

Leave her fond clasp, to mingle in the strife
 And clash of steel and dreadful shouts of death :—
 "O ! Basil mine ! I cannot tell the thoughts
 That weigh me down to silence If so be
 The man spake truly, I can only pray
 For thy return, unharmed, with victory
 Upon thy sword, and boundless joy for me.
 I would not, if I could, dissuade thee ! Nay,
 Would rather share thy dangers, if I might
 Do aught to save our country from its foes,
 To live for it or die, as God dispose."

"There spake a Queen of Amazons, indeed !"
 Replied he gaily, with a cheerful smile,
 To raise her spirits to the height of his,—
 "But life, my Isa ! is not easy lost,
 With love's immortal ichor in our veins !
 Did not Æneas, stricken by the blow
 Of fell Tydides, live by grace of love ?
 So I, with more than he to live for, far,
 My king to serve, my country to defend,
 And thee to wed and worship—shall not die !
 My world of life and love is just begun !"

Great tears stood in her eyes. He saw and said :
 "Forgive me ! Isa ! what a fault is mine !
 With this untimely mirth that keeps not step
 With thy angelic gravity, that fain
 Would smile with me but cannot, for my sake.
 Alas ! if God's or woman's love should cease
 Because of faults in man ! Then lost, indeed,
 Were he, without a hope to gild his lot !"

The phrase struck on her ear ; as when the pipe
 Of Spring's sweet harbinger, the bluebird, sounds
 With sudden music in the gloomy woods,
 Still leafless and embanked with winter snow,
 That lingers in the swales and sunless shade.
 "O, Basil !" said she, gently, "Woman's love
 Is not her own to give or take away !
 There comes a time of times, brings to the heart
 Its vernal equinox—when, happy they
 Who know the season of the seed divine
 To plant it in all worthiness—to grow
 And blossom into everlasting life !"

He raised her hand with reverence to his lips.
 "It comes to me," he said, "that vernal time
 Of light and love ! The blessed angel thou,
 Of its annunciation ! Isa, thou art sent—
 God-sent, it may be, with this message now !"