

XLV.

She faded from that hour. No more the earth  
Seemed pleasant to her : she was deaf to all  
The revelry of life, the carnival  
Of choral harmonies and songs of mirth.  
A mist of sadness lay upon her soul,  
Hiding the beauty of all fairest things,  
The flush of morn, the glow that evening brings,  
The clouds of sunset, and the stars that roll  
Through azure depths, while soft the night-bird sings.

XLVI.

Yet lived she many days. But when, at last,  
The palm-trees of the Nile appeared in sight,  
She sank as one exhausted, pale and white,  
As falls a flower before the winter's blast.--  
Then came to them a hermit of the plain,  
Compassionate, who prayed they might abide  
Within his dwelling, by the river-side,  
Until the maiden found her strength again,  
And needful rest to both might be supplied.

XLVII.

His hut was all embosomed in fair flowers,  
And shrubs of richest perfume, passing sweet;  
For here, they said, had trod the sacred feet  
Of Joseph and of Mary, and the hours  
Had shed bright sunshine on the mystic child  
Borne in the arms of loving motherhood :  
And Nature, in her happiest, holiest mood,  
Had showered all blessings, in profusion wild,  
And made a garden of the solitude.