

Invocation

My Harp ! my Harp ! by mine own brain designed, by my
hand fashioned
While others slept I laboured with unwearied love o'er thee,
That I some cunning instrument of song impassioned
Might here create to voice my melody.
Long have I wrought—wrought have with ceaseless toiling,
But thou art rude, and ruder are thy strains,
So that aghast from them and thee recoiling
I cry alas ! but mine are wasted pains.
'Twas thy creator's will thou would'st be tender,
That thou would'st utter, but the gentlest sound,
Ah ! can it be my spirit that doth lend her
Throat like the thirsty baying of blood hound
On human trail ? So sanguinary that I tremble !
Yet trembling dare to touch your chords once more
When lo ! what hitherto it did resemble
It now resembles not—a change sweeps o'er.
Yea ! in a moment's time the music changes
Unto a wail—one long wild wail of pain ;
But in another willfully it ranges
Back to its former sullen mood again.
Ah me ! but yet once more I will the trial make—
And now 'tis laughter—laughter loud and shrill
In tones of irony at which I quake ;
With shivering fear, my heart an instant still.
Yet tempt again—and now I hear a cry
Like to the weeping of a sorrowing soul ;
How vain—how vain to think that ever I
Will find in her the song of the heart whole !
For when I breathed in her the breath of life