

I could not, dared not shew you enough *how* happy!—
—But sorely am I punished, ah! too sore.

Rect.—Heavens! and is thy pain not keenest felt by me?

What is to come of me when you are gone?

Ott.—(*hesitating.*) (*Very low.*)

Of you?—Then why will you send me away?

Rect.—(*in a half-voice.*)

Why? Why?—have I then so close worn the mask

That what's beneath she dreams not?—What a smile

Is her's!—It speaks—What is it that it tells,

If 't is not that in it all's told?—

Ott.—(*lower still.*) Yes, why

Not keep me wholly your own?

Rect.— Wholly my own!

(*Kneels before her.*)

No longer dare I guess, child. My poor brain

Is all distraught.—I yield me to the storm;

View my gray hairs, then those long golden tresses

Adown thy fair neck twining amorously.

Thy youth has vigor, and thy beauty grace;

Peace broods o'er those whom thy soft glance caresses;

Long-buried hopes to life start 'neath thy spell.

I feel my heart when near to thine, throb wildly,

The power of love thrills through me a new life,

Thine every word within my gloating spirit

Soft-treasured up, repeated o'er and o'er

Resounds, a godlike hymn to the immortal!

'Neath thy veiled glances, where the fire still smoulders,

Like a snow-flake blown upon by rose-lipped Dawn,

Even so I melt in tenderness and cry:—

O pity! This is *love*, and not mere *biking*!

(*Half rises.*)

Misery! I've spoken; she knows all!—Excuse

I've none to offer. Thee I outrage,—myself

Delude, when in my own despite, I dream

A coming time when we twain shall be one.

'T is vile,—I know it well, e'en in my thoughts

To join to the fresh-blown flower a shrivelled stem,

Seared by life's storms, sealed as dark Lethe's due!

To disentomb a secret so deep buried,—