

TO MY WIFE.

My gentle Wife, though girlhood's peach-like bloom
Perchance is passing from thy cheek away,
And though the radiance that did erst illumine
Thine eye be temper'd by a milder ray ;
And though no more youth's airy visions play
Around thy heart, or flutter through thy brain,—
Still art thou worthy of the Poet's lay,
Still shall my spirit breathe the Lover's strain,
And, if approved by thee, not breathed perhaps in vain.

E'en as the Painter's or the Sculptor's eye
Dwells on some matchless vision which combines
All that they deem of Beauty, ere they try
By inspiration's aid, to catch the lines.
To deck earth's highest and her holiest shrines,—
So did I oft my boyhood's heart beguile
With one fair image,—and the glowing mines
Of Ind would have been freely given the while,
To bid that being live to glad me with her smile.

But when in maiden loveliness you came,
Giving reality to all the fair
And graceful charms that, blent with woman's name,
Had seem'd too rich for earthly forms to wear,
Yet sped beside me in the twilight there—
Then came the agony, to artists known,
The dread that visions so surpassing rare
May fade away, and ne'er become their own,
And leave their hearts to mourn, all desolate and lone.