

ISRAFIL.

(Continued from First Page.)



'Lo! down the airy waste
Four shining angels haste.'

The parting and the coming angel host.
Stay thy impetuous feet—
One moment now absented from thy post,
And all is lost.
The serpent watches well: thou shalt re-
turn too late.

VII.

An hour in past,
All Eden sleeps in motionless repose.
Around, above, he casts his restless eyes,
And sighs to think how long the night will
last.
The moon rides slowly, slowly down the
skies.
Surely far off have vanished Eden's foes;
No evil spirit can be lurking near.
No sound, no breath, meets his attentive
ear.
So long the night, so deep the silence
grows,
May he not wander at his wayward will,
If not too distant from the sentinel hill?
Only a few light steps will bring him near
The bower of which the angels oft have
told.
There in the moonlight clear
A moment tarrying, he may behold,
And seeing may believe
That only he has learned how beautiful is
Eve.

VIII.

As now with wilful steps he seeks
The bower where she is slumbering,
The dew brushed by his rapid wing
From hanging boughs falls on his cheeks,
His feet are trampling in their haste
The straying rose, a wildwood vine
Whose flowers the mossy pathway graced.
He starts when in the bright moonshine
A bird, awakened, trills a note,
Then sleeps, the song still rippling from
his throat.
But soon he trembles, listens, doubts no
more.
All else forgotten, he is bending o'er
The violet bed, amid whose blest perfume
Earth's fairest being sleeps, unconscious of
her doom.

IX.

She sleeps—she dreams;
For now a smile hovers with tender grace
About her lips. The beauty of her face
A breathing wonder to the angel seems.
Her dark eyelashes rest



'FROM ABEL'S BLOOD SPILT ON THE ALTAR STONE.'

Motionless on the warm flush of her cheek;
Her lips part softly, as if she would speak,
But had in dream-land lost the word she
fain would speak;
One hand is lightly clasped about a rose
Which fully open blows,
Too blest to share its sister flower's repose;
And, veiling her white breast,
Falls wave on wave of lustrous golden hair.
Like one enchanted, in the moonlight glow
The angel lingers still, and murmurs low,
'Daughter of earth—how fair!'

X.

'Israfil! Israfil!'
The cry rings through the startled night
The angels speed in sudden fright
Toward the unprotected gate.
On wings of fear flies Israfil—
Alas! he flies too late.
His brother angels, flashing by,
Already with pure sense perceive
An evil lurking nigh.
A change comes o'er the moon-lit sky;
The wind begins to sigh and grieve;
The garden feels a sudden chill,
The breath of coming fate.
'Where hast thou strayed, O Israfil?
The serpent's taint is on the air;
The son of darkness, once as fair
And frail as thou, is come!
He hides his face in his despair,
And stands before them dumb.

XI.

All night the angels to and fro
Seek for the messenger of woe.
He, subtle, silent, still eludes
Their search. In densest solitudes
Evades the lustre that is shed
From their celestial tread.
At morn, recalled, they seek the skies.
But Israfil, with drooping wings,
No longer heavenward can arise,
To earth unwilling clings,
Through all that fateful day, hour after
hour,
With deepest sorrow thrilled,
He stands invisible, apart—
Sees evil warring with the human heart,
And Eden's doom fulfilled.

XII.

When in the evening cool the Lord appears,
Sees the forbidden tree with broken bloom,
The garden desolate and lost in gloom,
The mortals hiding from His searching gaze,
Israfil, speechless, hears
Their fate pronounced, sees their repentant
tears,
And death's dread shadow hanging o'er their
days.
And now on him the rays
Of the Eternal Vision fall; the word
Of his own doom is heard:
'Since death by thee is come unto the earth,
Be thou its messenger. Thy name shall be
A terror unto all of human birth:
The shadow of the grave forever follow
thee!'

XIII.

In Eden it was early dawn—
How changed since in the even-time
The angel saw it in its prime!
The erring mortals now were gone.
He stood within their empty bower alone.
Above his head
A little bird was warbling cheerily;
The music mocked and pained his misery.
He raised his hand, unconscious of his
power,
And grasped the bough which held the dainty
nest,
And the branch shrivelled in his hand; with
breast
Panting in sudden pain, the bird fell dead.
Aghast, he sized a flower—
The rose which Eve's fair hand at night
had pressed.
Beneath his touch it withered; bud and leaf
Drooped dry and scentless. In a bitter
grief
He murmured, 'This is death!
And this henceforth shall be my destiny:
To slay, but not to die—
To blight all things of mortal breath;
All earthly loveliness to sear;
All that you beings hold most dear
Must perish when my steps draw near.
Nor can I shun my fearful power,
Or spare from them one dreaded hour.
Onward I go through all the years,
Unheeding human prayers and tears.
Let mortals seek through toil and fears
Some transient gleams of love and joy—
I follow after to destroy.'

XIV.

'Israfil!'
The angel looked, and bowed his face
Before a brow whose sweet, majestic grace
Had shone upon him oft in happier morn
From the eternal hill
Whose dazzling height reveals the Father's
throne.
Immanuel, the First-Born,
Stood smiling on him in the early dawn.
'Israfil, behold!
The Son takes in His hand the withered
rose;
Its petals seem like magic to unfold:
A new celestial bloom,

A heavenly perfume,
Through the awakened blossom breathes and
glows.
The Saviour, smiling, lays it on His breast.
He takes the dead bird from its broken nest;
It flutters, plumes its wings,
Then rapturously sings,
And soars away toward the beaming heaven.
Then spake He: 'Israfil,
The Father to the Son a boon hath given.
Go forth, but I am with thee. Do His
will
Who laid this doom upon thee, and be still.
Thou dost destroy, but thus can I restore.
Angel of death, arise and hope once more!
From Abel's blood spilt on the altar stone,
To Calvary's cross which I must bear alone,
Thou shalt be terrible to human kind;
And hope but dimly light the troubled mind;
But from that grave which yields to me its
portal,
Faith shall come forth, the Comforter Im-
mortal.
And thou, new crowned, shalt be
Seen by believing eyes linked hand in hand
with Me.'

XV.

Thus spake Immanuel, and, ascending, pass-
ed
Again unto His Father's house, to keep
Unbroken watch, while Time and Sorrow
last,
Of His beloved, who in death shall sleep.
And Israfil arose serene and calm,
And, with one last look upon Eden's bower,
Went forth into the morning's fragrant
balm
To wield for evermore his melancholy
power.

XVI.

Israfil,
Let thy sickle return to the harvest that
gleams
White and wan on valley and hill,
For my lyre is still.



'The serpent king with envious hate
Whispers, to tempt thy angelhood.'

The song that I heard in the land of
dreams
Is sung, and its magic shall haunt me no
more.
Ever yet to the unseen shore
Bear earth's harvest—the loved and lost.
Often thy shadow my door has crossed;
I have seen thy icy fingers laid
On lips that I loved, and was not afraid.
Following close on thy chill and gloom,
Reaching up from the darkened tomb,
Was the very odor of heavenly bloom
Shed from His garments who followed thee,
And took my idols to keep for me.
Israfil!
Come again at the Master's will.
At thy cross and pang my flesh may shrink
But thy bitter cup I will dare to drink,
And follow thee down to the river's brink.
Through the breathless tide
I will cling to the hand of the Crucified;
And when I awake on the further shore,
I shall see thee no more
Sad and shrouded in garments dim,
But the angel of peace and brother of Him
Who crowned thee and blessed thee on Cal-
vary's hill,
Israfil!

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died of a broken heart; have mur-
dered my children with neglect. When

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I can get my next meal. I shall die
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