

Indelible 'gainst Time they stood — eternal fires!
But he, the sad-faced one, held with a patient touch
A rod of sombre agate, pointed, gleaming red.
His larger book showed heavy ebon polished sides.
With lines of gold that burned along the thickened edge:
Within, the pages white as billowed mountain clouds,
Displayed long lists of black and red; whilst some there were
In mingled gruesome tints, that showed where sullen hues
And shades of lives had left their stains upon the page.
His fingers leaned not lovingly upon the rod
Of sombre colors; oft, when gliding spirits came
And spoke their names, they seemed reluctantly to write,
As if quite loth to do their God appointed task.
Then on his face one saw a light flash quickly up;
Like waves that play, caressing, on the curving beach,
So spread that light of love. as if the human whole
Were garnered by this angel's soul unto itself.
Oft was it thus, and spirits crowding near, wond'ring
And thankful for the upraised surer face of him
Who held the pearl, could scarcely see that other form,
Whose sterner task was often conquered by his love.

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As when through branching pine or silvered poplar leaves
The south wind breathing, fills the wooded, lofty aisles
With gentle rustling, so there came a murm'rous sound.
A soul, with steadfast eyes and upturned beaming face,
Amidst the parted waves of other souls, came slow.