

PROLOGUE.

Once more ye forked hills, ye fabled nine,
And glades and fountains, still in verse divine,
A votary comes, where others reap, to glean,
And fill his hand with blossoms else unseen,
And twine once more a garland for your cell,
And hymn thanksgiving and a last farewell.
This task alone remains. My space is spanned ;
And time has touched my forehead with his brand ;
And life's illusions, summer birds, have fled :
First, youth and love their pinions heavenward spread ;
Then passed the flowers of theatre and feast ;
Ambition faded next, and laughter ceased ;
And now health threatens flight, and with it, worse !
The charm of beauty's power, and charm of verse.

Peace to the rest ! But how from thee to part,
Spirit of song, whose shrine is in my heart ?