

POETRY.

CONTEMPLATION.

They are all up—the innumerable stars—
And hold their place in heaven. My eyes have
been

Searching the pearly depths through which
they spring

Like beautiful creations, till I feel
As if it were a new and perfect world,
Waiting in silence for the word of God
To breathe it into motion. There they stand,
Shining in order, like a living hymn
Written in light, awaking at the breath
Of the celestial dawn, and praising Him
Who made them, with the harmony of spheres.
I would I had an angel's ear to list
That melody! I would that I might float
Up in that boundless element, and feel
Its ravishing vibrations, like a pulse;
Beating in heaven! My spirit is athirst
For music—rare! I would bathe
My soul in a serener atmosphere
Than this! I long to mingle with the flock
Led by the "living waters," and lie down
In the "green pastures" of the better land.
When wilt thou break, dull fetter! When shall I
Gather my wings, and, like a rushing thought,
Stretch onward, star by star, up to heaven!"

Thus mused Alethe. She was one to whom
Life had been like the witching of a dream,
Of an untroubled sweetness. She was born
Of a high race, and laid upon the knee,
With her soft eye persuing listlessly
The fretted roof, or on mosaic floors,
Grasped at the tessellated squares, inwrought
With metals curiously. Her childhood pass'd
Like fairy—amid fountains and green haunts,
Trying her little feet upon a lawn
Of velvet evenness, and hiding flowers
In her sweet bosom, as if it were a fair
And pearly altar to crush incense on.
Her youth—O, that was queenly! She was
like

A dream of poetry that may not be
Written or told—exceeding beautiful;

And so came worshippers, and rank bow'd
down

And breathed upon her heart, as with a breath
Of pride; and bound her forehead gorgeously
With dazzling scorn, and gave unto her step
A majesty as if she trod the sea,
And the proud waves, unbidden, lifted her.
And so she grew to woman—her mere look
Strong as a monarch's signal, and her hand
The ambition of a kingdom.

From all this
Turn'd her high heart away! She had a mind
Deep and immortal, and it would not feed
On pageantry, She thirsted for a spring
Of a serener element, and drank
Philosophy, and for a little while
She was allay'd—till, presently, it turn'd
Bitter within her, and her spirit grew
Faint for undying waters.

Then she came
To the pure fount of God—and is athirst
No more—save when the "fever of the world"
Falleth upon her; she will go, sometimes,
Out in the star light quietness, and breathe
A holy aspiration after heaven!

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