

THE DARK HUNTSMAN,

(A DREAM.)

'Twas eve, and I dreamed that across the dim plain
One swept o'er the stubble,—one ploughed through the grain;
His aspect was eager, his courser was fleet,
He drove through the gloom as through air drives the sleet;
And dark was his visage, and darker it grew,
As o'er the dim landscape yet faster he flew.

I dreamed still my dream, and beheld him career,—
Fly on like the wind after Ghosts of the deer—
Fly on like the wind, or the shaft from the bow,
Or avalanche urging from regions of snow;
Or star that is shot by the Gods from its sphere;—
He bore a Winged Fate on the point of his spear;
His eyes were as coals that in frost fiercely glow,
Or diamonds of darkness;—"Dark huntsman, what, ho!"

"What, ho!" and my challenge went wild through the vale,
And long was my hollo, and loud was my hail:
"Dark huntsman, dark huntsman, what, whither away?
Dark huntsman," I shouted, "I charge thee to stay;"
And backwards he bellowed, "I cannot obey—
A thousand ere midnight my task is to slay;
But ere comes the morrow,
With sickness and sorrow,
Shall I be swift riding again on this way."