

In things material, the flash and warmth
Of spheres supernal, sometimes raised the veil
Just for a glimpse, and let it fall again
Before he caught the vision's perfect form.

For earth and heaven compose God's oldest book
By His own fingers writ in hieroglyphs,
Significant of meanings all divine,
Which none interpret but the truly wise
Who learn in God's way, not in man's, to read.

Whence comes the bright ideal, flashing through
A skyrift in the heavens, when we feel
That nature's pulses synchronize with ours?
Whence? But that nature is our outward self,
And all her parts but portions of the whole
Grand harmony complete in perfect man!
The soul as in a mirror sees itself
Reflected in the universe of things,
As God in all that's good and true. We catch
A glimpse as of a distant summer sea,
Glowing like glass beyond the thunderous clouds
Of this life's tempests, till with eager oar
We launch our boat and seek the evermore!

Sometimes in better moods, young Basil felt
The stirrings of a Spirit, not his own,
That wrestled with him till the sinew shrank
Of his strong self-hood; as in Peniel once,
A stronger man than he was overthrown
Contending with the Angel all night long,
And by God's truth was vanquished.

Basil thus
Felt oft his powers of reason halt and lame,
In the vast presence of life infinite,
And overwhelming forces above man's.
He cried for light—more light!—as Ajax prayed
For light, to fight life's battle in the day,
And not to die in darkness! Who can live
Upon loose sand-hills of negations, blown
By arid winds for ever to and fro?
Not Basil! too clear-eyed and full of heart
To live *in vacuo*; "For something is,
And must be!" said he; "What, I know not! but—
Those wretched butts! that tangle up the skein
Of our existence on the reel of life
The wrong way winding!—Isa! canst thou help?
Women alone, methinks, these riddles solve!"

The roses flushed upon her damask cheek:
"Yes, Basil!" said she, "if we pray in love