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THE
MYSTIC LAND
A VISION

WRITTEN BY
GEORGE 'RUSTICUS' HICKLING

This book is a work of *fiction*. Any resemblance between the fictional characters within this novelette and actual persons, living or deceased, is purely coincidental.

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PREFACE

The Mystic Land is an extremely special story to me. It was one of the first things I ever read from George Hickling. It was one of the things that started *the George Hickling Restoration Project*. It was also the piece of work from Rusticus that inspired me the most.

Its immersive, scary, thrilling, gripping and nail-biting. In this allegory, Rusticus creates a new realm, a whole new world with nothing but words. He takes you through a harrowing adventure and leaves you with a moral message. A message of not giving up, that there's always a light at the end of the tunnel.

I am thrilled to be able to release this version of the story, which has never been published online before. Edited by George Hickling himself in 1892, this version differs from its original, which was the opener to the book of the same title, originally published in 1856. There are thirty-six years between the two versions and this one is the more modern of the two. It's just as thrilling and scary but re-written by an older, wiser and more experienced Rusticus.

It's an honour and a delight to be able to publish this version for the first time online, in its own dedicated book.

Love, Always.

Dan Barker

Notts.

July 1st 2023.

THE
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GEORGE 'RUSTICUS' HICKLING

I

DARKNESS

METHOUGHT I wandered in an unknown land,
Whose barren surface ne'er before had borne
The print of human foot. I was alone,
In all the solitude of mystery,
Whose sad, depressive influence, bore down
Upon the emotions of my conscious soul.

The hour of night was shadowing o'er the scene
With dread and pregnant frown. A crescent moon
Or some distorted semblance of the same,
In strange, fantastic glimmer undefined,
Was settling o'er what seemed a distant range
Of rugged hills on the dim horizon.
Adding a weird-like aspect to the scene.
A horror seized me as the darkness closed
Around my hidden path. A shivering chill,
As of approaching death, seemed gathering round
My vitals as I tried with dizzy eyes
To penetrate the gloom. I heard a noise!
'Twas the hurrying and the mighty rush
Of some unfathomed sea whose angry waves
Dashed furiously upon a rock-bound shore;
Or as of the impetuous hurricane
When distant heard to tear the giant pines
On some bleak mountain side. I stood aghast,
And every member of feeble frame
Did shake with fear and dread. The fearful sound,
Now near approaching, every instant grew
In direful import, louder and more dread.
It seemed as though the very earth was seized
With paralytic tremblings, and that all
The complicated terrors and results
Of some disastrous dire phenomenon
Was hovering o'er the scene.

Prostrate I fell,
And crawled beneath the gnarled and blasted arms

Of some decrepit tree, whose charred remains,
All weird and phantom-like, we're spread abroad.

What in my vision did I see and hear?
Swift through the dusky air, in phalanx deep,
A legion of infernal spirits winged
Their murky way through all the concave vast, -
Spirits of such a shape, to humans sense
Unknown, and past imagination's ken.
That darkness blackened as the mighty host
Came sweeping onward through the fields of space
With horrid tumult and unsteady speed.
As when some awful fire-fraught thunder-cloud,
Impelled and driven by the whirlwind's force,
Now scours the surface of the trembling earth,
Then towers aloft and surges in mid air,
So seemed the movement of that marshal'd throng
Of hell's own progeny. I saw and heard
Until the whole of that black multitude
Had swept across my lonely hiding place.
Then I arose and essay'd to go forth;
But scarcely would my palsied limbs perform
Their wonted task. My 'wildered mind, intent
On some set purpose seemed; and through distraught,
And with ideas of chimerical imbued,
I felt impelled t' accomplish some design.
Which, forced upon me, could not be escaped.
And thus I blundered on, regardless e'en
Of consequence, or unforeseen event,
Which might arrest me on my devious way.
Though perils and disaster might await
My journeyings o'er this mysterious land;
And though experiences fraught with pain
And dire importance, and portentous ills
Might cross my path, and hinder the result,
The mission (for a mission now it seemed)
That I was called to execute, withal,
Was now upon me rigidly impressed;
Leaving, concentrate, all the powers of mind,
And vividly revealing to each sense,
As by some super-human quality,
My missioned work.

The frightful uproar died
In distance far away; then silence reigned,
And 'twas the silence of the inmost tomb!
Foreboding fear, and terror's darkest shape
Now took possession of my troubled brain.
My thoughts, like lava from the crater's mouth,
Flowed fiercely hot, and scorched my conscious soul.
The important question now would rise again-
Why was I found in that most doleful place,
Which seemed like earth, and yet no earthly sound
Did greet my ears, or cheer my lonesome way.
No lowing kine, no bleat of folded sheep;
No whirr of startled bird from tree or bush;
No watch-dog barking of at a distant farm;
No wafted cadence of the village bell
At curfew time; no music of the spheres;
No hum of human voices from afar
In prayer or praise; no glimmering sheen to mark
Th' abodes of congregated human life;
Nor e'en the sound or sign prognosticate
Of commerce with its many noisy wheels;
Or mammon with its ever surging whirl
Of greedy gain, and never ceasing strife; -
No sign of animal or human life
Appeared around the near or distant scene!

'Twas solitude; sad, cheerless solitude;
Nay, more, 'twas e'en the very gates of death!
A lurid light, a wan and ghastly glare
Unearthly, and unnatural, was shed
O'er all the prospect. Sickly and devoid
Of cheering influence, the sombre gloom
Which then prevailed was like the shadowy gleam
When some poor minor, in the depths of the earth,
Toiling for bread, sees issuing from his lamp,
And making there the darkness horrible;
Or like the taper in the abode of death,
Flickering and shimmering o'er the sheeted corpse,
Which, lone and waiting, lies in solemn state.
Or more to me, it seemed the awful hue
Which sometimes spreads about the affrighted globe,
O'er many a varied square of milage round,
When some volcano in eruption's throes
Spues from it's upmost top with thund'rous roar.
The sulph'rous flame and lava's burning tied.

The howling winds did now collect their strength
Unto the conflict of the elements.
The heavens were palled in mourning's deepest dye,
Save when the nearing lightning-flash illumed
The frightful scene with ever-blinding glare.

But ah! What did I see? A signal light,
Near midway up the foremost eminence,
There in the mazy distance burning blue?
Like some bright star of hope, which oft will guide
The steps of the benighted traveller,
And bears his courage up, so seemed to me
That flickering beacon on the mountain side.
P'rhaps some lone hermit in his rocky cell
Would soon disarm me of my boding fears,
And make me welcome to his scanty board;
Or there, perchance, a numerous brotherhood
Of pious monks, or holy anchorites,
Had 'stablished their abode conventual,
And, could I find an access to their gates,
Would surely take delight in aiding me.
As when the shipwrecked sailor clinging firm
Unto a raft of frail materials,
His only vessel on the briny deep,
At midnight hour espies a friendly sail
Within the reach of his enfeebled voice,
Buoyed up with visions of return to life,
Will, eager, call for help. So 'twas with me.
O, generous hope! Brought forth but to be crushed,
How soon would'st thou be smothered in my breast!
Endued awhile with superhuman strength,
Methought I stumbled on with fitful speed,
While desp'rately, I called and cried for help,
But echo's slumbers only were disturbed.
And I was doomed to bear the mocking pain
Of disappointment thrilling through my soul?
As when the panting traveller in the east
Where sandy deserts furnace-like, do glow,
Raging with thirst and parched in every pore,
Before him he sees, or thinks he sees, a pool
Of crystal waters; and with madman's haste
He runs to bathe and cool his burning tongue;
But, like a phantom floating in the air,
The waters vanish, (Oh, most cruel fate!)
'Twas but the mirage that deceived his eyes,

And on the spot he falls and dies alone!
And thus my surging mind had thoughts of dread
Disaster yet to come. The likelihood
Of such a fate brought madness to the soul.
Though that which had infused into my frame
Fresh vigour, now was lost unto my gaze;
And, like the airy shadow of a dream,
My buoyant spirits were dissolved, yet Hope,
Enthroned upon my heart, tenaciously
Clung unto life, and would not willingly yield;
Nor is she ever suddenly cast down,
Or overcome when once established firm
Amongst the tenants of the human mind.

With faltering steps still onward I pursued
My weary, darksome way up to the base
Of that high towering and extended range.
The frequent lightening flash still lit the gloom,
With vividness increasing, as the cloud
In awful grandeur rode upon the scene;
Revealing there, distinct and prominent,
Each pond'rous mass, in aspect horrible,
Tinging with lambent flame the utmost top.
The surging tempest now came rattling on,
And in its furious strength 'twould soon descend
On my devoted head. Dejected, cowed,
A living piece of abject misery,
Without a refuge for my feeble frame,
There was I found, defenceless, faint, and cold.
O, for the convent's hospitality!
O, for the comfort of the hermit's cell!
Now reason seemed to totter on her throne,
And threatened to resign her functions there.
How could I climb those adamantine walls,
And where, O where should I direct my steps?
In vain I strained my sight with eager gaze
In search of shelter from the approaching storm;
In search with burning and expectant eyes
For one more glimpse of that bright signal star
Which, like a magnet, had attracted me; -
In search of something which would fan and feed
The dying embers of the flame of hope
Within my breast. Ah, 'twas a bitter hour!
Assured I felt that in the dark domain
Of Terror's grisly king I walked alone,

And soon should feel his hand upon my heart!

Partly resigned to my impending fate,
And half delirious, and half dead withal,
Methought I stood impatient of my life,
When lo! What did my frenzied eyes behold?
Another awful feature of the night!
Emerging from the surcharged cumulus,
Which now was peering o'er the mountain tops,
With other multiplying cumuli,
Creating new electric batteries:
A lurid cloud of fire appeared in sight!

Detached, and with purpose all its own,
(If purpose it was destined to fulfil).
First tortuous, like a fiery serpent huge,
Then clad with wings, the strange phenomenon
Appeared a flaming monster in the sky,
Of aspect terrible. Alarmed at first,
But soon accustomed to the sight I grew,
And with unmoving apathy beheld,
Awhile, this dread addition to the list
Of horrid things which there surrounded me;
So dead to feeling had my mind become.
The death-like stupor which had then enwrapped
My yielding faculties slow moved away,
And conscious I became, awake, alive
Unto the change which came across the scene.
Illumined by that ever rolling fire,
Which soon o'er-spread a plenitude of space,
And caused the lowering clouds to flee away
On wings of darkness to their utmost bounds,
Amazed; and by the oft repeated glare
Of lightning's vivid fork, unto my view,
Oh, how unearthly did the prospect rise!

Back I recoiled with horror at the sight
Of beetling crags, and huge misshapen cliffs;
Tremendous steeps, and fissures yawning wide,
All scorched and charred as with infernal fires.
No eyes of man had surely ever gazed
On such a wild and hideous scene before.
Not Himalaya's heights, nor Andes' chain,
Where Cotopaxi rears his fiery head;
Carpathian, Ural, Balkan, nor the Ghauts,

Nor e'en the wild Caucasus, could compare
With those terrific heights. They pierced the clouds,
But other likeness or similitude
Had none upon the earth. The shadowy plain
Outstretching at their feet was strewn with black
Unightly masses, like to cinders burnt.
'Twas rude disorder's gloomy dwelling-place,
Where Night and chaos held divided sway:
It might have been the recent battle field
Of an unrivalled contest waged between
The furious armies of some monstrous tribes
Of giant size and hellish mould, whose hands
Had clutched the mountain with demoniac rage,
And had from thence huge fragments snatched and torn,
And in defensive and offensive war
Had hurl'd them at each other. Horrid sight!
O sight beyond description horrible!

But hark! A sound borne on the eddy wind
Fell faint upon my ears? 'Twas like a shout,
Though much prolonged, and in the distance heard;
Or like the echoes of a silvery horn
When trumpeted along the evening air
In climes where peace and plenty ever dwell.
O! Would to God it were some human voice,
And voice of one who has the feeling heart,
The ready hand, the power to minister
Unto the wants of a poor fellow man,
And calm the trouble waters of his soul.

The smouldering, dying spark within my breast
Now shot anew into a burning flame,
As when the taper in the sick one's room
Low burning in the stick at noon of night,
And flickering faintly in departing strength
Will sometimes suddenly light up the gloom
With brilliant flash one moment ere it dies.
Again I hasted on. The lightning blazed;
Incessant roared the thunder, peal on peal.
With force concentrate, stationed far on high,
Immoveable, o'er one devoted spot,
On the upper mountains sidelong, distant far,
Where the black line a sudden curve described,
Where highest seemed the rocks to raise their crests,
Suspended in mid air, that maddening sight,

That luminous monster which consumed the sky
From all sides round of its compacted form
Was darting thunder-bolts, and forks of fire,
All pointed to one place.

With hasty feet

I madly entered on the dire ascent,
All heedless of my life; with frenzied hope
Renewed, and pointing to a rescue near.
An easy slope had brought me to a gorge,
A friendly opening, rock-flanked, gaping wide,
Which soon received my form in eager search
Of mountain path, or bed of mountain stream.
Soon did I find, the labyrinth I sought,
Upwinding through the steeps. On, on I toiled
And followed close the water's devious track,
And quick was lost unto the plain beneath.

But soon a barrier stayed my mad career.

A frightful precipice, a yawning gulf
Lay at my feet, and one advancing step
Had seen me dashed and mangled far below.
O fearful fate! O worst deaths to die,
Uncared for on the lone and rocky wild.
I lifted up my voice, I cried aloud,
But such an answer did my call receive
As nought of earth could give. A piercing shriek,
A yell, a howling scream as from a fiend
Loud echoed through the depths, and taken up
Above, below, around by kindred fiends,
They Stygian chorus roused old Night himself,
And made the very mountains shake with fear.
Unto a ledge I crawled, and crouched beneath
A beetling crag. Grim visaged, black despair
Now banished from her place reluctant hope,
Crushing at once her small remains of life,
Then took possession of her vacant seat.
Upon destruction's brink I sat me down
And wept until the fountain of my tears
Was parched up and dried with fever's burning heat,
Praying, or raving in delirious throes,
In words like these:

"Great God of heaven and earth!

Why am I banished from the haunts of men,
And left to perish in so dread a place,

Which to the lower regions is allied?
The horrors of the devil's own abode
Could add but little to the horrors here!
Why do I suffer thus the fiery wrath
Of justice ere my mortal course is run?
O God of mercy, let thine arm descend,
And rescue my poor body from the jaws,
The fierce devouring jaws of death and hell,
Or let me here annihilated be!"

Such were the ravings of my maddening soul.

Now at its height the tempest raged and foamed,
The gloomy caverns and declivities
Resounded with the thunders awful voice;
Deep called to deep: the lightnings chased the winds,
Which howled as though they were frantic with pain;
Down fell the blasted rocks with hideous roar;
The yawning fissures and the ravines deep deep
Re-bellowed loud and long; the strong hills shook
As with an earthquake to their very base;
Hail, fire, and smoke, mixed in the pregnant air;
Accursed spirits swept the gulf in throngs
With hideous outcry, rushing from the face
Of Him who held the thunder in His hands
To hide in the blackest crevices of night!
The clash of elements, the wreck of worlds,
The day of terror, and the crack of doom,
Seemed now as though in very deed had come!

Confused I grew, and dizzy swam my eyes,
And all things quickly faded from my paling sight,
While senseless there upon the rock I fell!

II

THE DAWNING

Genius of truth! Sweet, heaven-instructed muse!
Goddess of the light and love! Minstrel Divine!
That which dost brood o'er my enraptured soul,
And fill'st my mind with sacred harmonies,
Whate'er thou art, assist me now to sing
In strains immortal what I saw and heard
In this my vision of mysterious birth!

What time elapsed ere I again revived
From that benumbing and o'erpowering swoon
Ne'er did I learn. But by a secret power
I was aroused from that deep lethargy.
A soothing voice, soft as the zephyr's breath
At summer's midnight in the woodland shade;
Melodious as the early matin song
Of joyous birds anointed with the dew;
Sweet as the music of the sabbath born,
Fell on my ears in rapturous words like these: –
"Mortal! Stand upright, look upon the face
Of one who is thy friend, to succour thee;
To give thee life and strength, to liberate
Thee from the dungeon of this hell on earth;
And to inform thee of its origin,
And why it now is suffered to exist."

A touch as from a fairy's magic wand
Now gently pressed my side, and through my frame
Successive waves of bright sensation thrilled.
The torpid blood, which stagnant in my veins
Was growing, danced anew into my heart,
And straight at once upon my feet I stood.
The storm was o'er, and calmness now reclined
On every mountain's brow, – a death-like calm
Which seemed as though 'twould never be disturbed.
But dusky shadows still did over spread
The face of all the scene. As when the orb
Of day is darkened by the queen of night;
When nature's tribes, alarmed, look up and mourn,

And at meridian seek their dark retreats;
Such were the gloomy shades now cast around.
But on the rock, close at my side, there stood
A being moulded not of earthen clay;
A flaming sword depending at his side;
Bright golden pinions towering o'er his head;
In glittering garments clad, in stature tall,
And in proportion vast; with countenance
All radiant as the sun with smiled benign;
In attitude majestic, and with power
Bespeaking plain a mighty angel's form!

With awe and admiration, I beheld;
With stammering tongue I essayed to pronounce
Some feeble words of incoherent sound,
But overcome with sheer and helpless dread
I bowed, I fell, I cowered at his feet!
But remain in that recumbent form
I was not suffered; quick he bid me rise,
And thus to me in wonderous accents spake: –
"Fear not O man of earth, be not dismayed,
Nor let thy tongue attempt to utter words
Which not bespeak surprise or gratitude.
At present 'tis thy duty to be calm,
And listen to my over-burdened speech;
Nor tremble at the presence or the sight
Of one who is a servant of the King
Of Heaven, to execute His sovereign will.
My words do thou digest within thine heart,
And let thy memory my speech retain;
That thou may'st tell it to the sons of men
When once again amongst them thou dost walk,
For there thou shalt return. What thou hast seen
Is granted as a boon of favoured kind;
And what thou shalt witness with thine eyes,
And listen with unreluctant ears,
Thou wilt not soon forget. This fearful place
By any of the motley tribes of earth
Has ne'er before been visited, and thou
Art now permitted to behold, and live,
What flesh and blood ne'er gazed upon before!
No questions ask, but rest assured that I,
To my commission's furthermost extent,
Shall luminate thy mind, and shall unfold
Things wonderful unto thy ravished soul."

“The ways of God are all inscrutable,
And past the ken of angels and of men;
But all His acts proclaim His righteousness.
When Justice strikes she but obeys His word,
And just the stroke doth prove where'er it falls.
Though man may murmur at the needful rod,
A salutary blessing in the end.
His attributes are infinite as the term
Of His endurance is: they equal are,
And none exercised above the rest.
What He permits of evil to exist,
And why 'tis suffered, questions are which we,
As His dependents, have no right to ask.
To do His bidding, and in Him to trust,
Is all the bond which He enjoins on man,
And angels too. When they this task perform,
This easy task, how great is their reward;
I say this easy task, for when the bond
Is worn with childlike, and with humble mind,
The task *is* easy and the burden *light*.
Of impious disobedience evil springs;
By this 'twas first begot, and not by God,
Whose eyes are purer than to view the same,
And in whose sight the very heavens are vile!

“O child of mortal race, hast thou e'er read
That Book of books which humans call 'The Bible?'
That Book of beauty and sublimity,
Transmitted through the ages for the use
Of all who love the everlasting truths,
And brilliant lights which play on every part;
That Book, on every page of which play on every part;
Emblazoned clearly as the noonday sun
The predication, glorious and omnific, -
 I am the All, I am the Evermore;
 Supremacy alone belongs to me;
 I am the Lord, no other Gods have ye!
That Book whose burden is a mighty theme
Whose never dying echoes undulate
With ever freshening chords in all domains
Of universal nature, and of man;
Whose diapasons, varied and sublime
Are daily, nightly hymned, in melody
And harmony of differential strains
Enrapturing and full; and thus the theme,

And this all the hymning – “God is love!”
That Book which some among thy puny race
Have essayed to destroy, and e’en with fierce
And hellish malice tried to substitute
Some spurious imitation, suitable
To their degen’rate minds and selfish hearts;
That Book, which once destroyed , removed
From off the face of earth, would bring a state
Of terror which no language can convey, -
Once thrown aside, and all forgotten, lost:
Ah! What a ghastly picture would the world
Present unto the startled gaze of man!
That Book, whose teachings all suppressed and dead
Would bring a chaos o’er the trembling earth; -
A chaos with the shades of blackest night, -
With all the noble institutions reared
Upon the sure foundations of its creeds
Destroyed, and all its inspirations true,
And aspirations beautiful and high,
Created by the same in noble souls,
Annihilated, such a frightful scene
Would then present its on man’s abode
Which not imagination’s wildest stretch
Could picture or describe in faintest form!”

“That Book of God! Refulgent lamp of life!
Bright guiding star and hope serene,
By which some few of thy poor kindred steer
Their barks so frail, and oft so tempest toss’d,
On the rough sea of life from earth to heaven.
That book of blessings by the Father given
In wondrous love and pity to the weak,
The guilty, and the wretched thy race
Whose children ye all are of varied name,
Though disobedient oft as well He knows:
That Book which tells a thrilling story true
Of One who left the highest realms of bliss
To walk on earth with human flesh and blood;
Upon him, and to walk the earth and die
And walking with them, taught them such a creed
As ne’er upon the earth was taught;
And afterwards to die a fearful death,
In mortal garb, to save a guilty race,
Exciting wondering awe in all the host,
The exalted host, of heaven’s beholding sons.

That Book whose glorious and superior light
Where'er it shines dispels the darkness thick
Of death and hell, which hangs and lingers still
O'er many a space of this terrestrial globe.
That Book which when by man 'tis studied well
And read with all the willingness of mind
And eager energy to understand
(Begotten of a holy love of God)
Its blessed precepts, and its promises
To be digested, and to form a part
Of his own being, and his daily life,
Will raise him to a standard towering high
In being's scale, and next to angels he
Will be regarded in th' Almighty's sight."

"And hast thou read such book? Then thou hast seen
The dire account of Satan it contains, -
That enemy of all that's pure and good;
That black malignant spirit of all ill,
Whose machinations blast and mar the earth;
That bold and wicked thwarter of the deep
Designs of Him who rules the universe
With sovereign power and will. That subtle fiend;
That wily tempter, that outcast of heaven,
That unrelenting foe of Adam's race;
That roaring lion whose extended jaws
Are ever ready to devour the souls
Of those who live unwatchful and unarmed;
That Prince of Anarchy whose banners wave
Exalted in the air, and whose dark hosts
Go forth at his command to hunt for prey."

"Know then, O child of man! This fearful place
Is the black habitation for a time, -
The chosen seat of Satan upon earth!
Here to deceive, to ruin and devour
The nations, all his fiendish plans are laid.
Here, since the day when Jesus, Son of God,
Upon the hill, a wonderous spectacle
Unto the Universe, suspended hung
Upon the cross in bitter agonies
(Such agonies as none can ever know),
And 'mid them all proclaimed the finished work,
Has Satan, conscious of his broken power,
Oft issued his commands unto his hosts."

“It was on that day when the accustomed sun
Refused his shining, and the apportioned earth
Was shrouded and o’er-palled at a height of noon
With shadows gloomy as the vale of death,
Which deeper grew around the peopled hill,
That man might not with sacrilegious eye
Gaze on the writhings and the agony
Of him who bare the bitter curse alone;
When conscious nature groaning in her soul
Her garments rent, and in profoundest grief;
Did lacerate herself in frantic sorrow;
When sights and sounds were seen and heard, withal,
Appalling, awful, supernatural, -
Such sights and sounds as only on that day
Were witnessed by the startled sense of man;
When heaven’s accustomed harmony was hushed,
And angels wept the tears of silent sorrow -
The only day in all eternity
When sorrow entered their divine abode.
Such was the price, and the conditions such,
Paid and accomplished, suffered and atoned
For the redemption of thy fallen race.”

“’Twas on that day, permitted by the great
Disposer and controller of events,
That Satan scoured the globe, on pinions swift
In search of place well suited to his mind,
Where, as a *rendezvous* convenient
He might collect his vagrant legions oft,
And oft instruct them in the deadly schemes,
The wily plans, the deep contrivances
Which now must be accomplished and performed,
With zeal, inspired by hellish malice dire,
For such a blow had he that day received
As made him foam and in contortions writhe;
Full well he knew that by these great events
A signal triumph for mankind was gained.
The earth had previous been his easy prey
Through all the long drawn centuries of time,
Though baffled oft by good and faithful souls,
The chosen ones of the Almighty’s will.
But now a war would be against him waged;
His name by all the soldiers of the cross,
Well Armed apostles and evangelists,
Would be denounced and spurned on every hand.”

“This is the place, this the devoted spot
He fixed upon. To marshal up his hosts
At once did he commence. Assembled here
To them, with gestures shadowing forth revenge
The subtle chief disclosed his new designs.
The horrid conclave to deliberate
And listen to the mandates of their god
Have here since then oft met. The well laid net,
The deep adjusted and constructed trap,
The fatal pitfall, and the snare concealed,
In oft repeated instances on earth
Have been successful in securing souls.”

“Oh! Dust-born mortal! Thy rebellious race,
Though warned and cautioned oft by the voices loud,
And by voices musical and low,
When nature takes her calm relief in sleeps,
In dreams which oft are whispered in the ear
By messengers, which their reluctant minds
Heed not until affliction bows them low,
And sad disquietude *compels* the ear.
The sensitive and responsive soul
Will, all unfettered, take its upward flight
To regions far above the earth and sense, -
Sense, grovelling and debasing, which would lead,
If followed by dictations gross and foul,
Deliberate, unto a fearful end.
But thus a multitude of simple ones
Contented slumber in the tempter’s arms;
Nor are they easy roused. The willing slaves,
The blinded captives, at their conqueror’s will
Are led through deep’ning shade in ruins pale
Until eternal darkness shuts them in:
A wonder to the legions of the sky,
Who marvel that thy race should be so blind,
And so unmindful of a destiny,
And of a gift which is eternal life.”

“Ah, man of earth! Thy fellows will not see;
Wilful and callous they despise the truth;
Conditions are set forth clear as the sun
At noonday’s hour, or as the full-orbed moon
Reflecting all the same at midnight, when
The peace is on the earth; so on the page
Is blazoned thus – “The wage of sin is death.”

But the All father's "gift" to all who will
His faithful servants be – "Eternal Life!"
But some in armour clad, complete and bright,
Give battle to thy foe. The fight of souls,
This mighty conflict, by the host above
Is not regarded with the indifference,
Nor are they mere spectators of the scene.
They tune their harps to the highest notes of praise
When any mortal from the ranks of sin
Deserts, and casts the chains of darkness off,
To join the armies of the living God.
But they loon on with chastened sorrow when
Divisions mar the peace of all the camp.
Ah, man! If all these soldiers of the cross would
Would show a solid phalanx to the foe,
In unison of fealty to fight
Shoulder to shoulder, steadfast, hand in hand;
With bickering and pretty fretful strife
Schismatical, with acrimonious tongues
All silenced and subdued with holy love,
Then soon would be established firm and sure
The reign of righteousness upon the earth.
The hearts of all those servants of the Lord
Who wish and pray that they may do His will
Should undivided beat, and ever swell
In chords of sympathy and fond desire
With all the hosts of heaven to magnify,
And glorify the mandates of the King –
The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords Most High: -
As we, O Father, as Thou knowest well,
Do magnify and glorify Thy name;
And in Thy service recognise Thy will
In whatsoe'er direction we are sent,
Or whatsoe'er the task to be performed, -
O God of Love, and Majesty Divine!"

III

THE LIGHT

While uttering words recorded here above,
The being by my side in aspect changed;
And with a countenance serene, benign,
Which not the purest mortal on the earth
Could imitate, ore e'en approach unto,
So radiant, so beautiful, sublime,
As lifting up his eyes in holy trust,
Ignoring for the time my presence there,
He breathed those blessed words in accents which
Are surely heard but in the blest abode
Where angels stand around the throne of God!
The full, enraptured music of his voice,
Though soft and low, and in sweet cadence clear,
Was all unlike the music ever heard
In organ loft, or in cathedral choir,
Where mortals do their best to worship God.
Abstracted for a time in attitude
Of deep devotion and submissive mein,
He stood, while I, expectant and devout,
Was awe-struck, yet with admiration viewed
The movements of this messenger divine.

At length he turned, and with benignant smile,
He thus again addressed himself to me: -
"Mortal, dost know that in the universe,
Which is the dwelling-place of Him who rules -
Of Him who is the Architect thereof,
Of Him whose might power sustains the whole,
There are Intelligences numerous,
Illimitably numerous, withal,
Who wait the mandates of th' Almighty will.
Of various orders is the whole composed;
But to obey and execute commands
Is the chief happiness of one and all."

"Thy dwelling-place, a unit of the whole;
But though a unit infinitely small,
Has all its own peculiar traits and wants,
And sad resultances begot of man,

Is tended by one order of the same,
Protecting ban from his insidious foes.
Invisible to hell's devouring wolves,
And unrevealed to eyes of flesh and blood,
These creatures spiritual are on th' alert,
And walk the earth in myriads night and day."

"To minister unto the dying saint,
To show him that instead of death 'tis life
He now will enter; for the Christian knows,
Well taught by every principle divine,
There is no death for him. 'Tis but a change,
Most necessary at the portico
Of that vast field of happiness and love
Which is the gift of God – Eternal Life!"

"Ah man! I must repeat those blessed words: -
Eternal Life, which is the gift of God!
Who only hath an immortality.
'Tis He who can confer the same
On whom He will. 'Tis He who dwells in the light
Which no poor mortal can approach unto;
Whose attributes no creature can assume;
And to be banished from whose presence means –
O, awful thought! What do the words imply? –
Be banished from the presence of the Lord,
And from the glory of supremest power!
Oh! Punishment of which there's not a dream
In any mortal mind. A punishment
Which would induce the wretched victim's prayers
For blank annihilation. Uttered words
Are all too feeble to define the same!
But, ah, His banished will not be expelled!"

"Now let us turn
To more congenial features of our theme.
To pour fresh balm upon the wounded mind;
To whisper music to the troubled soul
When carking cares of his poor little time
On earth would worry and distract, and e'en
Destroy the higher aspirations true,
And make him grovel in the slough of mire;
To guard the household of the righteous man –
The man that doeth the righteousness in all
Humility of mind, and filial love
Of Him who is the Teacher of the same,

Infallible, - he is the righteous man;
To encamp around all those who fear the Lord,
And love to walk in virtue's holy ways.
By day and night this order finds delight,
In serving at pleasure of their King.
But other orders are there great and strong,
Who at the word of Him who rules the realms,
And holds them in the hollow of His hands,
Do execute their Heaven-imparted power
In thwarting hell's devices and designs,
In checking Satan in his mad career,
Who else would make a pandemonium
Of the fair habitation of mankind, -
Of such am I, and on such errand sent!"

“Ah child of mortal mould! Great is the love
Displayed by Heaven to all the fallen race,
And this the glorious privilege of man
Can never be too oft repeated here;
Yet he gives back but base ingratitude,
While the All-Father in long-suffering waits,
And pities all the wayward of thy kind
Who grovel, and will never learn t' aspire.
With sullenness they spurn the proffered aid,
And thus their many dangers are increased,
Where'er man is, or howsoe'er employed,
Morn, noon or night; amid the city's din,
Where grasping mammon oils the noisy wheels
Of busy gain, impelled by avarice;
Or in the sweet sequestered groves and dells,
Or on the hill, or in the quiet vale,
Or in the verdant field, or on the road;
In company, alone, in palaces,
And in the haunts of abject poverty;
Or in the place where he pretends to bow
His head with others, and to worship God;
In every island, continent, and sea,
In every stage, in every walk of life
Is man with ghostly enemies beset,
Who, unremittingly, are all employed
In teaching him rebellion, discontent,
Sedition, malice, hatred, unbelief;
And in administering unto his soul
Those deadening narcotics which destroy
The life of every influence divine.”

“Oh mortal! The Great Teacher of mankind,
The Founder of the system and the creed
Which ne'er before illuminated earth,
Nor shone about the path of erring man,
Knew well the fiend would traverse all His plans,
And work a mischief through the great design.
Ah! Through the whole we see the serpent's trail!
Through all the long-drawn centuries of time
Which have elapsed since the Great Teacher cried –
In agony and anguish – 'It is finished!'
'Finished is now the work I had to do' –
Has Satan marred with fiendish purposes,
And malice diabolical and deep,
The glorious and blessed consequence
Which might result, and surely will result,
From all the teachings of the Man of God,
Who spake as no man ever spoke before!
But, O, the bitter workings, and the strife,
The fightings, wranglings, and the sad mistakes,
The machinations, and the mischief wrought,
Is passing strange, and grievous to behold!
In rampant and discordant violence
Upon the earth. The craft of selfishness,
The cloke assumed of base hypocrisy;
The noisy voice of blatant ignorance;
The parent of all error, and the source
Of breaches and divisions in the camp;
The mummeries and mysteries of creeds
Begot of superstitious arrogance;
The labyrinthine argument, undue
But for aggrandisement of systems false, -
As false as is the father of all lies,
Whose cursed influence runs through the whole.

“Ah! What has not been done in every age,
In every clime, among the men of earth,
In that most potent, influential name –
Religion? What a chaos has been wrought
By Satan as an angel of the light
Amongst the dupes of all his blandishments,
And those the victims of his subtle power!
This will not ever last. God will arise
And terribly will shake the frightened earth,
When most astounding circumstance and deed
Will trouble and astonish all the isles

And continents thereof. What *will* be done
In that most holy and most blessed Name,
And through the mighty force and influence
Of the religion founded by the Christ,
And brought from heaven by the Holy One,
Will fae out-balance all the evil deeds
Begot of errant human nature, all
Beguiled by the arch enemy of God,
And God's own creature, man. The efforts made
To spread the true celestial light abroad
Have yet been futile, and the tribes of earth
Are in the dark – hushed in security
Of falsity. But ah, the time will come
When men will flee before the mighty arm
And terror of the Lord, and hide away
But to come forth anew purged as with fire!
The heathen then will cast their gods away,
And each proud nation, and each lofty height
Will be laid low and humble in the dust.
The kings and rulers, and the mighty men
Of earth will be subdued. The Lord alone
Will be exalted, and will cause the light
To shine for evermore. The darkest place
In every island, continent, and sea,
Th' untutored savage in the murkiest spot
Now hiding in uncivilized domains,
There practising foul rites and horrid acts,
Will be brought forth unto the blaze of day.
Yea, all the heathen and misguided tribes
Who grope among their idols for light
Which yet will come to the whole family
Of man that day when the Deliverance comes –
The light which then with seven-fold power will shine.”

IV

THE CONQUEROR

“But ah!” The curse still lingers in the air,
And blights the fairest portions of the earth!
The tribes of nature feel the influence,
And cringe, and suffer ‘neath the awful ban.
Oft when the midnight hides the chequered scene
Their piteous calls are heard. The weeping earth
With doleful wailing, and with piercing cries
Laments the sad degeneracy of man.
Creation groans in chains of sorrow bound
And writhes in pain. ‘How long, O Lord, how long?’
The righteous ask, and earth repeats, ‘how long?’
E’en now there is a yearning for the peace,
The calm and quiet which shall ever reign
When the blest day arrives.

“The mighty powers
Which now upon the surface of the globe,
Where most do congregate the civilized,
So called, and cultivated of the race
Are brandishing the sword – bending the bow,
And sharpening their wits to sharper make
And more destructive, the accursed means
For the extinction, diabolical,
Of human life. They stand arrayed in form
Of multitudes in burnished armour clad
Ready to prey upon their neighbours near
When aught of trifled consequence or cause
Should wake the ever-ready trumpet call
Which leads them forward at the dread behest
Of monstrous war!

“Yet still the note is heard,
The piping note of dread compunction’s voice;
Yeah, e’en the mighty ones with all their ships,
Their frightful engines, and their stands of arms
All ready, ever ready for the fray,
And aye increasing in destructive force
Stand, still aghast, and even contemplate

The sad resultance which perforce must flow
From congregated fierceness in the field:
The wide extended space which yonder earth
Must yet be doomed to witness. Ah, they shrink!
They shiver at the overwhelming thought,
Which soars above the blood be-deluged field,
And at the prospect cry – ‘Let us disarm!
Let us cast off the burden and the drag
Of standing in armies, and the monstrous pomp
Attaching thereunto; and let us meet
In conclave friendly, and more sensible,
To arbitrate each difference, which would yield
Unto a simple argument, devoid
Of evil feeling.’ Then would come the end
Of all diplomacy which has its rise
And purpose to defeat another’s plan, -
To traverse all a neighbouring state’s designs
For lasting peace.”

“Not yet. Still carries time!
Still do the demon spirits fly about
And work the mischief. Still the dragon rules,
And all that is unclean goes forth abroad
Among the nations to destroy, and urge
The kindred spirits of unrest and vice
Of foulest form. Great revolutions yet,
And strife of direst import must obtain,
And for a time will even seem to eclipse
The very light which had been shed abroad
Upon the earth from heaven’s beneficence.
A striving for the mastery, by force
Of blind contumacy will surely come,
For contumaciousness will hurt the world
To a degree not dreamt of even now.
The gradual but still increasing flow,
Like waters of a river, turbulent,
Will ever swell until a mighty flood
Will pour destruction o’er the earth around.
Confusion dread, with “devils’ spirits” foul
Will rampant run in riot’s giddy course,
With anarchy creating chaos; all
To overturn and root up what of law
And order still remains. Ah, what a scene!
The peoples and the nations of the earth,
With varying results, will fiercely strive

For that supremacy which only *One*
Can ever have.

“Ah mortal! In the Book
The promises and prophecies are sure,
And the denunciations stand firm.
Satan with force augmented, and with power
Increased and granted for a purpose wise
In the decrees, mysterious and great,
Of Him whose thoughts are as the heavens high,
Will, with his hosts, concentrate all his strength,
And will combine, with coadjutors here
On earth, in numbers countless, to o’erthrow,
In final stroke, the kingdom and the rule
Of Christ on earth. To gain supremacy
Each effort fiendish in the last degree
Will be employed, But O, the consequence
To mortals who unwittingly work out
The fell designs will be most terrible!
In the last struggle of the powers of hell
Before the consummation which will come
At the appointed time.

“A day will dawn,
A day in Gods eternal counsels fixed,
When retributive justice will descend
Upon the great arch-enemy of God.
The mighty angel of the mightier Lord,
The minister of justice and wrath,
Armed with the thunders of Omnipotence,
And in his left hand holding forth a chain,
Whose mighty links, forged in the flaming fires
Of the Almighty’s wrath, will set at naught
The powers combined of his malignant foes
Who now will rally round their frowning chief,
A ponderous key depending at his side
And in his right hand brandishing a scourge
In likeness to a comet’s fiery tail
When spread abroad upon the midnight sky,
Will on most speedy wings descend from heaven
Attended by a bright, illustrious host,
To wrest the kingdoms from th’ usurper’s hands.
Then such a thrilling, undulating swell
Of many voices, never heard before
In conscious triumph penetrate through all the trembling globe;

On all sides round re-echoing aloud,
Sounding in every ear pf every tribe,
And thus proclaim the King and Lord of all!

“Then comes the awakening in convulsive throes
Of nature and of man. The very earth
And all the life there of will feel the power
Of Him who now will reconstruct His plan,
And terribly assert His only right.
Then hunted from the face of every land
Will be the Dragon and his progeny:
Ah! At the time when he had fondly thought
The vict’ry was in his unholy hands.
In howling throngs, lashed by the firey scourge
Od the avenging angel, down they’ll dash
Into th’ abyss of night, their own abode.
None will be left to lurk in land remote,
Or dark, or distant. Not e’en this dread place
Will then concealment offer to their hordes.
Through outer darkness to the gates of hell,
Which now convenient on their hinges swing,
Affording all advantages to those
Of Satan’s host who by commission hold
Chief offices, and orders o’er the rest
Of the accursed crew, on rapid wings
To traverse and encircle night’s domains,
The horrid myriads with such haste will fly,
And consternation and tumultuous roar,
That Erebus – nay, e’en the universe
Will stand amazed. The huge Tartarean doors
Back flinging all their adamantine folds,
Displaying there a frightful orifice,
Through which pernicious smoke and hideous flames
Leap forth, will then receive the company; -
A surging multitude a howling throng
Of horrid breed and hellish parentage,
Close packed, and in a line upreaching far.
The last of the condemned and guilty host
Will enter after lapse of time required
For such a sweeping cloud of hell to pass,
Close followed by the angel of the Lord,
Who, armed with lightnings from the Power above,
And more than proof against the Stygian fires,
Attended by a glorious body-guard
Of heaven’s deputed ones, will straightway pass

With warlike mien, unscathed into the pit,
And o'er the infernal vales and gullies deep,
The mountain gorges and the yawning caves,
Where all the blackness of the darkness reigns,
Uplighted by his own refulgent rays,
Revealing there full many a crouching form
And hideous presence, foulest of the foul,
Will sweep majestic to the middle space
Where Satan on a hill of conic shape
Hemmed round with circling fires and serried ranks
Of grim and ghastly fellows and compeers,
Now reassured and rallied, like a tower
Will stand erect and firm with brazen front,
Defying all the powers of heaven and earth
T' approach him, or to harm, or cast him down
From that high place which he by right can claim
And call his own.

“A fearful contest now
Will follow, after this the challenge given.
Inspired, inflamed anew with hellish hate
And confidence and vengeance by the speech
And presence of their high, imperial head,
The closing ranks will shout exultingly,
And pompously will now prepare their arms, -
Such arms as naught of earth could ever show,
As the minister of justice sails
On steady wing undaunted to the mound.
Their glorying will not last, for such a shower
Of fiery wrath will on their heads descend,
As quickly to the utmost bounds of hell
Dispersed, their anguished yells will echo loud
Through all the concave vast. These put to flight,
And held at bay by such a living fire
As though didst see o'er yonder mountain top -
Maintained by legions of the invisible,
(Of which hereafter) Satan yet unmoved,
Upon the circular mount will view his foe
With such a frown as only he can show.
Foaming with passion then will appear
Like the volcano huge when belching forth
In dread eruption poisonous flames and smoke;
And with a gesture contumelious
And in a voice of thunder will demand
To know the meaning of these strange events

In words like these:

“Tell me, who’er thou art,
By what authority, assumed or not,
Hast thou most impudently dared and tried
By force to banish ignominiously
From yonder earth, our rightful heritage,
Myself and legions to these vast domains,
Where also I alone am king and lord;
And where I only have the privilege
And liberty of egress, and, know though,
Of ingress too. Usurper, as thou art,
I now demand to know what do’st thou here?
And who the intended victim, or the slave
Or slaves, perchance, of those foul fetters are?”

“To these proud words the angel will reply,
In voice which like archangel trumpet sound
Will echo and reverberate through all
The distant caverns of th’ abyss of the night: -
‘Satan! False deity! ‘Tis the decree
Of heaven gone forth from all eternity!
Thy time has come! Thy power is now cut off!
Thy head is bruised! Thy ruling is no more!
I am th’ appointed messenger of wrath,
And with these fetters I shall bind thee fast!
By heaven appointed, I am here this day
To execute the high behest of Him
Who is the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.’

“Thus answered and informed, Satanic rage
No bounds will know. In the fiercest attitude,
And with the blackest language of his tongue, -
Such language as no mortal can command -
Though some, alas! Among the sons of men
Will ever try to imitate the same, -
Will he defy heaven’s messenger to arms.

“The angel the advancing with the chain,
And conscious of his strength, with mighty arm
Will grasp the dragon, who with outspread wings
Will rush to the affray. Such conflict now
Will hell behold that naught of figure here,
Or semblance to thy mind can I convey:
Invulnerable one, and confident

Of victory, in righteous cause engaged,
Well knowing his commission and his power,
Illimitably granted and bestowed
By heaven's high King; the other also sure
Of conqu'ring thus in single combat matched
(For Satan yet in inherits wondrous power)
And worked to highest pitch of madness dire,
At thought of liberty to him denied,
At sight of manacles brought there to bind
Himself as captive in a dungeon cast, -
The two great combatants will then engage,
While heaven and hell look on in dread suspense!

Closing in dread embrace with the sudden force
Each will his utmost do to overcome;
With such a crash they'll meet, as if on earth
The fight could be her scared inhabitants
Would stand aghast, and in their fear conclude
That some great comet in its erring course
Had struck their planet midway 'twixt the poles.
Satan, whose tongue into a thousand darts
Will be converted, tipped with venomous fires
And barbed with scorpion stings of deadly sort,
In vain will try each art of devilish war.
Back driven oft, as oft returning fierce
Unto the charge, the prince of fiends awhile
Will seem as equal to his radiant foe.
The contest o'er full many a league of black
Tartarean rocks, and hills, and vales will rage;
The wolves of hell at many a cavern's mouth
Will show themselves with grinning, howling snarl;
But back affrighted to their inmost dens,
Pursued by lightning's fork, quick will they fly.

At length grown desp'rate at his failing strength,
And bellowing loud as many earthquake's roar,
The dragon to the last attack will come.
Long will they struggle, grapple, writhe and heave,
And fall at last firm locked in limb and wing;
But uppermost and disentangled quick
The mighty one will kneel upon the fiend,
Who panting, struggling, plunging, cursing, there
Will fettered be. With dextrous move and sure,
Th' avenger 'neath the monster's scaly wings
And round his massive neck, and o'er his limbs

In circling twists and folds, will pass the chain,
And join it close with many a rivet strong,
Securing firm in helpless wrath and rage
The boastful ruler of the earth and air.
Him leaving there, the conqueror upborne
On wings unharmed will wind the pond'rous links,
In strength full many a rattling fathom long,
Thrice round a spiral staple through the rock,
By powers of thunder driven, secure the whole.

 This task accomplished, naught will now remain
But to pronounce the prostrate captive's doom, -
The term which he in penal chains must writhe
In hell's confinement. Hovering o'er the spot
Where like a huge leviathan in pain
The fiend will lie, the angel in a voice
Loud as the trump of God, and echoing round
The furthest walls of night, will thus proclaim
The sentence, in most solemn weight of words:
"Satan! Thou sire of sin and death and woe!
Thou god of anarchy – founder of evil!
Though traverser of the all that's pure and good,
Arch-enemy of God and man, attend
Unto thy doom, and to the just decree
Which now, commissioned, I must here pronounce!
Deceiver of the nations! Hear my words!
A thousand years, as mortals count the same,
In this infernal dungeon thou art bound,
With all thy hosts and chosen progeny!
'Tis the command of Him who rules sole King!
Whose captive now thou art, and in whose hands
Thy destiny is held for everyone!
To thee or thine, through yonder massive gates
'Twill not permitted be henceforth to pass
Until those years on earth have run their course;
For this key shall I so fast secure
Their folds that all the engineering of hell
Will not avail their bolts and bars to burst!
Satan! When this thy term of punishment
Is ended, thou wilt have a short reprieve;
And loosed awhile will be thy fetters here.
By the permission of th' Inscrutable
Thou wilt go forth with the vengeance in thy heart,
To gather all the evil of the nations,
And to deceive them with thy bitter tongue
Will be thy purpose. Havoc though wilt make,

And in thy exultation thou wilt think
Once more to wage a war against the high heaven!
But, listen now to these my parting words,
And know I speak with heaven's authority:
Thy respite will be short! A sudden end
Will come upon the thy machinations vile.
Then thou with all thy multiplied designs,
And all thy multitude of rebel hosts,
With everything that's evil, false and base,
Shall be together swept into the depths
Of all the deeps profound, of outer darkness. o
Deeper, still deeper, till thy influence,
And all thy power, without the slightest hope,
Is lost in blank annihilation's shadows,
Unto the ages of ages! Ah!
For ever and for ever thou wilt sink
Before the power of justice, whose demands
Are righteous and whose sentences are just.
Satan! I go! Remember thou my words!"

When these are ended Tartarus will run mad!
Could all the rav'nous beasts of every clime,
Of every forest and of every tribe
On earth, be close assembled in one place,
And each forth its own particular note
To swell a general chorus, 'twould be naught
To that which through the Stygian vaults will ring
When these most pregnant and most awful words
Have fallen from the mighty angel's lips.
Revenge incapable, -malice restrained, -
Hate shorn of power will lift their voices up
And with most hideous yells will greet the speech:
But on the returning wing of speedy flight
Unto hell's gates the minister will fly;
The portals passed and the important key
Produced, the mighty folds adamant
Will close with noise reverberating round,
And through th' infernal hollows, caves, and hills,
Will make the very devils quake with fear!
The bolts secured, and the seals applied,
The angel then, swift as a ray of light
From rising sun, will to his place return,
Where all the host of heaven will combine
In Alleluia grand, to welcome him
Who had achieved this great and wonderous work.

V

THE RESULT

Mortal! What thinkest thou will follow on the earth?
The hellish pest cast out, and all the influence,
So baleful and so horrible, destroyed:
What thinkest thou will be the great result?
O, glorious day! O, day by prophet, sage,
And poet sung, predicted, and portrayed!
A time long looked for by the sons of God.
Then will the earth be blessed with holy joy;
Then will she reap the fruits of perfect peace.
 Hast thou e'er rambled 'midst the beauteous scenes
Of pastoral peacefulness and rural life
On summer's Sabbath morn, and with desires
Of peace anticipated and of joy
And of every pure delight? All clear and bright
The glorious sun shone in a cloudless sky,
Whose radiant sheen lay glimmering on the earth,
Benevolent, and smiling; while thy path
Led on through all the loveliest groves and dells,
And winding glades where nature's incense pure
Was wafted thick upon the balmy air.
The glittering leaves and feathery branches formed
A canopy, close woven, o'er thy head,
Where glinting sunbeams like to bars of gold
Came struggling through the whole. The nectar'd flowers
Of every hue, in rich abundance strewn,
Rejoiced the working bees, whose lively hum,
Commingled with the briskly warbled notes
Of joyous birds on every bush and spray,
Produced a chorus of rich harmony
Which thrilled thy soul with every pure delight.
Then o'er the hill, or by the limpid brook,
Where graceful willows bowed their sleepy heads,
And flashed the silvery shimmering from their leaves;
Or on the lane with bordering hedgerows lined,
Fragrant of hawthorn, or the wild rose bloom
In lusciousness. Then through the grassy mead,
Where flocks of sheep and herds of cattle fed
On richest herbage, bending 'neath the weight

Of pearly dewdrops in profusion strewn,
All sparkling in the dancing rays of morn,
Thou walkest on in meditation deep.
No breath disturbed the calm and quiet scene,
Save where the gentle zephyr lightly tripped
With nimble foot upon the ripening corn,
Which scarcely waved or bowed its graceful head.

 Anon, the sound of distant village bells
Boomed sweetly on the air in holy chimes,
And answered quick from neighbouring tower and spire,
Inviting multitudes to haste away
Unto the worship and the praise of God—
Enhanced the pure delight which thou didst feel.

 The varied landscape to thine eye appeared
As bathed in Heaven's serene and holy light.
Each tree, each feathered songster, and each flower,
Each blade of grass, each rippling rill and brook,
Whose babbling music murmured in thine ears;
The hamlets in the peaceful distance seen,
Close nestling in the shade of friendly trees :
The valleys, and the undulating hills
O'ertopped with smiling woods of scented pines;
The animals, domesticate and wild—
Nay, e'en the earth itself and all its life
With sacred influence seemed compassed round.
And all seemed conscious of the blessed day.
Abashed, the powers of evil for a time
Had fled the light—had shrunk from
Thus it appeared unto thy willing mind.

 What didst thou feel? Oft pausing in thy course,
That each enraptured sense might take its ill
Of holy pleasures; round thine heart did glow
Such fires of love and gratitude and joy
That thou wert e'en compelled to lift thy voice
In praise to God: and this spontaneous flight
Of spirit breathing is the certain sign off the
Scene. of future bliss. Earth seemed no longer earth,
For at the time, and in the circumstance
Thou hadst a taste of what will ever be
The heritage of all the chosen ones.
All worldly cares, all sorrows, pains and strifes,
Where banished for the moment from thy mind,
And far removed from e'en thy memory.
Thy spirit soared to marvellous heights of bliss,

Thy listening soul drank in the rapt'rous strains,
As thou didst hear the symphonies of heaven.
Thou hast experienced this, - hast seen and heard,
Enjoyed, partaken of these pure delights!
'Twas just a glimpse, a very feeble type,
A mere resemblance, and similitude
Most dimly seen, - a taste in small degree
Of that bright cup of joys which will be poured
On every kindred, tribe and tongue of earth
When the Deliverer claims them for His own.
Relieved of sin, procuratorial,
And every evil hellish hate begot,
And rained upon with blessings from the skies,
The earth will bud and blossom as the rose.
A mighty anthem, one harmonious song
Of praise from every nation under heaven
Wil echo through the vast celestial arch,
And fall in cadence round the throne of God.
Nature rejoicing then will lift her head
And pour abundance forth on every hand.
Her voice will mingle with the voice of man
In sweetest notes of joy and thankful praise.
The barren wastes will yield a hundredfold,
And purity will spring on every hand.
Each ravenous beast will lose its appetite
For blood, and every unclean bird of prey
Will then a harmless songster, pure, become.
Then righteousness, with all harmonious peace,
With love and truth unmitigated; joy
All hearts uplifting, all divinely blest
Will dwell in every land.

The earth restored.
Prolific then will yield her varied fruits.
Increased and multiplied will be her kinds;
Increased and multiplied will be her stores.
No dread diseases of contagious kind,
The offspring of neglected Nature's laws,
Will rack the frame of renovated man,
Or take him to an all too early tomb.
Then godliness in every land will thrive
And ever bloom to fill the gladdened earth.
When men will learn the art of war no more,
Nor nations thirst for neighbouring nations' blood.
The cannon's dreadful roar will then be hushed,

While swords and spears no more will see the light;
For the fierce passions of the human breast
Will be consigned to the abyss below.
Then man no more will feel life's bitter woes
As now he feels them, destitute of cure;
For art and science, commerce, trade and laws
Will flourish unmolested in the lands,
And e'en the voice of blind contumacy
Will then be stilled in general harmony.
"Then every grade of Christians will agree,
And of their bick'rings and their strife grow tired.
In unity, together they will walk;
While, looking back, they will be horrified,
And will, in ashes and in sackcloth clothed,
Repent with sore repentance and remorse
At the dread knowledge forced upon them now
Of former fightings and divisions; all
Begotten of the devil's subtle power.
Then pride in every shape will be laid low,
And foul ambition with its monstrous pomp
And arrogance and greed, will bow the head;
While sweet humility instead will grow,
And o'er the whole Contentment will preside.
The Lord's own people who have slighted beer
Despised, obscured, and into corners thrust
And hated by the gabbling multitude,
Will then in triumph with their Master reign
On earth throughout the great Sabbath rest.
As one great family united firm
In Christian bonds, mankind will then delight
To cultivate the sciences and arts
Of lofty nature, which will then be raised
Unto perfection's height.

Ah! man of earth,
Thy race e'en now great wonders have achieved;
But when the keys of knowledge, all yet hid,
Of transcendental laws are given to man,
To open out the adamantine gates
Of secret forces, then the sciences
Will blaze abroad in one refulgent day.
'Tis little that is known. In embryo
The mind of man remains, though struggling oft
And labouring, in company with oil
Of midnight lamp, in order to obtain

The wisdom coveted. But then twill come
Spontaneously. No harsh or jarring sound,
No note of discord, no obstructive weight
Vill then impede the progress of the mind.
One principle will animate the whole, -
Pure love to God and man; and this will move.
As 'twere, the mainspring in each human heart.

 Methought, abrupt, the angel ended here,
And in suspense I stood. His posture changed;
The aspect of his countenance grew stern.
With flashing eyes directed t'wards the gulf,
And in an attitude most terrible
He stood, as though preparing for a foe.
His flaming sabre high above his head
His golden wings Swept through the sombre air.
Were quiv'ring and outspreading all their folds.
At length, advancing to the rocky verge,
And piercing with an eagle's eye the gloom
A moment, then on mighty pinions swift
He swept the gulf as if in eager chase
Of some retreating foe who had advanced
With ill intent to our locality.
But quickly he returned. With graceful wheel
And evolution bold, he reached the spot
Where I, with anxious thoughts, expectant stood.
Folding his wings, and sheathing up his sword,
He thus, with looks of love, his speech resumed:

 “Mortal! my words have chiefly been of things
In future yet to be; of Satan bound,
And of a glorious era yet to dawn
Upon the earth, at God's appointed time.
That time yet tarries, but 'twill surely come,
And ushered in 'twill be with judgments dire,
And fierce and fiery wrath which will descend,
Not on the devils only, but on all
The sons of men who hate the gospel's light.
Discriminating, searching, sifting power
Will winnow every land, and men will mourn,
As mourners only mourn when they have lost
That which was the most precious thing in life,
But now departed, hidden from their view.
Some past events have, in a measure slight,
Been also touched upon, for benefit,

And for th' instruction of thy willing mind.
But now the present must be all our theme, -
The present time, the circumstance and place
Must be the subject of our strict attention.
Satan yet roams, yet waves his banner high,
Yet walks the earth, and rules the powers of air. -
Sending his legions the wide world around:
Still makes headquarters of this horrid place.
And demonstration ocular shalt thou have
Of his existence, and thine ears shall hear
The thunderings of his voice. Be not afraid,
For naught of harm shall unto thee approach.
The glorious sun ne'er looks with smiling face
Upon this dismal scene. No cheering ray
Lights up this region of perpetual gloom!
It is a land of blasted name and nature!
'Tis undiscovered, and will so remain
Until the day when God restores the earth
And purifies with fire this horrid place!

“Thy visit here is for a wise intent;
But knowledge geographic of the place
Will not be now imparted to thy mind.
I saw thy wand'rings in the dreary plain;
I heard thy cries, and signal for thee made
When thou wert in the trammels of despair.

“There is a spot amid these mountain heights
Where Satan has his seat: a castle strong,
And of dimensions huge, planned in the rocks.
Together there soon will we both ascend,
And safe shall I conduct thee. 'Tis a place
Well known to me in all its hidden vaults.
A council there is now about to sit,
With Satan at its head. To note his speech,
To listen to his wily plans divulged,
That I may true report the same in
Heaven For guidance and instruction to the whole
Of those who have the guardian angel's power
Here am I sent. Invisible at will,
At will appearing in most dreaded form

Unto the fallen hosts, I vantage have,
And power above the reach of Satan's arm.

"That sudden move, which thou hast just observed.
 Of warlike nature, which by me was made,
 Was in the scope of that capacity.
 A vagrant troop of Satan's rebel chiefs Approached our standing place with bad intent:
 A multitude of creatures similar
 Have now been called from every land on earth
 By signals such as thou canst never know.
 Or see, or hear, unto the conference.
 One legion hurried swiftly o'er thy head
 As through the desert thou didst wander lone.
 That legion, gathered from those favoured lands
 Which men call Christian, European chief,
 Straight fled at once unto the common place
 Of meeting, but were not permitted there
 With base impunity to take their place.
 Though yet at liberty to prey on man, -
 To use his utmost to re-mould the earth,
 Satan oft feels the dread Avenger's arm, -
 The foretaste of his final punishment;
 That fiery cloud of fearful shape and flame
 Which rolled across the heavens and lit thy path,
 Pursued their wingings to the castled cave,
 And with a shower of seething thunderbolts
 Dispersed them far and wide. The surging storm
 Then followed close upon their lingering,
 And drave them quick through many a yawning gulf,
 Where cries of pain, with curses deep and dire
 Broke from their lips, as thou wert witness to.
 Such power have I, imparted by the King
 Of Kings Omnipotent, enthroned above,
 To scourge the fiend in this his spacious hold;
 But to prevent his council is not mine.
 Upwinding now through many a rocky gorge
 On stealthy wing, to the attractive point,
 The scattered legions wend their silent way;
 And soon will we, though unperceived, withal,
 Take up our station in their meeting place.
 Prepare thyself, O mortal, for a flight
 Into the regions of the middle air."

Methought the angel now with gentle force
 Possessed my hand; then with a mystic move
 And sudden, did invest my mortal frame
 With wondrous powers and strange capacities.
 I, buoyant as the light and feathery down,

Astonished, rose at once into the air,
Along with the bright offspring of the skies,
Traversing swift the murky atmosphere,
Methought we scaled the huge o'erhanging cliffs
And passed full well o'er many a rocky gorge,
Skimming the dizzy heights, the peaks and crags,
In quick succession, upward rising still.
At length near to the utmost top we came,
And halted in our course close by the spot
Of direful import – Satan's chosen seat.
Upon a table land of arid soil,
Hemmed in triangular with massive rocks,
The topmost heights of all the mighty chain,
Did we alight; while preparations sure
And soon completed did the angel make,
Imparting needful lessons to my mind.

And now I saw at one extremity
Of the flat space a spacious opening,
The entrance to an avenue, deep cut
Into the rocks which formed on either side
A black gigantic wall of height immense,
The adamant being cleaved unto the top.
This entered, and its windings followed close,
Descending at each step, we quickly came
Into an inner court or vestibule
Of spacious bounds, guarded on every side
With perpendicular cliffs of darkest hue.
The gloom was here lit up by sullen fires
Of blood red glare which issued from the sides,
The crevices, and loopholed apertures
Of two enormous towers, shaped in the rocks,
And serving there as hideous ornaments
Unto a portico, arched o'er with flames
Of bristling nature, jets, and fiery tongues, -
A grim device in honour of th' event;
Who paced their bounds with monstrous pomp and show.
The last of all the scattered, motley host,
The stragglers of the hell-born multitude
Were entering there as we, unseen, arrived;
But there we entered not. The powers of heaven
Anticipate the devil's cunning craft.
Uprising safe unto the middle height
Of castellated granite, carved and hewn,
A niche was entered, and a secret door
Unlocked by secret key admitted us;

And in a vaulted ante-chamber there
I these received from my companion's lips:
 "Mortal! so far have I conducted thee
That thou may'st hear the voice and see the form
Of him who is the deadliest foe of man.
Ask not why such things are, nor entertain
A doubt of thy Creator's righteous laws.
The very doubt is sin. Each man is free
To choose the Saviour's or the devil's yoke.
Though sin's black virus running through thy race,
Hereditary passed from sire to sou,
First breathed by Satan on the human soul,
Renders man's nature but a salient point
Of weakness and corruption for th' attacks
Of force or guile with which he is assailed.
But while probationary on the earth
Man runs the little circuit of his life,
Help, ever near, is ready at his call.

 "But multitudes among thy puny race
Would fain discover something in the laws
Of God, which inconsistent proves the same
With inf'nite justice, truth, and righteousness.
Deep mysteries do they attempt to fathom;
And mysteries which angels understand
But little of, nor can *they* ever learn.
How then shall man, a creature of the earth,
Whose mind is shattered like a broken gem –
How then shall he find out the ways of God?
As well might thou attempt to teach the worm
That crawls beneath thy feet the useful arts
And sciences in which thy race excel, -
Such distance lies between the God of heaven,
And man, the frail existent of an hour
Nay, infinite, immeasurable heights
Exalt the Maker o'er His greater works.
«In God's revealing will man has the light
To guide his steps through every slippery way.
No fault of heaven prevents his happiness;
But disobedience is the fruitful source
Of present misery and future woe, -
The bane and curse of his most precious life,
Precious, I say, and once again repeat,
Precious, because it is the gift of God
Eternally to all who do His will.

“Think not, O man, that inconvenience
Attends my visit to this horrid place.
Such things by heaven's exalted company
Are never felt. Our happiness consists
In doing duty at the word of God;
In executing all his great designs;
In building up the Saviour's glorious throne,
And in existing 'neath His smiles of love.”

VI

ANGEL'S WORDS

Now in my dream methought my spirit guide
With gentle movement took my willing hand,
While lovingly he drew me to his side;
And from his touch there thrilled through all my fame
Most beautiful emotions, and degrees
Of undulating feeling, rapturous
And elevating; as if all the cause
Or causes of sublimest happiness
Were concentrated, and o'er-arched my soul,
While all my inner being was with joy
Ineffably imbued. Benevolence
Of highest type seemed now predominant.
Bliss inexpressible, while all the charms
Of loveliest music, holy and divine,
Seemed but a part of my enchanted self.
And in my rapture, now, I felt impelled
To open out my lips in utterance
Of words which seemed to rise spontaneous,
And to address the being at my side,
Who stood as though in meditation deep
And all absorbed in holy contemplation,
I thus in stammering numbers uttered these:

 "Celestial messenger! May I presume
With deferential homage to enquire
Of thee, who hast with such beneficence
Conducted me and counselled me, withal,
Through all the mazes of my journeyings,
Why now I feel these rapturous delights,
Which seem to change my being, and indeed
T' assimilate my nature with thine own?
Tell me, O tell me why this thing should be;
And why in this most dark and dreary place
I, a poor human, should become as one
Who near approaches unto the divine?"

 And thus most gushingly, and in degree
Vehemently, I uttered this my speech;
To which my bright companion thus replied:

 "Mortal! I chide thee not for these thy words;

They are the outcome of an influence
Which overshadows thee; - an influence
Which if thou passive wilt remain within
The power thereof, will raise thy nature high
Above the sordid things of earthly life,
And will impart unto thine inner self
A modicum of heaven. The more the taste
And touch of heavenly things is thy desire,
With purity of heart, the more thou wilt
Of heavenly things partake, and will become
A part of God's great whole of holiness,
Wherein lies all the happiness of man.
T'aspire unto the highest standard now
Of righteousness, in all humility,
Should be thy aim. Nor grovel in the mire
Of selfish wallowings wherein is sloth,
And all unclean desires of doubtful birth,
Where creatures dwell of questioned parentage,
In multiplied degrees. Leave these behind;
For while upon the earth, and doing there,
Among his fellow men, his duty true,
And in consistent form, whate'er may be
His calling, or his sphere of usefulness,
Man still may soar on high attaining wings
Unto a height of virtue, purity
Of mind, with e'en a possibility
Of spotlessness which brings him near
The borders of a heaven upon the earth.

“Darkness and light are not so far removed

But that the light may suddenly illumine
The thickest night, and cheer the lonely way
Of any poor desponding traveller,
As on the earth he plods his doubtful pace.
Dross and alloy are separated quick
From gold of purest type by means
And known to be infallible withal.
Evil and good are in proximity employed,
So close sometimes, that e'en a little film
Is the partition from behind whose shade
Good out of evil comes. And good will yet
Absorb the whole of evil's influence;
For good will be the universal force.

“All life is in the open gates of death,

But death is life if with the Presence blest.
Trouble and sorrow are the common lot

Which human nature in its present state
Must bear with patience and with will resigned,
But trouble oft is weakness of the mind, -
The intellect o'erburdened and o'ercast
With consequence of sin in varied shapes.

“All wickedness is imbecility;
But wickedness deliberately done,
And practised with a relish for the same,
With glorying and boastfulness, withal,
Ah! a madness of the soul Is madness.
Which will reduce the victim to a state
Of inability to e'en discern
The evil from the good. The consequence
And the result will be a fearful end.
The perpetrator and the circle where
His influence has been distributed
(For evil has its influence) will sink,
To lower depths descending, heaping on
The ballast of acquired depravity
Until destruction's darkest pit is reached,
Therein to flounder, ever, in the mire.

“Heaven and hell are not so far apart;
At present they are mingled and combined.
The universe is heaven, and it is hell,
The bottomless, the topless, and the boundless.
Here, in this narrow space, is heavenly light,
And heavenly influence. There, 'neath our feet,
Is hell, and hell's accursed company!
This will not ever last. Eventually,
In God's own time the separation comes
Ah, mortal! Some among thy wayward race,
Who walk abroad as teachers of the rest,
Proclaim aloud from rostrums far and near
The pit of fiery-brimstone, bottomless;
And preach the horrors of a superstition
Born of the *letter* taken literal,
And giving this authority, undue,
Above the truer *spirit* of the same.
They shadow forth that the great God of love
Is but a monster who would take delight
In torturing His creatures ever, ever;
Without a ray of hope or spark of mercy.
Ah! This can never be. The very thought
Is blasphemy! The Father willeth not

The everlasting cursings and despair,
The everlasting agony of those
Whom He created. Immortality
On evil never will be thus conferred.
Evil hath not an immortality!
Good only has it. God, the great All Father,
Permits not sin to all eternity.
This cannot be. It will not follow, then,
That the All Good, conforming to His nature,
Will bring, create, a vast majority
Of His own creatures into life and being
For the sole purpose of inevitable
Tormentings and despair! And this for ever!
Perish the thought! 'Banished but not expelled!'

“Heaven is progressiveness in all that's good, -
In all that tends to love, and light, and truth, -
In all that's pure and holy. Hell is night
Perpetual, of still increasing darkness!
Heaven is ever increasing brightness. Light
Unto the endless ages of the ages!
Eternity! Eternity! The cycle
Of God's existence is from everlasting,
And will remain for ever. Lucifer,
With all his influence and principle,
Will be for ever banished and expelled
Into the outer darkness, with the whole
Of that which can create, or e'en maintain
Of good from evil will continue. Ah!
For ever through the bottomless, the topless,
The boundless, which is but the universe!
Evil, as such, will sink for evermore!
Good will predominate, and be absorbed
Into the light and nature which proclaim
I am the All: I am the Evermore!
Whose is the only immortality,
And whose the gifture of eternal life!"

The angel ceased. His words to me were said.
But now a change came o'er his attitude,
As of the consciousness of wondrous power.
A most mysterious light shone from above,
And glimmered through the chamber where we stood.
It was as though the shimmering of morn
High o'er the top of some far distant hill,

When roseate heralds wait upon the sun;
Or as the golden sheen which on the earth
Is witnessed only in a clime remote,
And seldom visited. Or as the glow
Which summer's glorious sunset oft bestows
Upon the evensong" so beautiful
Of some cathedral choir, chaste in design,
Where coloured windows, glinting with the same,
Reflect the light o'er transept, aisle, and nave,
Through which resounds the evening hymn of peace,
And makes the whole a counterpart of heaven.
Thus, God is light. Within this hallowed spot,
For hallowed now it was whate'er the place,
The Holy Presence, manifestly felt,
Surrounded, and o'ershadowed all the scene.
To my bewildered mind so strange appeared
The situation, that my burning soul
Seemed conscious of a strange anomaly.
Here are the confines and the breath of heaven,
So positive, in such reality,
That all my faculties drank in the same;
There, in my hearing, is the awful roar
Of hell, and hellish agents in dispute,
In boastings, and in declamations dread,
Against the Author-Giver of all good.

My bright companion now addressed me thus:
"Mortal! this is the place and this the time
For adoration! On thy bended knees,
And in recumbent form or attitude,
Remember thou *this* is the gate of heaven.
No matter where thou art, the universe
Is but the gate of heaven. The universe
Beneficence Is God's own dwelling-place.
Is shadowed forth in all His glorious works;
And naught will ever harm the righteous man.
For God is love, and God is truth and light, -
The All, the only One, the Evermore!"

While kneeling now in posture reverent,
And with a feeling of profoundest awe,
With admiration mingled, I became
Most fully conscious of mysterious strains
Of holy music all subdued and low,
Like memories of some departed dream,

Or as the grandest organ's dolce notes.
Entranced, I listened to the blended sounds
Of harmony and discord. Harmony
Above me, - discord of the direst kind
Below, where all the hellish hosts combined
To spoil the blessed harmonies of heaven.

And now with nervous gaze upturned I saw
The being at my side with spreading wings
O'ershadowing and covering his face;
While holding still my hand he thus declaimed
In solemn voice, and tones not as of earth: -

“Most high and mighty! Blessed be Thy name!
O holy, holy Lord! Jehovah! God!
Omnipotent! Sustainer of all life!
Whose power supreme upholds the universe,
And the stupendous garniture thereof!
Great God of heaven! Almighty King of kings!
The nations of this lower world are Thine;
Thine empire knows no bounds. Enthroned above,
All living creatures in Thy presence wait.
In Thee they live; they die at Thy command!
With Thee are all life's issues, mighty One!
O righteous God! 'Tis vast eternity
Which is Thine own unbounded dwelling-place!”
Parent of good! Most righteous are Thy ways,
And just art Thou in all Thy varied works.
The pillars of the world, O Lord, are thine,
Upheld and strengthened by Thy power supreme!
The rivers, islands, and the continents,
The moving seas, and all the life thereof,
Are holden in the hollow of Thine hand:
And the huge mountains Thou dost count but dust.
The pond'rous globes which swing in boundless space,
With all the varied constellations there,
Are in Thy balance but as simple grains.
Thine hand withholden but a moment's space
Would see the wreck and ruin of the whole!
Omniscient! Ah! 'Tis Thine all-seeing eye
Which penetrates with ever searching power
The great designings and accomplishments
Of the minutest creatures and creations,
In domains of nature where the eye
Of man is blind. And through creation's bounds
Thou dost behold the vast machinery,

All guided by Thy hand mysterious!

“O Omnipresent God! Soul of the whole!
Pulsation of all life! We live in Thee!
Father! O Father, God of light and love!
We praise Thee, laud Thee, magnify Thy name!
Omnipotent! Omniscient! Omnipresent!
We now adore, we worship, glorify
Thy holy name for ever-evermore!”

The adoration ended. Yet the strange
Emotions which enthralled my very nature
Were in intensity increased, and raised
To more exalted heights of joy and bliss.
Ah! what a rapture, what a mighty fight
Of spirit movement now inflated me!
The glimmering of the mysterious light
Which erst while shone about the lonely place,
Now gradually resolved itself anew
Into a brilliant and a dazzling flame,
Illumining the space with rays serene;
With sparklings and with tintings which no power
Of rainbow variations could produce;
Despite the trace of many fingered art
Which sometimes gladdens all the minds of men
Who are susceptible unto the force
Of beautiful emotions.

While I knelt,
And while the angel's voice was lifted up
In praise and adoration, gradually
The dulcet notes of heavenly music rose
Into a flood of harmony divine!
Filling the place, and swelling high above
The horrid roar below, and for the time
Still louder growing in the grandest strains,
Until naught else was heard. o, blessed chords!
To live for ever thus in rapture pure
Seemed now the yearnings of my inner soul.

The music of the earth, of sacred sort,
In anthems, and in oratorios,
With swelling choruses of master minds
Begotten, and presented to the race,
Concerted well in fully balanced power,
Will elevate man's very nature, when
He listens to the body of a sound

From many voices all in harmony;
But this, O this! 'twas the celestial choir;
Invisible, but in attendance there!

But ah! it died in cadences away:
As did the glorious and mysterious light
Pale and decrease, and from my vision fade.
The light and music seemed but for the time
Attendant on – auxiliary unto
The blessed words which fell upon my ears.
The angel then resumed his former mien,
And, turning, bid me rise.
The time was come. The blessedness is past.
The visions change. Earth is no longer earth.
Departed now Is heaven, and all its holy influence.

A metamorphosis, a sudden change
Came o'er the figure of my spirit guide.
A phosphorescent light seemed now to glow,
And flicker round his form, - eventually
To leave but just a glimpse in glinting lines
Of his majestic whole: when these to me,
In solemn and mysterious voice he said: -
“Mortal! my words are now unto thee uttered!
Cherish them in thy inner mind of minds;
And let them burn into thy heart of hearts,
And ever inundate thy conscious soul!

Now pass we straight into the inner court,
Where the black multitude in council sit.
Fear not, for I am here invisible,
And in disguise shall I envelop thee.”

Thus ended all the pure and blessed words
Which I had heard with wonder and with awe
Proceed from that mysterious being's lips.

VII

SATAN'S COUNCIL CHAMBER

A change came o'er the pregnant mystery,
As of the half awaking from a dream,
When sleepers stirring in the early morn
With vivid recollections, hand to head,
Of something they would like to dream again, -
To finish some bright vision but begun,
Yet broken off by noises from without
Of busy life – early in worldly work.

My guardian angel now in altered form
Conducted me through mazes dark and drear,
My thoughts the while in burning numbers glowing,
Disguise and silence being now the rule.
At length we came unto a secret door
Or entrance, after windings far and rude;
Through this we issued, bodily and bold,
Upon a rocky platform high upraised, -
When, O ye horrors, what a sight was there!

A wide extended amphitheatre
In hideous grandeur burst upon our view.
In terraced tiers the horrid myriads there
Were in confusion and disordered form,
In shadowy gloom revealed. Low at our feet
And on each side, and sweeping far in front,
In classes, fighting, snarling, blustering,
For places suitable to each capacity.

The situation and the hellish roar
Of voices which no human discord dire
Could e'en approach to, seemed to paralyse,
Confound, and all benumb my very senses.
But my companion, with all sympathy,
Anticipated this my consciousness;
And with the slightest pressure of the hand,
Which never for a moment quitted mine,
Would reassure me.

Thus the monstrous crowd,
Expectant waited for their mighty god!

A ruddy fame forth issuing from the top
Of what appeared a huge truncated cone,
Flashing and belching tongues of hideous fire,
In centre fixed, lit up the dismal scene,
And threw a ghastly glare on all sides round.
The vaulted roof, by many a wide spread arch
On pillared towers of pond'rous style and mould
Supported, was in sickly light discerned,
And dim discovered were the utmost walls.

The awful murmurings of ten thousand tongues,
And thrice ten thousand multiplied again,
In mingled rumblings like the distant sound
Of many waters in their furious course,
Rose from the fiendish congregation vast;
Which now had formed in something like array
Of order and conformity. Here was a cloud
Of huddled blackness, - fiends of darkest hue;
There was a mass of flickering brightness, all
Resplendent in the varied rays of light
Which go to make a falsity of angels, -
Angels of the light. On all sides round
This varied and accursed multitude
Were in position placed, all ready now
To do the homage due unto their chief.

An open archway to the right appeared,
Above the heads of those in highest tiers,
T'wards which the eyes of all the gathered hosts
Were now directed. Flashings in device
Of hell's own fireworks now lit up the scene,
And heralded the coming of the prince;
Who, marshalled by a guard of pompous fiends,
Stepped on the terrace which conducted him
Unto a rocky throne on high upraised.

Here he received the homage of his hosts
In thunderings of voices and in pomp
Of action which can never be described.

The decorations of the prince of fiends -
Or armour may be called, a mockery
In varied form of what he seemed to think
Most suitable to the occasion were: -

Upon his head he wore a monstrous crown
Like to a helmet most of strange device;
While round his copious loins a girdle clasped
With colours multitudinous and bright,
All changeable as the chameleon's coat.

On his tremendous front a breastplate bore
The tracings of the wickedest designs;
While on his arm he wore a puny shield,
Contemptible; and in his stronger hand
He carried a childish toy, like to a sword,
Or the burlesqued resemblance of the same
In despicable form; and on his feet, -
His huge, mis-shapen, multiplying feet,
He wore a sandal - if sandal might be called -
From which there issued jets and bristling flames
Of fiercest nature, burning with the fires
Which served as "footlights" to the horrid scene!

I trembled, for in close proximity
We were unto the autocrat of hell!
So huge his size and so forbidding he,
That my poor nature shrunk with fear and dread
But once again my faithful guide returned
His confidential pressure of the hand,
And thus I was restored to confidence.

Having acknowledged with pomposity
The plaudits of his multitudinous hosts,
Satan, in voice which echoed far and near,
At once addressed the whole infernal crew: -

"Ye principalities! Ye mighty powers!
Ye world rulers! Ye spiritual hosts
Of wickedness in heavenly places found!
Ye mighty princes of the powers of air!
These are your titles, ye illustrious bands!
The first lieutenant of our enemy
Thus designates you, and, I'm sure, ye all
Are worthy of the titles he bestows,
And proud ye ought to be of such distinction!
A-ha! I know ye well deserve the same;
I know ye'll walk in these your destinies
With all the pomp and confidence begot
Of such proud eminence. Stand forth, at once,
Ye heads and chiefs of followings so great,
And answer me by presence and by words -
Are ye yet loyal to your sacred calling?
Are ye yet energetic in your task?"

A surging movement now amongst the mass
Was noticed, and the leaders of the crew
Showed prominent, while voices loud and long
Swore fealty unto their king and lord.

Satan, self-satisfied, continued thus:

“A-ha! I knew I had no traitors here;
Full well I knew of this your loyalty.
Your interest is mine, and mine is yours.

Now listen to the words I have to say:
Once more have ye been summoned to the place

Of earthly meeting, that ye may receive
Instructions needful and advice anew:
For am not I your ruler and your guide,
Your captain and your autocratic head?
Just now have I returned from compassing
The globe with observation's practised eye
(And, as ye know, my eye is practised well).
Each land inhabited by mortal race
Have I with scrutinizing vision swept,
And skimmed the surface of each shifting sea
To note the progress of our conquests there;
To mark o'er what extent our sceptre sways,
How flourishes the empire in our hands,
And how your influence is exercised:
For well ye know that tis our will to rule
Supreme on earth – to drive from thence all trace
Of its Creator, our great enemy
Of hated name!

A-ha! Supremacy!
We covet that. Shall we not have sole rule?
'Tis ours, if but to gain the end desired
No means, or fair or foul, be ever spared.

Vengeance! Revenge! Hate! Malice! Warriors
And conquerors of all the powers of air!
Stand forth, and hear what I have now t' impart,
And be aroused from loathsome lethargy!"

At this the flashing fires in darting tongues,
Forth issuing from the cone burst out anew,
And shot a bristling mass of hissing fire
Up to the vaulted roof, and caused a glare
Which brought the hideousness of all to view
In such a picture as would e'en appal
The stoutest of all hearts. The monstrous horde,
All moving now in attitude and shape
With agitation of a nervous kind,

Expectant, there was vividly revealed,
In all their varied and disgusting forms,
Roaring and bellowing all their approbation.

Satan, continuing, addressed them thus:
“Vengeance! be animated to a pitch
Of highest tension and necessity
When the occasion for your force arrives,
Hate! be inspired to strictest diligence.
Malice! remember what your duty is,
And let your soul be lifted and inspired
With fiery stimulus to work your part.
Revenge! take cognizance, especially,
Of what I say, for thou art needed most,
Most wanted when th’ important time comes round.
For I must tell you of a heavier doom
With which we’re threatened, sentence now being passed,
Of which an intimation I’ve received!
Hear it! The King of heaven has decreed
That at some future, yet no distant time,
Known only to Himself, our glorious bands
Shall be expelled the earth, and that we all
Shall be imprisoned and in fetters bound
With ignominy in the infernal pit;
Debarred thenceforth from roaming at our will
Upon the present scene. Will ye submit,
Without an extra effort on your part
Of desperate resistance? Will ye not
Double and exercise the subtle arts
Of which ye are possessed, and proudly show
A greater and a more unflinching zeal
Against the mandates of your lofty foe?

A hurricane, a perfect hurricane, -
A roar, a bellowing both loud and long
Arose, in answer to this fierce appeal
Of hell’s own chief unto his company.
The very rocks and granite fastnesses,
With all their adamantine stableness,
Appeared to shake and tremble to their fall
At the tremendous outburst, acquiescent, -
Responsive to the questions and demands.
After this tribute paid, thus Lucifer: -
“Though banished we are never yet deprived
Of power and liberty, as this day proves.

Full many a cycle of revolving years
Have we retained the nations of the earth
Within our grasp, and ruled them as our own;
And spoiled the work of our great enemy,
Th' Omnipotent Himself. Shall we then yield
Our fair possessions up at first or last
Without a struggle, such as heaven itself
Beheld when ye, my faithful, brave compeers,

A repetition of the thunderings
Here followed with increasing force and noise,
Accompanied with curses deep and dire
In all the bitter languages of hell!

S A T A N :

“Our time diminishes. We must to work.
Meanwhile let all your powerful arts be used;
Exert your utmost strength to overthrow
The kingdom of the so-called risen Christ.
Access ye have unto the human soul
In every grade and circumstance of life.
Accessories ye have and coadjutors
In humans who are born of devilish birth.
Of us they are, of us they will remain.
They do our work amongst their fellows here
Far better e'en than we ourselves can do.
Encourage them. A-ha! encourage then,
For you will find congeniality –
Fraternity among the whole self-doomed!
"In every age, in every clime we find
These willing tools among the sons of men.
No matter what their birth or parentage,
Mixed up are they with all our brotherhood.
Next unto us they are the outcast race,
All of necessity to be accursed!
No power of heaven or hell can change their fate;
They live, they die together in our arms!
They have no possible alternative.
They rush headlong into destruction's jaws!
They're of the nature animal, and all
Their instincts and desires are sensual.
Carnality's their god, and at this shrine
They worship and they revel day and night!
“Ah! could I offer up a prayer to God,
I would in pity for this abject race!

But prayer to God from me is not expected,
Nor would it be expedient withal.”
At these most awful, yet most pregnant words,
A jeering, sneering, hissing laughter-sound
(If laughter might be called), all taken up
And echoed, and re-echoed o'er again,
Ever increasing in the horrid mirth,
Was most demonstrative, and seemed to be
The highest exultation and delight
Of all the horrid crew. At length uprose,
And forward standing in the front of all,
A monster huge of most forbidding mien:
Sloth was his name. But he was also known
By other appellations suitable
Unto his nature and his occupation.
Silence restored, he thus essayed to speak

“Sire, here I am, and I am all you want.
But trust in me and I will raise your throne,
And set your kingdom far enough on high.
I have the sensuals and all the spawn
Of carnal nondescripts in my own hands.
I'll rock them all to sleep, and in the mire
I'll wash them, and will leave them there to crawl
And wallow like the helpless things they are.
Leave them with me, and I will do your work;
They shall be stepping-stones unto your throne,
And the foundations shall be of the same!
But I am half asleep. Some foul narcotic
Has numbed my feelings – paralysed my tongue,
And I require some rest.”

S A T A N :

“Well done, old *Sloth*! Thou hast well spoken, old
Carnality! Thy very nature has inspired thy words:
Great credit now is due for this exertion,
And for the sentiments thou hast expressed;
And thou shalt have promotion at our hands.
Go, rest thee; really thou hast earned repose.”

At this grim mockery, this devilish farce,
The host of hell on all sides round – above.
Below, where'er the crowds were clustered, - there
The fiendish laughter echoed far and wide,
In merriment most diabolical!

VIII

SATAN'S WORDS

During the wild uproar which some time prevailed
In hell's own mode of mirth and merriment,
Satan, advantage taking of the scene,
His posture changed. More terrible his form
Grew rapidly, until, tow'ring o'er all,
He stood a mighty monster of command.
Forth issuing from his head were forks of fire,
While lambent flames and dartings luminous,
Of Tarturus begot, surrounded him.
His attitude was proudly eminent,
And in a voice of thunder spake he thus,
With gesture of no vacillating mien:

“World-rulers of the darkness! Powers of air!
Ye hosts of wickedness who do your work
In heavenly places! All ye mighty ones
Called principalities, now hear me speak!
Leave off your mirth: attention give to me!
For to address you now in weighty words
Of ordered form, it is my full intent.
High and illustrious! Ye whose greater task
It is to rule the many-minded men
In Europe's nations, chief of all the rest,
Where greater skill and wisdom are required.
And powers of highest art, now hear my words!
A-ha! This Europe will not always be
The chief of all the earth. A greater part
Will sink at last to insignificance.
There is a spot belonging thereunto,
Of greater power and loftier influence.
Which will be dominant high over all.
'Tis Albion! That little lordly isle!
First ye whose duty is to govern there
Would I address. That spot, as well ye know,
Has long been chosen by the crucified
As, on the earth, His rallying place in chief
The principal head-quarters of His hosts.

“It is the centre point from whence proceed

The testimonies, statutes, mandates, laws,
 And gilded promises of heaven's high King!
 "It is the fountain-head which overflows
 The very globe with floods of hated light.
 "There, on that far extended continent,
 That western magnitude, where men are mixed,
 As yet, in every rude chaotic form, -
 There she predominates, and will do so,
 Ever increasing in her power to do;
 Until the blatant languages of earth,
 At present but a jargon all discordant,
 Will merge in one which will absorb the whole.
 "Ha! Conquerors! Ye have a heavy task;
 Heaviest of all my multifarious host.
 Britannia long has vexed us to the core;
 Long has she needed all our choicest arts,
 And our most strict attention has required.
 Her hills and valleys echo with the sound
 Of anthems raised in honour of the deeds
 Of our great enemy, whom mortals take
 As heaven's exalted Christ. Her villages,
 Her towns and cities, bask in God's high favour -
 Bask, did I say, in God's high favour? Ah!
 They think they do; but wait awhile, my braves,
 And do your duty from instructions given;
 The struggle then shall be on equal terms.
 Wherever now her wide-spread language lives
 She tells the story, yet in misty form,
 And muddled, mixed and inarticulate.
 Of boundless love and mercy to the race;
 And raises fanes and temples to the name
 Of Him whom men are pleased to call their God.
 Increase the muddle, multiply the lies
 Which ever issue from the rostrums there;
 Add to the mistiness which all surrounds
 The varied preachments of the gabbling crew.
 "There is a worship of convenience,
 Begot sometimes of ceremonial love,
 Where men are satiate with pomp and show,
 And all the tinsel of a blinding glare;
 Sometimes to nullify a foggy doubt,
 Or to allay a guilty conscience, when
 Some glaring or mischievous sin has scared
 The same unto the borders of remorse,
 Or e'en compunction. Thus they worship God;

And e'en confession make with whining tongue
Unto their fellow-mortals, impudent;
Assuming thus the sole prerogative
Of God Himself!

“A-ha! we leave them thus.
We can afford to laugh at such a farce!
Still hear my words! In Britain there is all
The elements that trouble us. None else
On earth hath such a powerful influence,
To combat which we must be on th' alert.
Amongst the drosses and the tinsel shows
There is the metal true. But thanks to ye,
Shows many a goodly spot and promising,
Where we, above all other worshipped gods,
Are honoured true. Our fanes outnumber far
(If fanes they may be called, or otherwise),
As do our worshippers, those of our foe.

“Your deeds are great, ye guardian gods of Britain!
But greater yet shall your achievements be
A reinforcement shall ye have of power,
And numbers shall be added to your ranks.
Make haste to conquer, govern, and destroy.
Go forth, and let your legions all the land
Encompass, and let every rank and class
Of mortals there be plied with poisoned darts.

“Let all your wiles be exercised anew;
But see that prudence and sagacity
Be watchwords through the length of all your lines.
Let all your snares and stratagems be laid
With reference to these important words.
Let all insidiousness be studied well;
For, now remember, Britain is the place
Where the reality and purpose firm
Of the belief in Christianity,
So called, is stronger than upon the earth
Can anywhere be found. It is abounding!
From monarch to the proletariat,
From throne to cottage ye will find enough
Wherewith to cope. Let all your energies
Be exercised with stern, unflinching zeal.”

Signs of disapprobation here arose, -
Some indistinct, suspicious murmurings
Of wounded pride, or confidence abused,

Among the section of th' assembled host
Who chiefly had the conduct of affairs
In that important portion of the whole
To which the chief alluded. Standing forth
At length, with brazen front and confidence,
With self-importance shown in all his mien,
A towering monster thus addressed his chief,
Who paused to hear the words he had to say:

“Sire! ‘Tis enough that we who rule the isle,
And all the great dependencies thereof,
Subject to thy dictations and commands.
Give unto thee the satisfaction due
From us as servants, anxious aye to serve
In all allegiance, and with loyalty
To do our utmost in a task so great;
But if so be our efforts are considered
In some degree to fall deficient here
Of what is now desired, we wish to know. -
To be informed thereof wherein we fail,
And in and under every circumstance
We will endeavour to arouse ourselves
Anew unto the importance of our task.”

S A T A N :

“Thou chief of all my host, Audacity,
Surnamed the Devil's Own, I hear thy words.
Take no offence, for none is now intended.
I simply wish, as business, to repeat
Injunctions necessary, and replete
With all the purposes and full demands
Of this our council. More is not required;
To ventilate the same is my desire.
Ye chiefs of companies and sections, all
Have homage paid to me. I am your head;
The autocrat of all. But to assume
Sole power to the exclusion of all else
I wish not. In all controversial points
I willingly will listen to the voice
Of congregated wisdom. Hitherto
Our meetings here have been harmonious, -
Unanimous, and ever undisturbed.

“But since events may happen of a kind
Which may surprise and disconcert us all;

And as I have presentiments, withal,
That this will be our final gathering
In the accustomed place, I feel impelled
With most important energy of mind,
T' impart a detail of instructions which
Are most important at the present time."
With these Audacity was satisfied:
While Satan thus resumed his admonitions:

“Infuse self-will and lust into the young,
For 'tis the starting-point which oft is all;
And, at the present there is ample scope
Wherewith to work upon the youthful mind.
This must be educated to a pitch
Of regulated tension which will make
The pliant will most proud and obstinate.

“Where'er the hoary head is dyed with sin.
Encourage sleep and lull the same to rest:
These are your finished work. Awake them not.

“Inflate the rich with pride, and give them all
The high pomposity which makes them feel
As though their riches made them gods o'er men –
But chiefly those who greedily acquire
Their riches from the labours of the poor,
Dishonestly. These are our better tools:
For they will e'en beget the grand result
Which will conduce unto our wily plans.
Aha! These riches are our great delight,
They are the fruitful, all procuring cause
Of greatest consequence in our domains.
But then these mines of wealth, these money hoards,
Are sometimes used to benefit the race;
And in the hands of some they are applied
Unto those purposes which we detest.
Seek well to turn the channels of the same
That they may flow into our exchequer.

“Increase the discontentment of the poor!
Ha! Here ye have a wide and open field,
Pregnant with all the elements of strife
Which would evolve catastrophes, to us
Desirable, of contumaciousness
Begot; and ending in a great revolt
Against all order, decency, and law,

Which 'tis our purpose now to controvert.
This must be done! It is our great desire
That earth should be a chaos, and to make
The length and breadth thereof a battle-field, -
The fighting being for supremacy;
When mind and matter shall be mixed amain,
And men shall be but demons, men of blood,
With natures furious as animals
Which roam and prow! in all the wilds of earth!
Aha, the time is hurrying on apace
In which we hope to see this consummation!

“Be present in the noisy senate house.
Where blatant statesmen talk. Engender strife
And bitterest contention there, in all
The efforts made to promulgate the laws
Of righteousness, of justice, and of truth.
As some would fondly designate the same.

“World rulers! here is opportunity!
Here is the place to gain your victories!
The senate house of Britain has a power
To influence the earth for good or evil.
It is the centre point whence radiate,
In lines innumerable, forces great
Which e'en can sway the destinies of empires,
And agitate the pulses of the world.
For round the globe this magic mightiness
Is ever felt, and ever exercised.
Here then, ye chiefs, exert your utmost skill,
And double all your efforts. Anarchy
Produce, in all its virulent degrees.

“But chiefly those who bear the cross of Christ
Upon their fronts attack. Mark well the point
Of greatest weakness in such Cross-stamped prey;
And mark the choicest mode and fittest time
Wherein ye may succeed. But caution use
In all your wiles of cunning craft and guile.
Ah! caution is the word – remember that.
Success has hitherto your efforts crowned.
Full many a one among their ranks I've seen
Who bear the name, but not the mark of Christ;
Full many a one without a sword or shield;
And some without a helmet or a girdle,

And not a few quite destitute of arms.
Among the well-clad few do they appear
As triumphs of your skill. These have ye stripped
As now I strip myself of mockeries.”

Here Satan, with sardonic impudence,
And with an action diabolical,
Took from his pondrous self the mimicries
Which for the time it pleased him to assume.
First 'twas the girdle representing Truth –
Misrepresented in base mockery;
Next came the breastplate, wickedly o'erwrought;
These were ferociously and fiercely cast
Into the abyss which yawned beneath his throne;
Next came the monstrous sandals, which were thrown
Or whirled on high – dropping eventually
Into the fiery mouthings of the cone.
There for a time they added to the flames.
The helmet next was hurled into the abyss
With rattlings of most ominous noise, below.
The despicable, and the spurious
Designs and imitations of the sword
And of the shield, were toyed with in the hands
Of the proud monster in the face of all
The applauding multitude, who clamorously
Solicited possession of the same.
Conceding the request, they both were cast
Unto the raging wolves of hell, who made
Most awful mockery and ridicule
Of these bright emblems of the Christian creed.

These actions were accompanied by words
Which 'twere not lawful to be chronicled
On this our page; while the wild scene around
The pandemonium was fraught with all
The horrid tumult only to be heard
When such a mass of devils do applaud!

IX

BRITAIN DENOUNCED

Satan now standing in his own true guise,
Bereft of all burlesques .and mockeries.
And conscious of his native dignity.
Resumed his theme of exhortation thus:

“And now my brave and noble followers.
I have but shown you how the work is done.
Close follow up each partial vict'ry gained,
And let your victims naught of respite know;
Attack them singly, and in gathered bands.
At every hour of morning, noon, and night,
Stay not your vig'rous work. Divisions make,
And sow the seeds of discord in their midst.
The spawn of strife and bitter thoughts beget;
And set the ranc'rous, bickering tongue on fire.
Ah! that unruly evil oft has won
The victory for us, when we stood aside
And waited but for the assured result.
The leech of vanity do ye apply
Unto the heart where'er ye find access,
That all humility may be withdrawn;
For mark you, this despised humility
Is the most subtle of our enemies.
"Then let the canker-worm of envious pride
Be introduced instead. But mind the words –
The watchwords – Caution and Sagacity.

“And you, ye spurious angels of the light,
Adorn each pleasant vice with virtue's garb.
And thus present it ever to their view.
Let all the little moths disport themselves
Awhile around the ever-fatal light.
Weave potent charms and spells, and cast your nets
On every hand. of sale ingredients
Mix draughts and potions of untailing strength.
That. drinking, they may drink the dose of death!

“Be present where in consultation met
The higher sort -the leaders of the rest –

Produce fresh schemes to spread the hated light
Of their abounding Christianity.
Frustrate their plans and all their efforts mar,
And cross their purposes at every point.
Let Albion be subdued! Let all her coasts
Be guarded well by watchful sentinels,
Who will report her ever restless work;
And let her watered be in every part
With heaviest showers of black infernal rain
From whose effects may spring all kindred forms
Of anarchy, disloyalty, and all
That go to make a chaos of confusion.
Haste, haste to strike the blow; for rest assured
That in the hands of our Almighty foe
An instrument she'll be against our hosts
Whene'er the last great contest finds us leagued
In dread array against the sons of God;
Unless consummate skill and subtle power
Devise some means, and carries out the same
To bring the island safe within our grasp.
Go forth, and cover like a sweeping flood
That burning object of our hottest hate!"

Satan had now into a foaming rage
Aroused himself, and in the very height
Of towering passion roared and bellowed loud.
His language, and his mass of interjections
Were all inspired of every devilish trait
Which his own nature only could reveal.
These inspirations, and this fearful hate,
Communicated and infused, were shared
By all the horrid horde. Such tumult now
And such a whirlwind of demonian rage
So shook the castle to its very depths,
That my poor human frame did shake and shiver
With fear and apprehension; but again
Restored to confidence as heretofore.

But, hark! What is that faintly whispered sound?
For now above the din there seemed to rise
Some far-off strains of hymning-music sweet.
It was as though in answer to the wrath
Of this Satanic speech – the holiness
Of solemn earnestness, defying all
The baleful and the diabolical

Deliv'ry of this poison-spawn of hate!
I listened with a quivering of nerves:
Fierce raged the horrid tumult. Higher still,
And nearer swelled the philharmonic strains,
Until the very devils seemed to pause
In their abominations. O'er our heads,
Far, far above the castellated rock
It came in cadences, like evening bells
Whose resonance of tones will undulate
Upon the ambient air, awakening
The fondest memories, and pleasantest
Of raptures rising from the past, and part
Of all the better life, while crowding on
And waking up those slumbering delights
Which childhood revels in.

Ah, 'tis the strain Yet indistinctly heard, of a procession,
When children, many-voiced, in unison
Sing lustily, and with a song devout.
Ah! now I catch some ever blessed words –
“Now pray we for our country.” O'er the din
Of devilish uproar which prevailed below
This flood of rolling melody divine
This music of the spheres grew dominant.
Anon, as if from congregation vast,
All clustered in some grand cathedral naves,
Accompanied by the organ's swelling notes,
Arose the blessed words – “Abide with me.”
Next, more subdued, but following on the same,
The Sabbath worship of a village home
At eventide, when families are gathered,
Alone, safe from all worldly care and strife,
In harmony devout and holy, met
For purposes of pure devotion, sing
The evening hymn by Christians all beloved.
With earnestness and understanding, all
The fullness of the spirit breathing, which
Will culminate in all the blessedness
Of Heaven's own harmony.

I was entranced.
The roar of all the devils could not quench
Or overpower the anthemings which rose
Spontaneously, above the awful din; -
Until at length, in varying cadences
They seemed to fall into the distance far.

Ah, then I felt a secret exultation,
God-given, rise unto the troubled surface
Of all my inner mind. I then discerned
That good would dominate o'er evil's power;
That all the hellish influence would be spent, -
Would vanish as an ever-lessening force
Before the glories of a coming day!

Satan, well master of all subtlety,
And choicest arts of self-complacency,
Now gathered up his independent spirit;
And throwing off his fury and his rage,
Did thus, and finally, address his hosts,
Who, at a word, came to the attention point:

“And now, ye multitudes enthusiastic,
Attention pay unto my parting words!
My pleasure is that ye should treasure up
Within your grasping minds and memories
The weighty words, and the instructions wise
Which I have uttered. Details of our plans
Must to the letter be at once wrought out;
And strict obedience to my commands
Shall I expect in every part thereof.

“Since now our council is about to close,
And our deliberative conference
Be brought unto the necessary end.
And since before another meeting here Be authorised,
Some unforeseen events
May come upon the erratic wings of time.
I would impress upon your consciousness
The all-important need of vigilance,
And energetic action t'ward the end
And consummation of our great desires.

“I have but now to offer you my thanks
And my sincere congratulations. All
My sympathies are with you, and my eye
Will ever watch your daring and your skill.

“Though Albion is now the greater source
Of our anxiety, and constant care,
We have a vast expanse of other lands
Which really are our own.

“Frivolity!
And all ye flippant angels of the light!

A fair and goodly heritage have ye.
Still soars the sun on our ascendancy,
Where shine his rays the brightest there we revel;
And 'neath the moon's pale light we hold our feast.
Those lands are our delight. Still heat the blood.
And give the impetus to all desires
Of carnal appetite, and gilded pleasures
Which will intoxicate, and overturn
"The best of all their every good intention.
Yeast up the workings of the human soul,
And let the friv'ulous frothings ever rise
Unto the surface. Let the simple sleep;
Awake them not unto the consciousness
Of any danger near.

 "Supreme we rule
Amongst the millions there. The spacious earth
Presents no choicer fruits unto our view
Than 'mongst those willing humans of our own.
Our conquests there are nearly all complete.
A priesthood have we and a sacrifice,
And immolations daily we receive.

I am the father of the burning lies
Which issue from the ever-ready lips
Of base hypocrisy, whose selfish greed
Plays all into our hands. Well satisfied
Are we with all these multiplied delusions
Created by ourselves to serve our purpose!
We have a heaven there. We are the gods
Worshipped and honoured in a high degree.
A glorious system by ourselves upreared
Does honour to our name at every point –
Tea, systems greet us wheresoe'er we turn.
And lift their towering heads unto the skies,
And pluck the stars of lesser magnitude
Which would eclipse the lustre of their face.

 "Uphold the prestige of our influence,
And pander to their every craving lust;
Shut out the light, and keep the province clear
Of all intruders on our conquered rights.
Remember, that in all communities
There are a few insidious enemies –
A remnant who would sneak into the fold

And spoil the peace of unanimity. –
Keep these in check wherever they are found.
My eyes are gladdened and my ears rejoice
Whene'er with lingering wing I hover o'er
Those wide extended regions of our own.
As angels of the light ye have achieved
The greatest wonders. Ye have set at naught
The boasted laws of the Omnipotent,
And with consummate art have taught mankind
To trample down the same among the dust:
In room thereof, unto their willing hearts
Have ye presented yet another code
More suitable unto their restless minds,
Which ye have moulded to your hearts' desires.
Aha, we have a glorious multitude
Of faithful ones, who at the signal given
Will rally round our standard, and go forth
With us to war against our lofty foe!

“And now I offer you my sympathies,
Congratulations, thanks, and highest praise
For all your noble work.

Remember me!
Remember my injunctions and commands.
Go forth! Nor hesitate to strike the blow;
For hesitation never must be seen
Among your ranks—the word must not be known.
I go to Compass heaven and earth and hell!
I go upon the kingdoms of the world
To gather them unto the final war,
Which will be desperate and decisive.
All The kings of earth will concentrate their power,
And fight like demons for supremacy!
Be ready at the call, for such a day
Ere long will dawn upon the trembling earth
As never in its Tons did occur!”

Satan, in voice of thunder, now exclaimed:

“Come forth! Ye faithful pioneers, come forth
Attend upon my journeyings throughout
The whole of earth's inhabited domains.
Come forth, ye devil spirits all, come forth!”

X

PANDIMONIUM

As these last fearful words of Satan rung
And echoed with reverberating power
Through all the corridors and corners round
The vastness of the rocky meeting place,
All suddenly, the jets and tongues of fire,
The grim illuminations burning low,
Now shot into a mass of fiercest flame.
On all sides round, the glare in blinding power
Increased, and flashed until the burnings seemed
To dance in unison with all the freaks
Of the assembled hosts, whose frantic screams
And yells of devilish applause, inflate
With maddest uproar of a frenzied kind, -
With gestures and contortions, all akin
To their own nature, wicked, lewd, and wild.

Under the increasing light were seen minutely
The terrors of the place, now more distinct
And well defined in all its full extent,
Which now unto my vision was revealed
In all its vastness. Many a furlong there
Now came to view which ne'er before were seen.
The multitude, let loose from all restraint,
Were dancing in the devil's own quadrilles;
The scaly wings and cloven feet were seen
To mingle and disport in every form
Of towering monsters, and of lesser imps,
Well mingled in a great fraternity,
While sparkled all the blazing fires of hell!
The revelry was in conformity
With common usages – a repetition
Of former orgies and foul blasphemies,
Which marked the closing of the conference, -
A festival in honour of the same.

Satan, meanwhile, beheld complacently
The glaring pandemonium, and all
The well permitted antics of his crew;
But waited not for this alone, as now,

Where shone the fires all fiercer and more keen,
And where the flashings and the belchings up
Glared round in all the blue of sulph'rous tints,
Three orifices, dim, but gaping wide,
Appeared to open on the nearest side
Of the tremendous throne where Satan stood.
These orifices gradually grew out,
And soon became a feature in the scene
Distinct, and interesting to the whole
Who eyed the same with all expectant gaze.
The revelry abated, till at last
There seemed a waiting for some fresh event.

And now, as if from preconcerted plan,
“Audacity,” surnamed “the Devil’s Own,”
Stood forth, and in a voice stentorian,
Attention called in flaming words like these:
“Gods of the earth, the heavens, and the air,
Leave off your merriment: collect yourselves,
And bring your orders into decent rank,
Compact in every part thereof, while now
We homage do unto our glorious chief.
Our adoration, while unanimous,
Must be most loyal and sincere withal.
This is our bounden duty. Desuetude
In these our plans must never be allowed.
Or contravention of our holy laws.
Devoirs we owe unto our lord and king,
And we must pay them with profound respect.”

Satan now turned with a benignant smile
(If smile it might be called), and with a move
Of sole authority which he possessed
Did thus address himself unto his chief:
Audacity, I have, as well as you,
A duty or observance in my hands,
A something new unto this conference,
And all its doings previous. I require
Your fair indulgence while I now repeat
The second time, which is conditional,
And in conformity with prior arrangements,
A summons of importance to us all.
Thrice must it be repeated; but the pause
Between the second and the third appeal
Will give the time for any demonstration

Which in your loyalty ye all may deem
An offering due unto your head and chief.”

Satan now lifted up his piercing voice,
And in the most grandiloquent of tones
Made thus his second duty-bound appeal:

“O-ho! Ye faithful pioneers, come forth!
Come forth, ye spirits of the devils, come!
We now go forth to work the potent signs,
And gather, gather, gather to the fight”

At these astounding words the devils paused.
And seemed astonished and bewildered, while
The glimmerings of the mysterious light
Within the triple caverns burnt anew.
Audacity, however, true to name,
Came to the rescue, and at once declaimed.

“Sire! we know not the meaning or the drift
Of all this new departure from the course
Of former councils, but it is enough
That we submit to thy superior wisdom.
Our duty now is but to offer thee
Our meed of adoration and of praise.
And thus our adulations shall have form
And system in a hymn unto thy honour,
Which we have well rehearsed, and which we now
With all devotion offer up to thee!”

Audacity, now standing in the midst
Upon a pedestal high o'er the rest,
Took up the task of leader and conductor;
And this was all the hymning and refrains: -

Chorus of Devils.

We devils all, both great and small,
Do magnify our king;
Glory to thee, a-ha, e-he!
Our off'rings now we bring.

We bring the spoilings of the human race,
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!
We lay them all before thy noble face:

We bless thy name with every devilish grace;
We worship thee with hellish pride of place,
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!

Chorus of Devils.

We devils all, both great and small, &c.

We bless thy name, thou mighty prince of all,
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!
We are thy servants, and we do thy will;
We'll fortify thy citadel, and grill
Thine enemies; we go their blood to spill.
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!

Chorus of Devils.

We devils all, both great and small, &c.

We'll bring the kings of all the earth to thee,
A-ha, O-ho, E-he! Before thy throne they all shall humbly bow;
Thou art the only potentate, and thou
Shalt only have supremacy, and now
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!

Chorus of Devils.

We devils all, both great and small, &c.

Who is the great almighty god but thee!
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!
Thou art the ruler of the earth and sea;
Who else shall dare to think of ruling thee?
To thy great power all else must bow the knee.
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!

Chorus of Devils.

We devils all, both great and small, &c.

Thy proudest foes shall yet be brought to thee,
A-ha, o-ho, E-he!
We'll fight thy battles, and well win the day;
All that oppose thee we will quickly slay,
And at thy feet our triumph we will lay.
A-ha, O-ho, E-he!

Chorus of Devils.

We devils all, both great and small, &c.

Thou art the king and lord of all the world,
A-ha, o-ho, E-he!
Thou art the prince of everlasting fame;
Thine is the power, through every age the same, -
We worship and we magnify thy name.
A-ha, o.-ho, E-he!
Chorus of Devils.
We devils all, both great and small,
Do magnify our king;
Glory to thee, A-ha, E-he!
Our offerings we will bring!

This hymn of adoration was a roar
Of choruses repeated, with refrains
Innumerable Naught of earth, combined
In such a base and foul conglomerate
Of all malignant essences of hate,
Could e'en approach a burlesque of the same.

Satan, well satisfied, impatient now,
Silence commanded, and, most pompously
Announced that ceremonies must conclude.
Then with a wave of his most potent hand,
Restored the whole to quietness and order;
While thus he for the third and final time
Repeated all the summons and appeal:

“O-ho, ye faithful pioneers, come forth!
We go to gather to the last great fight!
We go to make the earth a sea of blood!
We go to war against the saints of God!
We go to claim our own supremacy!
Come forth ye spirits of the devils, come! -
We now go forth to work the potent signs,
And gather, gather, gather to the fight!”

XI

HORRORS AND TERRORS

Shades of the darkness! Spirits of the night!
Monstrosities of earth! Offspring of hell!
Ghouls, gnomes, and goblin ghosts of all degrees!
Incubuses of every horrid shape!
Ye magnified and multiplied alarms!
Conjured creations of disordered brains!
Ye hydra-headed monsters of the deep!
Ye incarnations of all ugliness!
Sink down into chaotic nothingness,
And hide ye, hide ye your diminished heads
Before the demons in my vision seen!

The pre-historic periods of time
Could surely never show such horrid life!
Could never mass such animated filth!
Not the Triassic or Jurassic age,
Cretaceous, or Carboniferous,
When lived the dread Plesiosaurus kind;
The labyrinthodonts, equanodonts,
And all the teeming life which revelled then –
All unmolested by the hand of man,
Who figured not upon the changing earth,
Could e'en compare with what my eyes beheld!

At the last summons and prolonged appeal
Of Satan, confident, there issued forth
From the three caverns, simultaneously,
Three monsters of the most forbidding shapes, -
Shapes! They had none. Could all the horrid herd
Of races named of animals, and all
The lizard, and the great amphibious tribes
Which ever crawled in caves, or dipped themselves
Into the rivers of the æons past;
Or revelled in primeval forests wild,
Be moulded by some great magician wand –
All into concentrated ugliness, -
'Twould be as naught to what was now beheld.

Description is defied. Suffice to say
That these abortions of all hideousness
Came forth, and in the front as pioneers
Of a procession which was formed amain.
But which no tongue or pen can e'er describe,
Nor would it be in wisdom to attempt.
Trembling and fainting, there methought I stood,
All horror-stricken.

I was as one distraught;
But now my faithful counsellor and friend
With kindly pressure took my hand anew,
And in most solemn and impressive voice
He thrilled my soul with these his parting words:
"Mortal! 'Tis done; now let us hence depart!
Farewell; Farewell, until again we meet
In other spheres of happiness and peace!"

New life was now into my heart infused,
And from that moment all was confidence.
Some space of time had seemed to intervene
Before a vivid consciousness of change
Came o'er the varying aspect of my dream.

Methought I stood in contemplative mood
Upon a plane of elevation, high,
And far removed, distinctly separate
From the immediate scene, the circumstance,
And all the dread events so horrible
Depicted in my vision. Once again
I was alone, and all the gathering shades
Of dusky night were hovering far and near,
With solitude prevailing.

But my mind
And all th' emotions which can constitute
A nature renovated and refined
As by a potent spell, was calm and clear;
I felt no fear or trembling in my frame;
I had a confidence – a fortitude
Imparted as of super-human power.
But ah! what did I see? A fearful sight!
A great convulsion of the elements!
There, from my place, astounded, now I viewed
The awful shakings of destructive powers;
The consequence, and all the dire results
Of earthquake throes! Ah, now the thunder rolls.
The lightning's vivid flash was dancing o'er

The distant mountain's brow. I saw the cloud –
The fire-fraught agent of my earlier dream,
Again, with force increased, darting abroad –
The messengers of wrath retributive!
The upheaving throes of subterranean fires,
And all the seismic powers of dread destruction
Caused the huge mountains, all, to bow their heads
And topple to their fall.

 The bellowing thunder,
The lightning's scathing flash, the earthquake's roar
And rattle of confusion in the earth,
And on the earth; the clankings as of chains
Most ponderous, through the depths and cavities
Where thunderous parks of dread artillery
Were booming and discharging all their bolts;
The hissings of the seething fires below,
Where swelling seas of gaseous compounds
Burst through their limits with most fierce explosions:
The falling mountains, and the seas of fire;
The shrieks and curses of the flying fiends
Dispersed and driven, hurrying from the face
Of Him they had denounced, made up a scene
Of horror and of terror which, before,
The earth had never seen.

 Forth from the rocks
Where Satan had his customary throne,
The fragments huge, continuously, were hurled
Far, far away in all directions round;
While from the fissures, and the yawning gulfs
There issued living fires.

 As molten lead,
Consuming rivers rolled, until at length,
Amid the roar of crashing elements,
In one great throe the mountain masses heaved,
Shook, rocked, and rolled, until, with bated breath
I saw the whole engulfed and disappear!

 And thus the earth had purged herself with fire.
And with the cleansing Powers of Heaven combined
Had purified herself for evermore!

XII

PEACE

Peace! Blessed Peace! Restorer of the world!
The earth's bright angel, and her guiding star!
Sweet, gentle Peace! She comes with looks of love.
Attended by a band of heavenly creatures,
With healing on their wings; while
Charity In quietude and calm of loveliness,
Brings up the rear of all the holy train.

How sacred is thy mission! Ready, aye,
To bless us all with thy commissioned work.
In whispers ravishing thy voice is heard –
Peace! Peace! Be still and know that
I am here! Ah, thou would'st hush the rising tempest roar
Which oft will rush across the human mind,
And, like a mother with her infant child
When restless in the watches of the night,
Soothe the disquietude on bosom true.

And listening to thy voice the surging wave
Of congregated passions might have stayed
The great disasters which have hurt the world
To a degree which brings but ruination –
Destruction, and the bloody enterprise
Which makes a hell of earth: and spoils the joy
And all the pure delights which ever flow
From founts, which but for devilish influence
Would make the earth a heaven.

The peace of God!
The human mind, 'mid all its turbulence.
Misses the mark of all this blessedness,
And in the hurrying of the worldly strife
Heeds not the gesture of the beckoning Angel –
The winsome invitation to her feast.
Ah! how we miss our opportunities!
How we do mar our own true happiness!
Through selfishness, and hugging to ourselves
Forebodings of some evil yet to come –
Some great disaster in the future – Death!
Emblem and personality of Peace!
How beautiful thou art when hoary age

After a life well spent in godliness,
Waits but for thee in the last days of life,
O'erburdened with the plenitude of years,
When work is done, and duty's task accomplished:
Sins all forgiven-with sure and certain hope
Of the reward which only God can give
Eternal Life! Ah, blessed then is death!
'Tis peace for ever, happiness and joy, -
The peace of God which "passeth understanding." -
The peace which men sometimes in busy life
Forget to treasure in their memories,
And in the turmoil of the surging tide
Discard the blessedness:

The Peace of God!

That peace which gently steals upon our souls
In quiet hours of home, with softening balm
To heal the heart which sometimes feels the sore
And cruel usage of the turb'lent crowd,
In worldly strife engaged.

Ah, lovely Peace!

How many a mind hath longings but for thee
Yearnings with fervent aspirations true
For thy sweet consolation. Perfect Peace
Is heaven itself unto our homes and natures:
It is the outcome of the graces three
Faith, Hope, and Charity--the trio blessed.
Methought, once more, I stood in solitude
Upon an eminence, from whence I saw
But this was not A change of scenery.
The silent solitude of darkling mystery;
Nor of the horrible and terrible
Domains which erstwhile I experienced.

'Twas early morn. A morning in my life
When memory seemed beckoning me away
To some far distant time, as if awaked
From slumberings which haunted me with dreams
I scarce could realise. I felt relief
Amounting to a rapture, - happiness
Which never more could alter or depart.
I put the question - to myself I said:
Ah, what is this I feel? What moves me now?
I am but mortal! Yet of heavenly things
I have partaken; I have also seen
The visions as of hell! Is it a dream?
Ah, no! It is not all a shadowy dream!

I have the light – I have the consciousness
That some great influence has changed my nature;

Ah, where is now my blessed Spirit Guide?
His work is done! He's left me all alone
With power to work myself! I feel it all –
Thank God! These are Thy rich beatitudes.

The birds were singing in the copses round;
Nature was holding matin service there.
The glorious sun was coming forth anew,
And, from his chambers in the eastern sky
Was flinging forth his many-tinted rays
In plenitude of rich benevolence.

A placid lake, in far extended lines
Of shores, most beautiful unto the vision,
Lay at my feet, calm, peaceful and serene.
Wrapt in the contemplation of the same,
I saw the vision of Eternal Life,
Eternal Rest, and Peace for Evermore!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



George 'Rusticus' Hickling, born in 1827 in Cotgrave, Nottinghamshire, was a prolific poet and author who published five books between 1856 to 1892, publishing his first book, *The Mystic Land and Other Poems*, when he was twenty-nine years old. He worked as framework knitter from the age of thirteen until his retirement around 1900. His father, Thomas also worked as a framework knitter. He was married to Ann Smart from circa 1850 until her sad passing at the age of 56 in 1880. George never married again. He passed away on July 8th 1909 at the age of 82.

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