern window looks,
Forever looks, with constancy sublime.
At night, when spectral tints are in the North---
By day, when winds blow down from that bleak source---
That face peers from the window anxiously,
As if the elements might come from thee
Bearing some message to her pining heart."

As breaks the sunlight from a snow-filled cloud,
Smiles struggled through the list'ner's wintry looks.

"As land-bird with a green twig in its beak
Is welcome to the homesick ship which long
Hath tossed in foreign waters, so art thou
Welcome to me, with this consoling tale.
I am content. Weird OENE, keep me here!
And I will while away a century
In dreaming of a love which hath not failed;
Now knowing that the first to welcome me
In Heaven's ineffable bowers, will be my wife."

"Since thou, Sir *John*, protected me from harm,
What I have said may be some small return.
I do dislike to leave thee here, so lonely;
But since I for my BERTHO went in search,
Nought stays my footsteps long. Where'er I go,
Whether I be successful in my search,
Or perish by the way, I trust again
We shall in spirit, if not in body, meet.
I have seen this witching Pole-Queen; I have passed
This circling cold and stood in the warm heart
Of her domains---have pressed her magic isle

With my poor human feet, and with my voice
Have plead the cause of two young, eager souls.
She was not kind, and yet not very cruel,
She may relent, even of her hate towards thee.
If I again have access to her ear,
I'll not forget to plead thy cause, dear sir,
As if it were mine own. Farewell!"

"Farewell,
And heaven bless thine innocence, sweet friend."

With parting gesture full of tender grace
And soft regret, she passed upon her way.
A weary time it grew till on the summit
Of Thug she stood, gazing bewildered round.
No more she heard her lover's haunting call;
But she herself cried out with aching voice,
Whose sweetness dropped with every silver tone
From the full note of hope to doubt and fear.

Sudden a chill fell on her, and a shadow;
Her breath congealed, and on those rosy lips
The white rime gathered. From behind a rock,
Which crowned the mountain, there advanced to view
WOLE, that old warrior who before OENE
Rumbled his boastful story. In his hand
He poised his massive spear in act to throw;
Yet, seeing there, chilled in her loveliness,
(Like some young rose-bud nipped by spring-time frost,)
The maiden whom his Queen herself did spare,
The frown rolled from his forehead as a cloud
Rolls from a rugged crag. The spear remained
Moveless in air, while through his frosty glance
Melted a softness never known before.
The life so nearly frozen in her veins
Flew back and thrilled her heart, as on her knees
She dropped, and lifting up her pleading hands
Crying---"Slay me, at once, great WOLE, slay me!
With those keen looks, or tell me of my lover!
If this great mountain rested on my breast
It could not crush me worse than this suspense,
Kill me or free me from it! What, to thee---
Thou greatest warrior of this shadowy land,
Whose conquests like the snows upon this mount
Lie white and venerable on thy fame,
Unsoiled by one defeat---what is to thee,
One prisoner, if she who loves him well,
Comes kneeling at thy feet, to ask him back?"

Thou'lt give him her, I know, since to achieve
Renown like thine there must be generous heart."

"Look!" cried the warrior and outstretched his spear---
"'Tis not auspicious hour for such a plea."

Following the motion of his hand she saw
From the horizon phantom suns and moons
Shoot swiftly, or along the red edge roll.
Dim on the distant verge of ghostly shores
Pale fleets of paler shades, and flying hosts
Of spectral horsemen on their vanishing steeds,
Fled either way before the coming morn;
While fairies that, on snow-flakes, sailed about
Down through the valleys darted out of sight;
And meteors, coursing higher in the sky,
Exploded in their wrath, dropping down dead
The fiery ghouls who rode their shining wings.

Sudden, while *Olive* gazed, she thought a flame
Sprang from her feet, when looking, startled, down,
She saw the glory of the rising sun
Touching the pinnacle of sparkling ice
On which she stood. Silent and rapt she gazed
While thousand golden flames on thousand spires
Were low and lower lit; and here and there
Some broad plain glimmered into sudden white---
And frozen cataracts which, in daring leaps
Midway between vast depths were holden tight,
Gleamed out like streams of gold:---Thus, one by one,
The wonders of that soulless land appeared,
While grey and ghastr, behind the sparkling towers
Of gorgeous Thug, the ancient Night stooped down.

WOLE gnashed his teeth and turned again to smite
The helpless girl who pleaded; but the light
Which angered him had beautified her so,
That his cold breath grew moist upon his beard.
The sunlight melting in her eyes and flushing
Her cheeks with rosy redness, crowned her hair
With lustrous splendor, and about her form
Fell like a robe of glory, warm and soft.

"Mortal!" he cried, while in the agony
"Twixt admiration and inherent hate,
The sullen throbbing of his heart was seen
Thrilling his moistened beard---"Pass from my sight!
Thou makest old Thug's warrior drop his spear,

And should that fair face beam on me eternal,
Eternal I would swear the sun was good
And OENE was no Queen. Yet I would rather,
Crush thee beneath my feet, than be this traitor."

He would have thrust her rudely from his path.
But she arose from off her bended knee,
Turning her fair face from him, so her hair
Hid its too touching beauty from his sight;
Clasping her suppliant hands upon her bosom
She spoke out wildly, as one weary waiting
For long-expected good;---

"Oh, cruel WOLE!

Where is my BERTHO in this mountain hidden?---
Shaping fantastic dreams of heartless OENE,
With aching hands into a tangible beauty.
How can'st thou keep two yearning souls apart?
If *thou* could'st feel what love is, mighty master
Of loveless War, then thou would'st pity me!"

"Thou shalt behold thy lover, southern girl,"
Was WOLE's reply, and reaching round the rock
Took up a horn shorn from some monster's head
And blew in it a blast meant to be angry:
Yet strangely pining from the curves it came,
And went down wailing through the pallid sunlight,
For it was born of the tumultuous sigh
Stirred in his bosom by the lovely stranger.

Soon the sound smote against a pinnacle
Which someway down the mountain had just caught
The radiance of the morning, and now stood
A ruby palace on a crystal base,
With emerald towers and columns sapphire-hued:
While at the summons, swift was lifted up
A shining net-work from behind the columns,
And out there flew two fair, unearthly sprites,
With wings like birds of Paradise, and bodies
Of shape uncertain; for so swiftly shifted
Their rainbow hues amid enwreathing mists,
That *Olive* likened them to those vagaries
Born to the eyes that gaze upon the spray
Of cataracts dashing in the sun. Their flying
Made music like the flowing on of streams,
They came and hovered in the air before her,
While she regarded them with timid looks
Of fear and pleasure, seeing not their features,

But floating hair of gold, and beamy brightness
As of white foreheads and blue, humid eyes.
Next moment she was lifted from the earth,
Encircled, as it were, by many rainbows,
And rushing, bird-like, through the airy space:
While a monotonous, soft and sleepy humming
Rose all around and filled her drowsy ears.
Brief time it was, 'till, with bewildered eyes,
She saw her fairies vanish in a mist,
Floating away in music, while she stood
Alone, far down the mountain opposite
The side that with such toil she just had climbed.
She stood alone---and where? the roses shrank
From her wan cheeks to view her new distress,---
Before her a dark chasm, and above her
A crowd of close and overhanging rocks,
All dripping, black, and hopelessly down-leant.
A glimmering hope now broke upon her sense---
Seeing an arch, and, far beyond, the gleam
Of lights that from some cavern stole away.
Under the arch she passed and found herself
Walking an ever-widening vista down,
Fading from twilight to auroral glows
And brightening into more than noon-day breadth
And gorgeousness of light, until she paused
Beneath the grand arch of that grand succession,
Standing amazed, one slender hand upheld
Shading her eyes, half blinded by that view
Of Arctic-Nature and of Arctic-Art.
In limitless magnificence the cave
Before her spread, a world within a world.

She entered in, like Eve in Paradise
Searching for Adam; and yet, oft beguiled
From the great love-thought, by the sights she saw.
If she glanced upward to the sparkling dome,
The lamps, swinging like suns as far above,
Shone down upon her beautiful young face,
Smiling to see them dwarfed within her eyes.
The crystal floor doubled her bashful feet;
She saw no walls; but the refulgent space
Was here and there disturbed by artful groups.
Once, by a fountain passing, dulcet murmurs,
Wooed her aside to listen; and, again,
Temples, which mimicked the frost's fairy work,
Burning with gems, attracted her to gaze.
Music, from hidden sources, beat the air
With wings of melody that flew abroad

Beyond th' enchanted sense, and darting back
Swept with a sweet vibration near her face.
Thrice o'er her brow she drew her languid hand,
That, if it were a dream, she might dispel
The gay enchantment; and thrice murmured o'er
The spells learned of her nurse in infancy,
Which would all witchcraft render innocent;
But that great cavern of the northern world
Was not by nurse's spells to be dissolved,
Growing more wond'rous, as she wondered more.

Now, 'neath her feet, the floor less polished grew,
And fountains dashed from the unsculptured rock;
She saw half-finished grottoes, fewer lights,
And heard a discord in the melody
As if of hammers and the shouts of workmen;
Meanwhile her heart loudly began to beat.

"BERTHO! I have come, BERTHO!" she cried out,
As the next moment, 'mid a swarthy group
Of dusky laborers, a familiar form
Raised itself from a shaft of phorphyry,
And turned itself to hear that throbbing heart.

A light too glad for smiles came o'er the face,
The shadowy face, uplifted from its toil,
And, "*Olive!*" echoed back her eager cry.

The fairest sight that cavern ever saw
Was that young girl holding her glowing arms
To clasp her love; her sweet mouth all a-tremble,
Her dark eyes flashing joy and tender tears,
Her bosom fluttering in its snowy folds
With sudden pleasure;---but, what clasped she?
A shadow! Pale and silent she shrank back;
Her lover folded up his hopeless arms;
His face a melancholy so profound put on
That *Olive* to his side again drew near.

"Is this one mystery of this mystic world---
This world of phantoms?" sighed the stricken girl.
"Oh! why did hope keep life within my breast,
And passion thrill me with strange fortitude?
Why did I save the kisses of my lips
For him who nevermore can give them back?
Why did I smile to think my arms were soft
When thus this spirit fades within their clasp?
BERTHO!---that scornful Queen did tell me this.

And yet I did not comprehend her words.
There is no warmth nor beauty in this land!
Its people have no hearts---know not of love---
Their thoughts are colder than their beds of snow.
Indeed, this is no world!--but some vain dream,
Troubling my sleep, and I cannot awake.
Love then, is a deceitful fantasy--
BERTHO is dead---is dead---and yet not dead!
Life is not life"---

Her wild, distrustful words
Here ended, as she saw the bitterness
Which stormed across the spirit's anguished face:---

"Forbear, poor child! thy pitiful complaints!
When through these long years of distasteful toil
I thought of thee, unceasing, day and night,
Calling on heaven to bend thy steps towards me,
I thought not that this spirit, weary, worn,
And from the covering of its body torn,
Its feeling could retain and substance lose.
Fool that I was! to sigh for human love!
Why art thou here to madden me with looks,---
Those womanly, caressing looks which fill
My soul with wild desires! Back, to thy home,
In that gold-girdled circle of daylight,
That island of elysian loveliness,
Where thou and I did'st one time idly dream!
There breathe the passionate breath of orange-flowers---
Walk in the sunlight till thy brows are flushed
With its warm kisses---plunge thy snowy feet
In the embracing waves and silver sand---
Shake down magnolia-blossoms on thy hair---
Answer the nightingales' delicious song
With thy sweet cries---and, on bright eyes, look up
And charm the moon upon her lingering way
With that soft fire of thine entrancing eyes!
Thou wilt not for regret or tears find time.
Some lover, clothed in human dignity
And tangible robes of life, will haunt thy steps,
Drawing up, with magnetic looks, the smiles
Which lie deep down in thy now tearful orbs;
And, wiling from their blissful hiding-place,
The bashful dimples to thy blushing cheeks,
And,---it may be---with human eloquence,
Beguile thy hand to rest within his own,
Sitting, as we have sat,---thy glossy hair
Rippling in golden waves across his breast."

"Can he be mad as well as dead?" the girl
 Murmured aside! and then her sorrowing brow
 She lifted proudly, while a sudden fire
 Sprang to her lips and eyes---her trembling voice
 Steadied itself on her unfaltering love.--
 "Forgive me, BERTHO, that my woman's heart,
 Finding thee thus, should, for an instant, only,
 Shrink back from thee in awe and deep regret.
 My love, which has endured so much, grows strong
 In its endurance; and it only asks
 That I may never from thy side be driven.
 Talk not of islands in a sunny sea,
 Or fragrant blooms, or singing nightingales!
 I love them not. My father's marble floors
 Were colder than the icy plains I've passed,
 When thy dear footsteps fled them. Be content.
 Love like our own needs not the warmth of sighs
 Or soft caresses to keep pure the fire
 Upon the sacred shrine; 'twill burn as bright,
 Though never by the breath of kisses fanned;
 'Tis not a fading blossom---nor a bird
 That only sings amid the orange-flowers.
 What have I still?---thy spirit, which is *thou*.
 What have I lost?---thy body, which I loved
 But as the garment which adorned thy soul.
 Thou art my BERTHO still! I, thy fond *Olive*,
 Who comes to share thy banishment with thee.
 Be of good cheer. Only one century
 Can OENE thrall thee. In the meanwhile, I
 Shall die, and be a spirit, as thou art.
 Until that time I will abide with thee;
 We will on one another patient wait,
 Till, hand in hand we leave these dismal shores
 And celebrate our marriage-day in heaven."

PART THIRD.

Tumultuous music filled the spacious cave.
 OENE was coming with her virgin train,
 Impatient to behold what further charms,
 Her prisoned laborers at their tasks had wrought.
 Blowing on quaintly curved and curious shells
 Which made a sea-like music---mingled up
 Of sweet, unsyllabled sounds, and long-drawn sighs,
 Heavy with memories of coral reefs,
 Murmuring shores, caverns, and surging deeps---
 There flew, midway between the roof and floor,
 A band of sprites which lived in air or sea;

With eyes like twinkling stars, and winged feet,
 And sparkling fins down either shoulder-blade,
 And cheeks puffed out and flushing with their toil.
 Announced by these, the courtly train approached
 The spot where BERTHO and his *Olive* stood,
 Close by an emerald rock, within whose breast
 A living spring slept like a smiling child.
 Around the brim BERTHO had sculptured moss
 And rare similitudes of southern flowers;
 Shaped violets from sapphires, and from stalks,
 Hung ruby roses, bright, but without soul,
 As perfumeless as was that frigid land.
 OENE, resplendent as a wintry moon,
 Bent her proud eyes upon the waiting pair:---
 "So! thou hast found thy lover, southern maid?
 Are, then, these sunbeams which flow from thy head,
 Pinions as well as tresses bearing thee
 Across the perilous chasm which guards our cave?"

"Yes! I have found my lover, noble OENE;
 And I am happy working by his side.
 See! this sweet spring which we have brimmed with flowers---
 A mirror for thy beautiful face, O Queen!
 In adding my slight labor to his own,
 In hopes that thou would'st never banish me,
 But leave me by his side to aid his work,
 I've found a consolation very sweet,
 And have been happy."

"But *I* have not been!"
 Spoke BERTHO with a moody passionateness,
 "And never can be till I am restored
 To the full use of all my natural powers.
 Happy! when hearing this young creature's laugh---
 Seeing the dimples, begging for a kiss,
 Peep from her cheeks, and hide themselves again---
 Feeling her soft breath warming o'er my brow---
 Yet be this bodiless ghost of what I was!
 O, Queen! wilt thou not give me back that shape---
 Which thou did'st cruelly bereave me of---
 That I, again, may feel my bounding heart
 Throbbing against the bosom of my bride?
 Then thou shalt find what grateful souls can do.
 For I will court invention, study art,
 To decorate this favorite cave anew;
 And she I love will serve thee patiently
 Unnumbered years, till we our freedom earn."

The sternness of his tone had melted down
To liquid sweetness, and his fiery eyes
Grown humid, as he fixed them on the Queen
In soft entreaty.

From her lofty brow,
So pale and passive, had the shadow rolled,
As slightly and unconsciously she bent
To his quick utterance. A sudden ray
Stole from the twilight of her deepening eyes,
And a warm redness into either cheek,
Troubling its cold repose, shot quickly up.
A moment of suspense, and then she spoke:

"'Tis true that I thy body might restore,
Since but suspension of its human powers,
And not its loss or injury, I control.
But what assurance have I that this boon
May not prove dangerous? Mortals have what we,
With all our vast machinery and weird powers
Moving the earth, the sea and air, have not---
And that is---*soul*. A soul and body, too,
Might circumvent us---work us desperate harm;---
At least 'tis wise to fear the things unknown,
And to be chary how we give them scope.
As long as thy body's powers restrain,
Thy spirit to my will in bondage is;
Thou hast no wherewithal to make ado---
No weapon at thy service---art a slave,---
And shall I give to thee a master's place?
Yet, thou hast wakened in me a new thought.
What is this love of which you mortals tell?---
Which puts such tender sweetness in your tones
Such brightness in your looks, and makes you turn
Upon each other such delighted eyes?
Your words have stirred strange pleasure in my heart:
I, too, would know what love is. I command
That thou shalt teach me, BERTHO. Let the girl
Return, uninjured, to her southern bowers;
Whilst thou remain to teach me this new lore.
Perchance, in finding Love, I'll gain a soul,
And learn of immortality; and all
The vague, sad intuitions that now mock me,
Make real, and I become what I have dreamed.
Make these things come to pass, and thou shalt have,
Thy body and thy freedom, and a place,
The highest of my chieftains. Follow me!"

These ominous words of the enamored Queen,
Spoken as though she knew not what it was
That one should think of disobedience,
Poor *Olive* heard, with looks of agony
Fixed on the speaker's face---that Northern face,
Wild in its power and in its beauty weird.
The starry halo of that tintless crown,
The midnight blackness of her plentiful hair,
Set off the splendor of the countenance
On which the maiden bent her pale regard.
A jealous terror urged her on to say---

"Love is not taught, Queen OENE; 'tis a gift
Mysterious as life, and more divine;
The congregated glories of this cave,
With all its jewelled lamps and sparkling roof
Could never purchase one of its small joys.
Love, in exchange, takes nothing but itself,
Power cannot claim it---fear cannot command---
It is a tribute Queens cannot exact.
The humblest peasant, singing in her hut,
Is often richer than the proudest princess:
It is the gift God left the human race
To keep them from despair, when sin and shame,
Pain, poverty, and death, and madness came
Among the people. When a youthful pair,
Look in each other's eyes and say---"We love"---
The common earth grows to a heavenly world.
Singing of birds, shining of summer suns,
Blooming of flowers and brightness of the moon,
Have a new charm to their elated sense;
They hear the music of the Universe,
Walking, with light feet, to the harmony;
Careless of care and disbelieving pain,
Grateful for life---and all, because *they love*.
Thus have *we* said those irrecallable words---
Solemnly smiling in each other's eyes---
BERTHO and I---and never to unsay!
Therefore, sweet Queen, command him not, I pray,
To an impossible thing, which needs compel
Rebellion to the will which he respects.
I am a princess, yet will not refuse,
The humblest service which thy pride requires,
If I from BERTHO am not forced to part."

Imperious OENE turned her scornful eyes
Quickly to BERTHO's, as in inquiry;
While he, gathering resolve from OLIVE's face

Of love and anguish, answered the mute look:

"I cannot teach thee love, since it is learned
Only when one heart from another takes
The sweet contagion; but, my bride and I
May humbly teach thee other human lore.
Thou say'st thou hast no soul. This cannot be,
Since reason and all mental gifts are thine;
Within the lovely calyx sleeps the germ,---
A flower as yet unblossomed. Warmth and light
From the great spiritual Sun alone it wants
To bud and bloom into the fullest life.
Shall we expound this marvellous mystery?---
Tell thee of Endless Life which still unfolds
Till it doth circle every star in heaven?---
And light within thy spotless bosom's shrine
The silvery flame of Christ's unwavering love---
A love which we, indeed, would gladly teach,
The parent of all other, whose pure fire
Doth hallow and exalt our earthly hopes.
We'll learn those peerless lips to syllable, *god!*---
A word that thrills the Universe with awe!
Thou shalt no more a lovely heathen be,
But a sweet Woman, and a child of Heaven."

A slow, soft light, into the wondering eyes
Intently fixed upon the speaker, came---
A deeper glow than from their slumberous blue
Had ever startled; as she slightly bent,
With earnest air, her crowned, resplendent head.

"Speak on!" she bade, "my thirsty heart is held
To catch your words, as lillies catch the dew---
So eager that it fain would overbrim
With the fresh gathering. It has waited long;
And now, it shall be filled to bright excess.
Speak on! I am impatient. But, first say
That I shall then be worthier of love,---
When I have mastered all these subtle things
That thou wilt love me better than this girl.
I'll have thee for my teacher---thee alone;
She shall return to her gay, foreign home,
Laded with many a costly gift from me;
I'll bid my warriors wait upon her steps,---
My North-Lights shall illuminate her way,
No frost shall nip the redness of her cheeks,
And no rude wind shall bluster round her feet."

"The frost of fear already nips her cheeks
At thought of living separate from me;
At the mere word she droops, a blighted flower.
Nay, gracious Queen? accept of both our hearts,
And our united service," BERTHO plead.

Down on her knees sank *Olive*, bending low
Her suppliant head, murmuring "Accept our hearts;---
But the same beauty which had conquered WOLE
Angered the jealous Queen; she could not brook
The glistening of those unbound locks of gold;
A pain, before unknown, stung her proud heart;
While the fierce consciousness of absolute power
Urged her to tyrannous deeds. She waved her hand,
And while her maidens shrank as if in dread,
The finny sprites blew the shrill note of war,
At which an hundred warriors gathered round.
Olive they seized and shut her in a cell---
The very temple she had so admired---
Where, heedless of her piteous shrieks and tears
They left her to her grief; while BERTHO went,
Securely guarded by their threatening spears,
Following his conqueror's receding steps.

Poor *Olive*, the forlornest captive bird
That ever beat its heart out in a cage,
Fluttered the pinions of her restless will
In vain against her dungeon. What cared she
That this same dungeon had an emerald floor
And lattice-work of gold, or that the spring
Which closed the door, was on a jewel hinged?
The lustre of the cave flowed through her cell,
And she could strain her weary eyes to catch
Glimpses of splendor, which but mocked her state.

The tiresome days rolled round, never relieved
By the refreshing shadows of the night;
Until the lamps so often counted o'er,
Seemed burning in her brain; and she had fears
That madness lurked within her feverish veins.
The ghouls who chanced to pass her, never spake;
At last, with joy, the stranger of the mount
She saw approaching:

"Ah! Sir *John*," she cried---
Her pale face, peering through the lattice-work---
"Thou find'st me in a miserable plight---
A closer prisoner by far than thou."

"Why, thou bright bird, has OENE caged thee here---
Prisoned an oriole in her Arctic bowers?
'Tis well we meet. As I was solacing
My banishment, by wandering here and there,
Greeting old Thug by the day's sickly smile,
I chanced within this cavern, where surprise
And pleasure lured me on from scene to scene.
What tyrant holds thee in this glittering cell?"

"From OENE's anger I am suffering,---
Yes, dear sir *John*, from more than angry hate---
From that implacable passion, worst of all,
And cruelest of purpose, jealousy.
I'd trust the tenderness of hungry wolves,
The beauty of the cobra, or the talk
Of waters to the rocks---but not the will
Of woman, when to jealous thoughts aroused.
She binds me here and bears my love away,
To tempt him with a thousand sweetest wiles---
With beauty, wealth, ambition, vanity,
And all that easiest moves a man's proud heart.
How shall I know if BERTHO---even *he*---
Has truth or virtue beyond this rich price?
Or, she may torture him,---by pain compel
Consent to her soft wish and queenly will.
Alas, Sir *John*, I am very miserable!"

"Shall I not play the messenger, and urge
Thy cause before her, if, by inquiry,
I find the Queen still visiting old Thug?"

"Oh, if thou would'st and yet---what should I gain?
Nothing, nothing!--still, I should hear from *him*---
Should know the worst. I'll pray for thy success,
And thank thee from my heart, if thou wilt go!"

Long time Sir *John*, misled by wicked sprites,
Searched for the Queen! until, by some kind chance,
He wandered through a grotto by the sea,
Where silver pendules from the ceiling hung
And gossip ripples whispered at the door.
Here, on a seat from solid crystal hewn
Sat OENE,---BERTHO at her feet,---her hand
Nestled amid the ringlets of his hair,
Like some white dove amid the wav'ring shade;
Her eyes bent softly on his countenance;
The crimson of his fiery southern blood
Burned through the brown of his defiant cheek;

His eyes were downcast, that their sullen fire
Should not too much betray him, as he lay,
A half-tamed lion at his mistress' feet,
Restless, yet yielding to the golden chain.
In a low voice, which, like a pent-up stream,
Chafed at its boundaries, he made reply
To her incessant questions of the world,
Of human life and love, of death, and heaven.

When bold Sir *John* intruded on the scene
OENE resumed her native haughtiness.

"I've come to plead the cause of a sweet child,
Who, like a wild-bird newly caught and caged,
Within her cell is fretting. Noble Queen,
I'm not an eloquent nor fair young man,
To please a gentle fancy; but my tongue
And mind shall do thy bidding, should there be
Aught which my humble wisdom could expound.
The meanwhile he who now instructs thee, hastes
To ope the prison door and let the bird
Flutter to her true home within his breast."

Scarce were these words with a firm purpose said,
When all the scene was changed. Where erst a Queen,
In shape most loveable, did blushing sit,
A terrible and yet a glorious form
Rose in portentous wrath; her star-crowned head
Paled the chaste lustre of the silvery dome.
It was no shame to him that BERTHO fled,
Dismayed, before the anger of her eyes,
For they were awful. Parted from Sir *John*,
And flying through a dark, unknown ravine,
He lost himself in tangled labyrinths:
Stumbling o'er rocks---only by daring leaps
Saving himself from dropping into chasms
Which opened suddenly across his path.
From tortuous windings underneath the ground,
At length released, he thenceforth knew the way,
And sped across the mountain to the cave
Where *Olive* pined, weeping despairing tears.
Like a swift arrow through the sunlight shot
He passed athwart its glory, till he reached
Her prison---heard her sudden cry of joy---
Touched the elaborate spring which bound her in,
And freed her, while she gazed in mute surprise.

"Love! look not thus incredulous of hope!
 This temple was thy lover's handiwork---
 This curious spring he wrought,---and what he did
 He can undo. My sweetest! it is I:---
 Thy living, breathing BERTHO stands before thee!
 This happiness, at least, I owe the Queen,
 Who, since repentant, may her gift resume,
 Should Heaven not grant us now a quick escape.
 But once---this once---though death should press me next---
 Come to my arms---to thy dear bosom draw me,
 So fondly close!---and feed my famished lips
 With kisses worth a life of wo to gain!
 Nay, pause not to inquire---'tis better thus
 To feel the throbbing of thy timid heart,
 Than to waste breath in words.---

"How did it come?"

I know not: I was tranced in sleep profound,
 And when I woke I was my former self.
 Queen OENE hoped my gratitude would grow
 To love, in time; and I was grateful---would
 Have given her everything but what was thine,
 And that alone she coveted. Come, sweet!
 Fly from this land forlorn:---if miracles
 Are still in fashion, one might serve us well.
 Cling to my guiding hand; trust all to me;
 My soul is so elate I would not flinch
 From meeting every imp of this dark land---
 The touch of thy soft hand is such a triumph!"

Even while his accents lingered, they were gone
 By an obscure and solitary path,
 Until they came upon some rough-hewn steps,
 Which wandered round and down, interminable.---
 A stairway leading to the upper world
 For the ascent of gnomes, who dwelt beneath
 In those huge tidal caves which underlaid
 Old Thug, upheaved from earth in ancient times.
 Silent the lovers fled; their locks grew wet
 With mildew, and their breath came gaspingly.
 A sound of gibbering gnomes, of elfish song---
 Mingling high discords with the patient clink
 Of instruments of toil---of laughter strange---
 Warned them of the wild laborers they must meet.
 A moment more, and the pale fugitives
 Stood at the bottom of those countless steps,
 Peering into the lowest deep of all.
 A hell-like spot! and spirits of the doomed

Were scarce more haggard than the clumsy elves
Who here pursued their coarse and perilous toil.

'Tis in these horrible caverns, deep and wide,
Each day the ocean sinks, when, rushing round
With the swift world, he falls into this snare;
From whence with groans, and anger impotent,
He backward struggles to his bed of sand
And lies there panting; while the credulous earth,
Dreaming of love, looks on him with a smile,
Saying---"He pineth for the sweet-faced Moon;"---
Thus had he just receded, when the pair
Stood peering shuddering in, hearing afar
The painful sighs, which shook his savage breast.
The dwarfish elves, with waning lamps in hand,
Creeping like worms along the slimy floor,
Pursued the ebbing tide collecting spoils.
The lovers saw from what exhaustless mines
Were gathered up the overwhelming wealth---
The jewels and the curious costly toys
Which graced OENE and all her splendid court;
For there the sea,---forever wrecking treasures,
Gulping down golden argosies at once---
Leaves them behind him in his angry flight.

"Art thou afraid, my darling?" BERTHO asked---
"I'll bear thee safely through this hideous place.
Here *Lucifer*, I think, must love to linger;
The shrieking of the ocean hath a sound
Like the united wail of hopeless souls;
Here darkness dwells in everlasting sleep;
For these poor, puny lights which wander round,
Scarce make the drowsy lashes of his lids
Tremble o'er his blind eyes;---the heated earth
Gives forth the odors of her burning heart,
In whose incessant fires her vitals wither.
See! where those wretched gnomes are dragging chests,
Banded with iron! most like, is heaped within
The ingots of some drowned West-Indian:
And look! ah heaven! how beautiful and strange,
To see the delicate corpse of this young girl
Like marble petrified, the raven hair
Grown rankly long, trailing around her limbs,
And clinging to her lovely, breathless breast!---
That rude dwarf clutching from her helpless hands
The jewels which some friend or lover gave.
If we had time to give our fancies range,
What a wild story we would make of this!"

Thrilling with pity, *Olive* hid her eyes.

Twelve hours of desperate flight, and they emerged
From darkness to a dead shore, shrouded white,---
Saw the green ocean rolling, saw the Sun,
Pale, like a wounded God, and weary, hang
Low in the southern sky---saw mountains crowned
With snow and fire---saw motionless cataracts
Hanging like frozen rainbows over chasms---
And icebergs settling downward towards the sun
As if to pierce him with their glist'ning spears.
Remotely, to the North, the Polar Sea
Hung like a roseate cloud along the sky
Fringing with lovely tints the dim horizon,
Holding unseen its island star within.

"A miracle!" quoth BERTHO; "Love, observe
How all these waves set from the shore, and glide
Like a broad river, 'twixt these frozen banks.
The current which ran northward with thy boat,
Has overtopped the Pole, and flows away,
A liquid belt, girdling the earth. Alas!
We have no trusty boat in which to launch,
Once more, our fortunes on the promising deep."

Wearied, they flung themselves upon the shore,
And, hand in hand, sat gazing on the sea
With home-sick longing. WOLE, the eager-eyed,
From his far height espied them where they sat,
And sent four of his people to their aid
(Such power hath youth and beauty through the world!)
Bearing a skiff, contrived of ribs of whales,
For frame work,---these, inwove with fibrous moss,
And lined with furs of savage Arctic beasts
Which he had slain. When, with this welcome gift
The slaves appeared, and bowed at OLIVE's feet,
The tears sprang to her eyes; her heart was touched
By this rude warrior's magnanimity.
They put to sea. Scarce were they free from land,
When, o'er the plain they saw OENE advance,
Alone and melancholy, to the shore.
Her anger was subdued by greater grief;
While something new and holier than sorrow
Restrained revenge. It was the Love Divine
Which sacrifices self to others' good.
Some word, Sir *John* had uttered when her wrath
Would have consumed him, fell upon her heart
Like rain on a thirsty garden---there sprang up

The amaranthine flower of charity
Whose seed was dropped from heaven; the nameless pain,
The want, which she had ever felt, was gone;
She knew the immortal meaning of the Soul,
And blessed the speaker for the 'perfect work.'

Speedily from her sight they floated out;
But, long time, while gazing, they saw her stand
In desolate beauty, silent on the beach.
The plaintive music of a horn wound down
From WOLE's grey fortress; all the fading scene
Lay, like a sad thought in a musing breast
Called up by the enchantment of sweet sound--
A thought, no more--all,--save those lustrous eyes
Shining upon them like two troubled stars--
Vaguely receding into things that were:
While, high and low, in whispering melodies
Borne by the uncertain winds, a farewell came:--

Oh, when for love we pine
We sleep in bloomless bowers;
But Life is a thing divine
When the love we crave is ours.
Shut close your feathery wings
Ye silvery birds of snow--
Across the ocean's rippled rings
Let no wild tempest blow;
From valleys bleak and caverns hollow
Let no rude spirit dare to follow.

Oh, who hath drunk of love
Will drink forevermore;
While ever, the golden rim above,
The draught will bubble o'er.
Let no fierce storm assail
These lovers in their flight,
But only a soft and steady gale
Pursue them day and night;
Nor jutting rock nor whirlpool hollow
Can seize them while our wishes follow.

Oh, love is a singing bird
That flutters everywhere;
His music in our souls is heard,
Charming us unaware.
Over the restless sea
The while these lovers glide,
This bird will pour his music free

And soothe the sleepless tide:---
While tempests crouch in caverns hollow
Let this sweet bird the lovers follow.