

My heart aches, and a

drowsy numbness pains

My sense, as though of

hemlock I had drunk,

Or emptied some dull opiate

to the drains

One minute past, and

Lethe-wards had sunk:

'Tis not through envy of

thy happy lot,

But being too happy in

thine happiness, -

That thou, light-winged

Dryad of the trees

In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and

shadows numberless,

Singest of summer in

full-throated ease.

O, for a draught of

vintage! that hath been

Could a long age in the

deep-delved earth,

Tasting of Flora and the

country green,

Dance, and Provençal song,

and sunburnt mirth!

O for a beaker full of the

warm South,

Full of the true, the

blushful Hippocrene,

With beaded bubbles

winking at the brim,

And purple-stained mouth;

That I might drink, and

leave the world unseen,

And with thee fade away

into the forest dim:

Fade far away, dissolve,

and quite forget

What thou among the

leaves hast never known,

The weariness, the fever,

and the fret

Here, where men sit and

hear each other groan;

Where palsy shakes a few,

sad, last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale,

and spectre-thin, and dies;

Where but to think is to

be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where Beauty cannot keep

her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them

beyond to-morrow.

Away! away! for I will fly

to thee,

Not charioted by Bacchus

and his pards,

But on the viewless wings

of Poesy,

Though the dull brain

perplexes and retards:

Already with thee! tender

is the night,

And haply the Queen-Moon

is on her throne,

Cluster'd around by all her

starry Fays;

But here there is no light,

Save what from heaven is

with the breezes blown

Through verdurous glooms

and winding mossy ways.

I cannot see what flowers

are at my feet,

Nor what soft incense

hangs upon the boughs,

But, in embalmed darkness,

guess each sweet

Wherewith the seasonable

month endows

The grass, the thicket, and

the fruit-tree wild;

White hawthorn, and the

pastoral eglantine;

Fast fading violets cover'd

up in leaves;

And mid-May's eldest child,

The coming musk-rose, full

of dewy wine,

The murmurous haunt of

flies on summer eves.

Darkling I listen; and, for

many a time

I have been half in love

with easeful Death,

Call'd him soft names in

many a mused rhyme,

To take into the air my

quiet breath;

Now more than ever seems

it rich to die,

To cease upon the midnight

with no pain,

While thou art pouring

forth thy soul abroad

In such an ecstasy!

Still wouldst thou sing, and

I have ears in vain—

To thy high requiem become

a sod.

Thou wast not born for

death, immortal Bird!

No hungry generations

tread thee down;

The voice I hear this

passing night was heard

In ancient days by emperor

and clown:

Perhaps the self-same song

that found a path

Through the sad heart of

Ruth, when, sick for home,

She stood in tears amid the
alien corn;

The same that oft-times
hath

Charm'd magic casements,
opening on the foam

Of perilous seas, in faery

lands forlorn.

Forlorn! the very word is

like a bell

To toll me back from thee

to my sole self!

Adieu! the fancy cannot

cheat so well

As she is fam'd to do,

deceiving elf.

Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive

anthem fades

Past the near meadows,

over the still stream,

Up the hill-side; and now

'Tis buried deep

In the next valley-glades:

Was it a vision, or a

waking dream?

Fled is that music:—Do I

wake or sleep?

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!

Bird thou never wert,

That from Heaven, or near

it,

Pourest thy full heart

In profuse strains of

unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher

From the earth thou

springest

Like a cloud of fire;

The blue deep thou

wingest,

And singing still dost soar,

and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning

Of the sunken sun,

O'er which clouds are

bright'ning,

Thou dost float and run;

Like an unbodied joy whose

race is just begun.

The pale purple even

Melts around thy flight;

Like a star of Heaven,

In the broad day-light

Thou art unseen, but yet

I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows

Of that silver sphere,

Whose intense lamp

narrows

In the white dawn clear

Until we hardly see, we

feel that it is there.

All the earth and air

With thy voice is loud,

As, when night is bare,

From one lonely cloud

The moon rains out her

beams, and Heaven is

overflow'd.

What thou art we know

not;

What is most like thee?

From rainbow clouds there

flow not

Drops so bright to see

As from thy presence

showers a rain of melody.

Like a Poet hidden

In the light of thought,

Singing hymns unbidden,

Till the world is wrought

To sympathy with hopes

and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden

In a palace-tower,

Soothing her love-laden

Soul in secret hour

With music sweet as love,

which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden

In a dell of dew,

Scattering unbeholden

Its aëreal hue

Among the flowers and

grass, which screen it from

the view:

Like a rose embower'd

In its own green leaves,

By warm winds deflower'd,

Till the scent it gives

Makes faint with too much

sweet those heavy-winged

thieves:

Sound of vernal showers

On the twinkling grass,

Rain-awaken'd flowers,

All that ever was

Joyous, and clear, and

fresh, thy music doth

surpass.

Teach us, Sprite or Bird,

What sweet thoughts are

thine:

I have never heard

Praise of love or wine

That panted forth a flood

of rapture so divine.

Chorus Hymeneal,

Or triumphal chant,

Match'd with thine would

be all

But an empty vaunt,

A thing wherein we feel

there is some hidden want.

What objects are the

fountains

Of thy happy strain?

What fields, or waves, or

mountains?

What shapes of sky or

plain?

What love of thine own

kind? what ignorance of

pain?

With thy clear keen

joyance

Languor cannot be:

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee:

Thou lovest: but ne'er

knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,

Thou of death must deem

Things more true and deep

Than we mortals dream,

Or how could thy notes

flow in such a crystal

stream?

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter

With some pain is fraught;

Our sweetest songs are

those that tell of saddest

thought.

Yet if we could scorn

Hate, and pride, and fear;

If we were things born

Not to shed a tear,

I know not how thy joy

we ever should come near.

Better than all measures

Of delightful sound,

Better than all treasures

That in books are found,

Thy skill to poet were,

thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,

Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow

The world should listen

then, as I am listening now.