

17.

I need not ask—for truth hast said
That Hell, how black soe'er its will,
Contains no demon half so dread,
Or half so capable of ill.

18.

The minstrel, having sung thus far,
Would fainly leave the drunkard here,
Were he not found a baleful star
To all that breathe within his sphere.

19.

Our song would grow prolix to tell
How his example spreads his vice;
His followers know its power too well—
Their dark experience should suffice.

20.

The temperate would conclude that none
Could countenance so vile a course,
Because his reason bids him shun
Its specious wiles and syren force.

21.

But as the sinful were the pure,
And but the free can bow to thrall;
Let those that think themselves secure,
Regard their standing lest they fall.

22.

For ah! the Circe of the bowl
Beguiles in so occult a way,
That men are fast in her controul
Ere hardly conscious of her sway.

23.

Enough:—return we to the curse
With which the drunkard blasts his own;
To subjects painful to rehearse—
To ills deplored wherever known.