

Of softly-falling waters ; breathings low,
 As of a woodland when the south, at blow
 In tenderest zephyrs, kisses it to heart,
 That all its notes, new-sexed by God's own art,
 Sleek from their rugged bass to sweetness fine
 Of woman's softness, as the dryad line
 Of Greece were not the fable of a dream.

But more his soul was pitched to power supreme
 Than to a key of sweetness ; and, to him,
 The haunters of the Hartz, its dwellers dim,
 Possessed no terrors : one with them he stood,
 An elemental spirit of the flood,
 The forest, and the mountain, and the storm,
 A shouter with the thunder, and a form
 That revelled in the lightning, and a heart
 Moulded to these, and moulding them to art.
 What of the midnight darkness reckoned he,
 Or of its demon striders ? Ecstasy
 Uplifted him the touch of fear above,
 And shot him headlong to a heaven of love !

A heaven of love, but builded o'er with storms !
 A heaven of love, but tenanted by forms
 Of cloudy angelhood, which yet might raise
 A war with heaven, till, shaken from the ways
 Of light, his toppling spirit so might fall,
 Down-ruining from a height celestial.

Through all his stormy boyhood he had trod
 Apart from men, yet, walking not with God,
 Had held, for sole companions of his heart,
 His violin, all nature, and his art.
 At thickest midnight of the mountainside,
 When ghostly horrors rode the air astride,
 When from the horrent crags and caves out-stole,
 Vague breathings of the demon and the ghoul,
 And from the giant pines black terrors fell
 In bodied glooms o'er every rugged dell
 Of shaggy solitudes no human foot
 Save his alone, would wake to ominous bruit
 Of any earthly wanderer through the night—
 Oft, in the very heart of dim affright,
 Planted upon some mossy plinth of stone,
 From upper heights by burly winds o'erthrown,
 Deep in the bosom of some savage glen,
 Where scarcely noon, to common mould of men,
 Might lend them nerve to enter, for some tale
 Of demon horror turning manhood pale—
 There, where the soaring steep's shot heads on high
 That shook a plumed menace at the sky,