

MEDEA MATER.*

BY E. T. F.

Beautiful dreamers! Oh! sleep on, sleep on!
There is no sound or stir on earth or sky,
And blessed influences from on high
Descend like dew. Thou Bay Saronian,
Dimly afar, with moonlight overstrawn,
I see thee now. Almost I am at peace:
All misery and anguish seem to cease,
Beneath this holy time's dominion.

Smiles! aye, and lute-voiced laughter. In your sleep,
Beloved sons, what glowing phantasies
Are thronging now around you? Do your eyes
Feast, in imagination, on the sweep
Of those great hills, where gods their vigils keep?
Or, haply, on fair valleys, which the hours
Bless with perennial, incense-breathing flowers;
Such vales as bloom beneath the Olympian steep.

It was a day to be remember'd ever,
The day that saw us starting down the stream
Of ancient Peneus. With the morn's first beam,
And where, with scarce perceptible endeavour,
Solemn and slow, the sacred waters sever
Mount Phœstus from the hills of Thessaly,
We launch'd our bark. There were none others by,
Save those beloved ones who left me never.

O the glad freshness of that summer dawn!
The thrilling song of birds, the rich perfume
Of thousand, thousand flowers, the dim seen bloom
Of wild Pægan rose, thickly strewn
O'er hill and dell, green glade and glossy lawn,
And, over all, the blue immensity,
The kindling east, the star-lit western sky.
Day, as a god, advancing slowly on!

Elysium of earth! the awed content,
That over all my happy soul had grown,
Rose not from thy magnificence alone;
But there was one—one who beside me bent
With innum'rd words, of love and worship blent,
And therefore was I happy. Human love
A magic mightier than my own had wove,
A spell that silenced all presentment.

Thus, silent with deep joy, through Tempe's vale
We drifted on. But now the dreamy calm
Of gorgeous noon was past, and grateful balm
Refresh'd the air, and fann'd the drooping sail.
So evening shadows found us. Silvery pale,
The moon arose o'er Pelion, and the sun
Behind Olympus went serenely down,
Whose awful shadow wrapt us as a veil.

Would I were mortal! Men are born and die:
And with them dies the memory of their woes:
The wearied spirit unrepining goes
To rest, to renovation. Misery
Is mine for ever. As the stars on high,
That change not, grow not dim, so I must reign,
A fixed despair, immortal in my pain,
Fill'd with one thought, a thought of joys gone by!

* In the older Theogonies, Medea always appears as a divine person. Hesiod expressly names her as one of the "immortals wedded to mortal men."

By the deep love with which I honour'd thee,
By the wild worship, and surrendering
Of my whole being, all that I could bring,
And offer'd thee with rapt humility:—
By the old days which weeping memory
Still holds enclasped, a hoard of treasured pain,
By all that has been, may not be again,—
Bitter, most bitter, shall thy nuptials be!

And these—these are thy children;—they must die!
Let none dare question me—let no soft wind
Whisper me aught! I would not—would not find
Weak pleadings in the mother-thoughts that ply
So fondly at my heart-strings. Thou, oh sky!
Look not so pitifully. ———

All is past:

I am alone. They were too bright to last,
Those glorious dreams of fond humanity!

So passes from me earth: and I return
To my Olympian home. Daughter of gods,
Must I re-enter those serene abodes
Reluctant and regretting? Must I mourn
At passing once again the shadowy bourn?
Aye! with a heart all desolate and cold,
Medea fallen comes. Immortals, hold
Your looks of pity, spare your frozen scorn!

Farewell, bright land wherein I loved to dwell!
Thou blue Propontid lake—thy cloud-veiled dome,
Strobilus hoar—and thou, my Grecian home,
Land of the ilex and the asphodel!
And oh! far more than these,—thou rapturous swell
Of human fondness,—mother-love, that grew
The holier for its sorrows,—life, that knew
Such weeping joy and pain,—Farewell! Farewell!

THE BIRDS OF SPRING.

BY DR. HASKINS.

Love to you, lovely birds! and your wild lay,
Sweet sung beneath th' approving smile of May.
Glad heralds of delight! your angel voice
Thrills through my heart, and bids my soul rejoice;
How exquisite your notes unto mine ear,
Long stunn'd by howling storms of winter drear!
How wildly glad, amid the unfolding leaves,
They tell a tale the willing heart believes!
They tell of bliss, of beauty, and of flows;
Of paradisaal green ambrosial bows;
Of odours breathing from the enamell'd field;
Of scents and sweets the painted gardens yield
Of buds and blossoms waving to the breeze;
Of tassell'd wreaths that crown the verdant trees:
Of golden days, when summer's light shall be
Shed as a glorious flood o'er land and sea;
Of blushing morn, and gentle eventide;
Of the bright moon, bedeck'd in silvery pride;
Of gorgeous noon,—night's majesty,—the deep
Hour, when the eyes of Nature close in sleep;
And, oh! far more than these, they tell of love,
Nestling within the bosom like a dove!
Blest love—that makes the jarring wheels of life
Roll smoothly on, and heals our inward strife.
Sweet birds! oh! may your hours in bliss be pass'd
Nor cloud nor storm their sunshine overcast.