

Treading the ambient winds, and bearing day  
To mortals and immortals, chasing night,  
That fled before in terror, to his cave  
Deep in the Occidental ; on, on, on  
They sped, until with tireless feet they trod  
The empyrean, when behind I heard  
A sound as of the sweeping of great wings,  
Or as a forest on some mountain side  
Swayed by the tempest, when Euroclydon  
Wakes raging. Rearward straight my vision turned,  
And lo ! an unknown one, whom like a god  
I'd call, but for a god he seemed too bright,  
Too glorious ; rainbows circled all his form,  
And, widely waving from his shoulders, wings  
Supported him ; before him, the right hand  
Did grasp a blade, that like the lightning's beam,  
Jagged streamed forth afar. His countenance  
Majestic past all utterance ; Jove might ne'er  
Gaze fearless on that brow. Onward he came,  
Doubling my coursers' speed, his mighty vans,  
Like two great clouds of purest white, outspread  
Fanning the air to whirlwinds. He o'ertook  
Me soon, and with a voice as of the sea  
Lab'ring in tempest, " Phœbus from thy place  
Descend and yield thy flaming car to me,  
The minister of Him who reigns supreme.  
The old gods are too weak for sovereignty,  
And from beneath their feeble rule hath passed  
The empire of the universe ; descend !"  
And by his word, stricken as Phaeton  
By Jove's hurled thunder, down through the abyss,  
Earthward I fell—down ! down ! the aerial mists  
Smote on my form, as, by my horrid speed,  
They seemed to harden ; till, with dizzy brain,  
Upon Olympus' top I ceased my flight,  
Leaving my coursers guided by new hands