

Had he but looked, perchance the tale at such
 Had ended in the prologue. But her touch,
 Though lightly kissing as a lily blown
 To contact with its owner, and her tone,
 Though sweet of sound as is the lily of breath,
 Waked in his breast not love, but, underneath
 Its tumult passion of insane desire,
 The added tumult of a headstrong ire
 At any check to passions free too long,
 And anger such as mildest right in wrong
 Is sure to waken if it bar the way
 When this is bent on passage, yea or nay.
 Grimly he stared with stony eyes before,
 And rudely from her clasp his hand he tore,
 And, setting teeth, "Away," he cried, "away!
 The mighty music calls me! I obey!"
 And, bounding fiercely, saw not where she fell,
 But hurtled headlong for the throat of hell.

Under the shadow of the beetling crag
 That grisly maw lay open : many a jag
 Of splintered boulder set its bristling jaw
 With snarling tusks of horror ; and an awe
 Of hideous blackness gorged the dragon throat
 Which led to entrails of a hell remote.
 But now the inky air was all alive
 With most stupendous music, as did strive
 The glutted pit to spew its throttling gloom,
 And, swelling high against the bars of Doom,
 Shook with its choking bulk to awful sound
 Reverberating justice clamped around
 With wrath, and from blown discord taking tone
 Of God's harmonious anger, sternly thrown
 About, and strongly grasping, dissonance,
 And crushing it to music.

If, perchance,
 A fear did grip the madman entering in,
 No hold it had to stay him. When from sin
 Fair love a lofty nature puts not back,
 Small hope that fear will stay it on the track.
 The baser nature crouches from the lash,
 And finds in that deterring ; but, more rash,
 The nobler, once of love it burst the chain,
 To straight destruction hurtles, by a pain
 Of apprehended baseness winged the more
 At every point of menace up to soar,
 And feeling, madly, half absolved from wrong,
 The more it plays at stake with hazard strong.

What way he passed, the madman never knew,