

Keen anticipation speeds
 Swifter than those matchless steeds
 Which Phœbus drives at equal pace with time :
 So the maiden sighed for night,
 Yet she sighed at thought of flight,
 Restless as one who meditates a crime.

But when Proserpine's sceptre sway'd,
 And day in night was lost,
 The daring Babylonian maid
 Her father's threshold cross'd ;
 Nerved by conscious helplessness,
 Urged by ardent love no less,
 With winged step, and beating pulse, she sped ;
 Braving night and parents' wrath,
 Wondrous power that Eros hath !
 She passed the gates, and from the city fled.

And through the desert night she hid,
 Tho' grimpest terrors hover
 Around each bush the maid descried,
 Her thoughts were of her lover.
 Hela lit the desert night
 With her hallow'd silver light,
 And guided Thisbe to the place she sought,
 Where, a limpid fountain nigh,
 Spread a lofty mulberry ;
 But only she had reach'd the appointed spot.

At length strange sounds her ear impell'd,
 And creeping fears encroach ;
 Lo ! horror-stricken, she beheld
 A lioness approach ;
 Stalking to the forest spring,
 Fresh from recent slaughtering,
 Its shaggy front still dripping with the gore.
 Startled by Thisbe's sudden flight,
 Slow it woke to wrathful might,
 And, springing forth, her fallen mantle tore.

When slaked her thirst, the lioness
 Departed to her lair,
 Came Pyramus, all cagerness,
 No Thisbe found he there !
 When he mark'd upon the ground
 Tracks of savage beast, and found
 The well-known mantle, torn, and stain'd with gore,
 He exclaimed, "O wretched I !
 Have I brought thee here to die ?—
 This night shall see us twain cross Lethe's flood !"

With mortal wound he smote his side,
 And sank upon the ground ;