

A VISION UPON USHBA.

HERE in the wild Caucasian night,
The sleepless years
Seem to pass by in garments white,
Made white with tears,
A pageant of intolerable light
Across the sombre spheres,
And, mingling with the tumult of the morn,
Methought a single rose of blood was born.

Far on the iron peaks a voice
Crystal and cold,
Sharper than sounds the aurochs' choice
O'er wood and wold,
A summons as of angels that rejoice,
A pæan glad and bold,
A mighty shout of infinite acclaim
Shrieks through the sky some dread forgotten Name.

Trembles the demon on his perch
Of crags ice-bound ;
Tremble near forest and far church
At that quick sound ;

The silver arrows that bedeck the birch
Shiver along the ground :
Priest, fiend, and harpy answer to the call,
And hasten to their ghastly festival.

There in the vale below my feet
I see the crew
Gather, blaspheming God, and greet
Their shame anew.
A feast is spread of some unholy meat ;
Oftimes there murmurs through
Their horrid ranks a cry of pain, as God
Bids them keep memory of His iron rod.

The vale is black with priests. They fight,
Wild beasts, for food,
The orphan's gold, the widow's right,
The virgin's snood.
All in their maws are crammed within the night
That hides their chosen wood,
Where through the blackness sounds the sickening
noise
Of cannibals that gloat on monstrous joys.

The valley steams with slaughter. Here
Shall the pure snow
The bloody reek of murder rear
To crush the foe ?
In Titan fury shall the rocks spring clear,
And smite the fiends below ?

Shall poisonous wind and avalanche combine
To wreck swift justice, human and divine ?

Priests thrive on poison. Carrion
Their eager teeth
Tear, till the sacramental sun
Its sword unsheath,
And bid their horrid carnival be done,
And smite beneath
In their cold gasping valleys, and bid light
Break the battalions of the angry night.

That sword that smote from Heaven was so keen,
Its silver blade
No angel's sight, no fairy's eye hath seen,
No tender maid
With subtle insight may behold its sheen
With light inlaid ;
But God, who forged it, breathed upon its point,
And His pure unction did the hilt anoint.

Within the poet's hand he laid the sword :
With reverent ear
The poet listened to His word
Cleansed through of fear.
The brightness of the glory of the Lord
Grew adamant, a spear !
And when he took the flachion in his hand
Lo ! kings and princes bowed to his command.

Then shall the flag of England flaunt
 In peaceful might,
The sceptred isle of dying Gaunt
 Shall rule by right.
The sons of England shall bid Hell avaunt
 And priest and harlot smite.
Then all the forces of the earth shall be
Untamable, a shield of Liberty.

Freedom shall burgeon like a rose,
 While in the sky
A new white sun with ardour glows
 On liberty.
Men shall sing merrily at work as those
 Who fear no more to die—
Ay ! and who fear no more at last to live
Since man can love and worship and forgive.

Then on these heights of Caucasus
 A fire shall dwell,
Pure as the dawn, and odorous
 Of bud and bell ;
A flower of fire, a flame from heaven to us
 All triumph to foretell,
A glory of unspeakable delight,
A flower like lightning, adamant and white.

There needs no more of sun or sea
 Or any light ;

On golden wheels Eternity
Revolves in Night.
The island peoples are too proud and free
And full of might
To care for time or space, but glorious wend
A royal path of flowers to the end.

I pray thee, God, to weapon me
With this keen fire,
That I may set this people free
As my desire ;
That the white lilies of our liberty
Grow on Life's crags still higher,
Till on the loftiest peaks their blossom flower,
The rampart of a people and their power.