

To that wise master from whose hands you came
Equipped to win, and win yourself a name.
But I,—I have but one quick-slipping year
To spend amid these rooms and faces dear,
And then must quit this fostering roof, these walls,
Where from each door some bright-faced memory calls,
And halt outside in sore uncertainty,
Not knowing which way lies the path for me
Through the unlighted, difficult, misty world.
Ah, whither must I go? Thick smoke is curled
Close round my feet, but lifts a little space
Further ahead, and shews to me the face—
Distorted, dim, and glamorous—of Life;
With many ways, all cheerless ways, and rife
With bristling toils crowned with no fitting fruit,—
All songless ways, whose goals are bare and mute.
But *one* path leads out from my very feet,—
The only one which lures me, which is sweet.
Ah! might I follow it, methinketh then
My childhood's brightest dreams would come again.
Indeed, I know they dwell there, and I'd find
Them meeting me, or hastening up behind.
See where it windeth, alway bright and clear,
Though over stony places here and there;
Up steep ascents, thro' bitter obstacles,
But interspersed with glorious secret dells;