

and mocks at all things great and worthy even as we do. Let us make much of him!—his genius is dead!”

And they applauded and praised him, and flattered and cajoled and feasted him, and he grew proud and arrogant.

“Now at last,” said he, “shall my work prosper!”

But the Angel at his side looked reproachfully upon him, murmuring—

“Alas, it is ill done!”

He heard the gentle warning whisper, but heeded it not, and turning from the holy radiance of the Heavenly Presence, he plunged with reckless haste and eagerness into the vice and folly of the day, forgetting everything save the prompting of his own will, and the allurements of his own passions. Caring no more for others, he sought only the gratification of self, and by and by, a woman,—a crowned queen of many sins,—came upon him in all the witchery of her beauty, and casting over him the glamour of her eyes she cried—

“With all thy wisdom and thy work thou knowest not the mystery of Love! Come!—I will teach it thee! Here in my arms thou shalt find paradise, and my kiss shall compensate to thee for all the world! Come—come!—leave all this weary effort—drink wine!—be merry!—Give thy starved nature all it craves!—Behold my beauty! Wilt thou find fairer food for perfect joy?”

And as she spoke, she cast herself upon his