

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
 Sails the unshadowed main,—
 The venturous bark that flings
 On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
 In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings, 5
 And coral reefs lie bare,
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
 And every chambered cell, 10
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
 As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell.
 Before thee lies revealed,—
 Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
 That spread its lustrous coil; 15
 Still, as the spiral grew,
 He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
 Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
 Built up its idle door, 20
 Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the last no
 more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
 Child of the wandering sea,
 Cast from her lap forlorn!
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born 25
 Than ever Titan blew from wreathed horn!
 While on mine ear it rings,
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that
 sings:—