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E. Angelo

RHODAPINE;

OR,

THE THESSALIAN SPELL.

A POEM.

PHILADELPHIA :

PUBLISHED BY M. CAREY AND SON.

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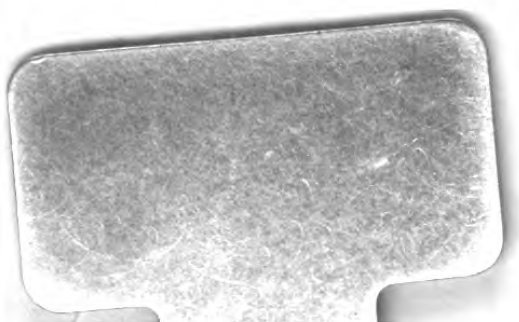
—1848—

from the Black Law Book page 214 514

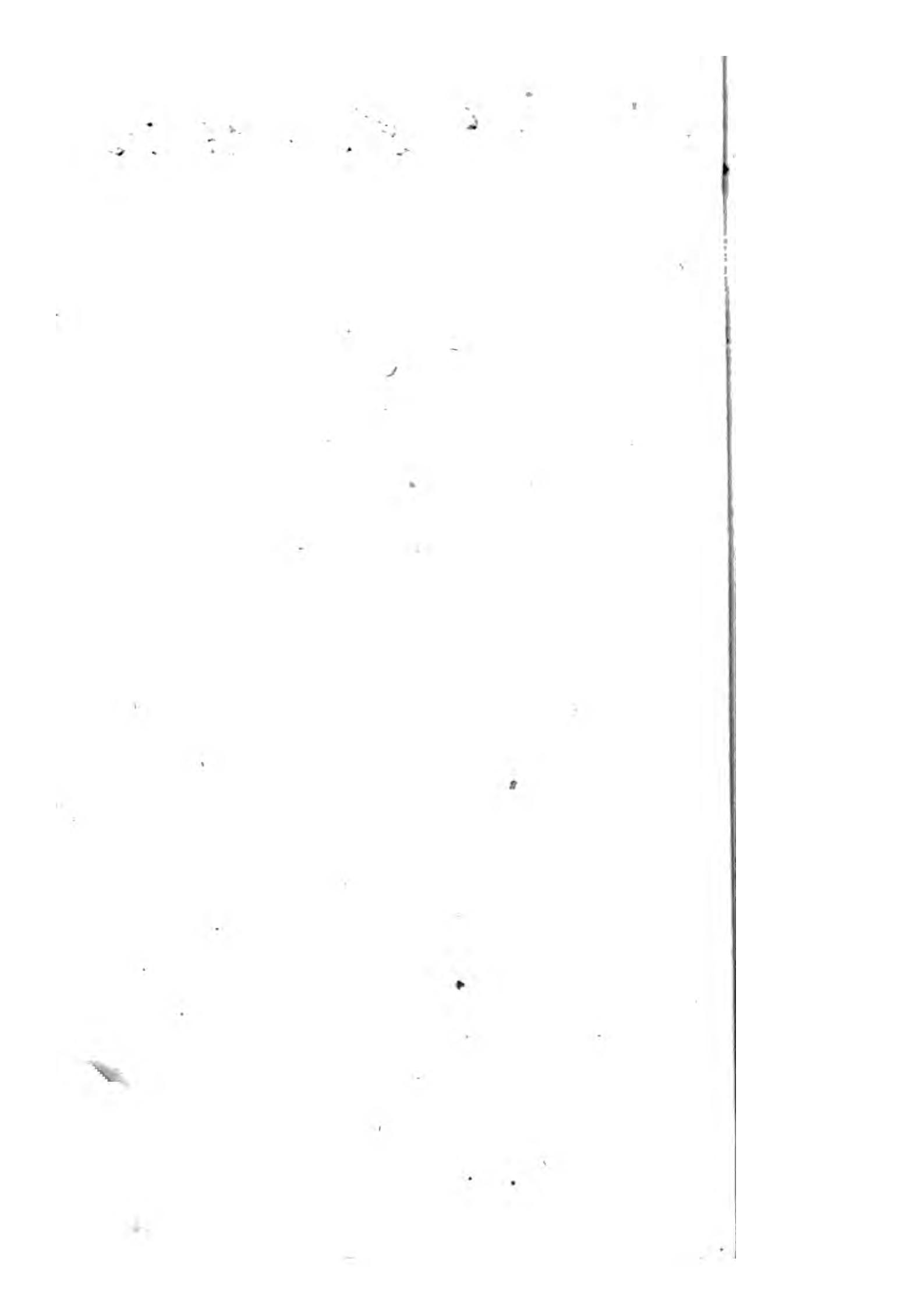
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E. Ingersoll
RHODODAPHNE:

OR

THE THESSALIAN SPELL.

A POEM.

PHILADELPHIA:

**PUBLISHED BY M. CAREY & SON,
NO. 126, CHESTNUT STREET.**

1818.

its natural shape; that the stones of the streets, and the waters of the fountains, were indurated and liquified human bodies; and that the trees which surrounded the city, and the birds which were singing in their boughs, were equally human beings, in the disguise of leaves and feathers. I expected the statues and images to walk; the walls to speak; I anticipated prophetic voices from the cattle, and oracles from the morning sky."

According to Pliny, Menander, who was skilled in the subtleties of learning, composed a Thessalian drama, in which he comprised the incantations and magic ceremonies of women drawing down the moon. Pliny considers the belief in magic as the combined effect of the operations of three powerful causes, medicine, superstition, and the mathematical arts. He does not mention

music, to which the ancients (as is shewn by the fables of Orpheus, Amphion, the Sirens, &c.) ascribed the most miraculous powers : but, strictly speaking, it was included in the mathematical arts, as being a science of numerical proportion.

The belief in the supernatural powers of music and pharmacy ascends to the earliest ages of poetry. Its most beautiful forms are the Circe of Homer, and Medea, in the days of her youth, as she appears in the third book of Apollonius.

Lucian's treatise on the Syrian Goddess contains much wild and wonderful imagery ; and his *Philopseudes*, though it does not mention Thesalian magic in particular, is a compendium of almost all the ideas entertained by the ancients of supernatural power, distinct from, and subordinate to, that of the gods ; though the gods were

supposed to be drawn from their cars by magic and compelled, however reluctantly, to yield it a temporary obedience. These subjects appear to have been favourite topics with the ancients in their social hours, as we may judge from the Philopseudes, and from the tales related by Niceros and Trimalchio at the feast given by the latter in the Satyricon of Petronius. Trimalchio concludes his marvellous narrative by saying (in the words which form the motto of this poem :) "You must of necessity believe that there are women of supernatural science, framers of nocturnal incantations, who can turn the world upside down."

It will appear from these references, and more might have been made if it had not appeared superfluous, that the power ascribed by the an-

cients to Thessalian magic is by no means exaggerated in the following poem, though its forms are in some measure diversified.

The opening scene of the poem is in the Temple of Love at Thespia, a town of Bœotia, near the foot of Mount Helicon. That Love was the principal deity of Thespia we learn from Pausanias; and Plutarch, in the beginning of his Erotic dialogue, informs us, that a festival in honour of this deity was celebrated by the Thespians with great splendor every fifth year. They also celebrated a quinquennial festival in honour of the Muses, who had a sacred grove and temple in Helicon. Both these festivals are noticed by Pausanias, who mentions likewise the three statues of Love, (though without any distinguishing attributes,) and those of Venus, and Phryne by

Praxiteles. The Winged Love of Praxiteles, in Pentelican marble, which he gave to his mistress Phryne, who bestowed it on her native Thespia, was held in immense admiration by the ancients. Cicero speaks of it as the great and only attraction of Thespia.

The time is an intermediate period between the age of the Greek tragedians, who are alluded to in the second canto, and that of Pausanias, in whose time the Thespian altar had been violated by Nero, and Praxiteles's statue of Love removed to Rome, for which outrageous impiety, says Pausanias, he was pursued by the just and manifest vengeance of the gods, who, it would seem, had already terrified Claudius into restoring it, when Caligula had previously taken it away.

The second song in the fifth canto is founded

on the Homeric hymn, "Bacchus, or the Pirates." Some other imitations of classical passages, but for the most part interwoven with unborrowed ideas, will occur to the classical reader.

The few notes subjoined are such as seemed absolutely necessary to explain or justify the text. Those of the latter description might, perhaps, have been more numerous, if much deference had seemed due to that species of judgment, which, having neither light nor tact of its own, can only see and feel through the medium of authority.

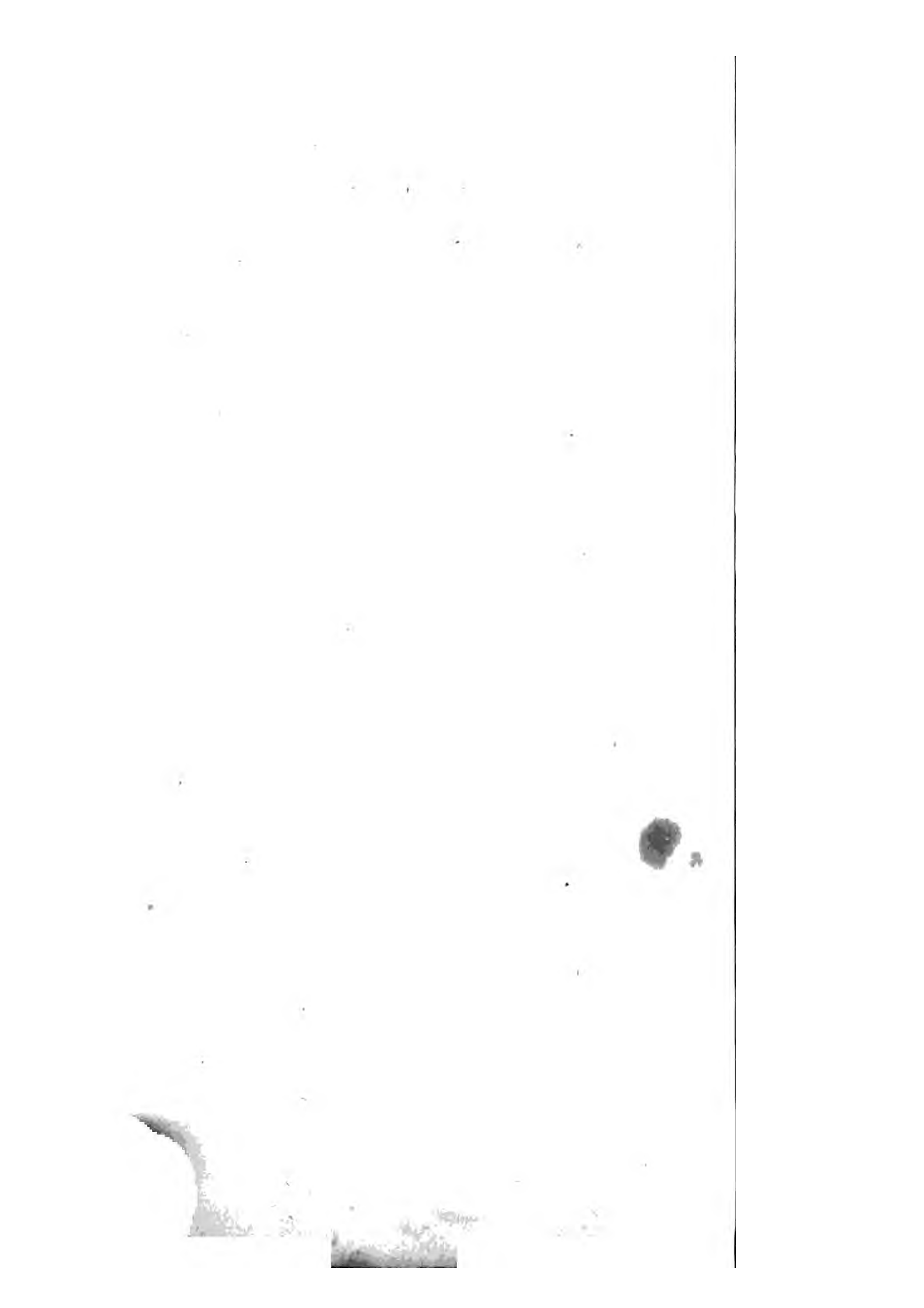
Σοφος ὁ πολλὰ εἶδως φνα΄

μαθόντες δὲ λαβροὶ

παγγλωσσία, κορακεὶς ὤς, ἀκραντα γαρυίτον

Δίος πρὸς ὀρνίχα θείον.

Pind. Olymp. II.



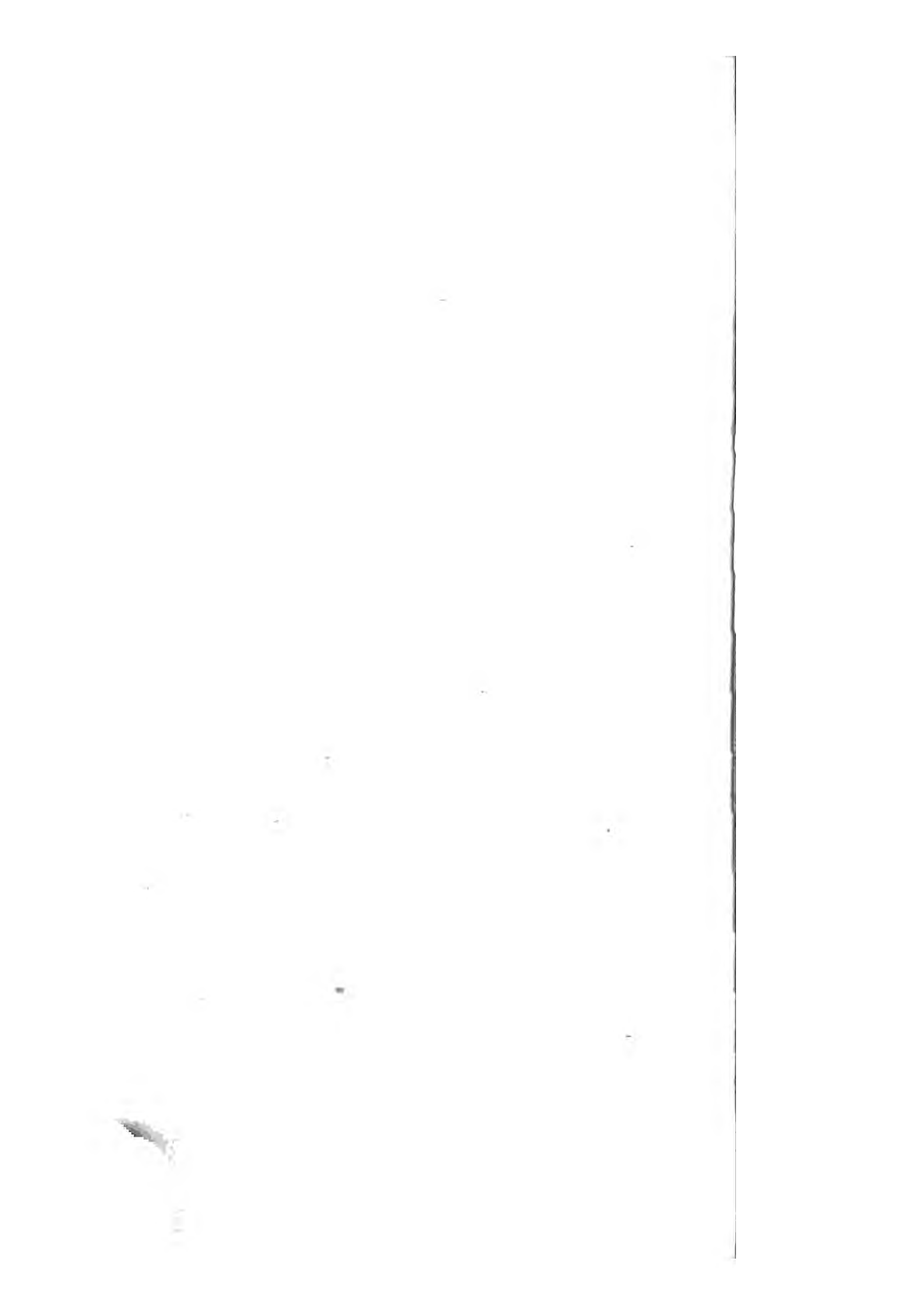
RHODODAPHNE,

OR

THE THESSALIAN SPELL.

Rogo vos, oportet, credatis, sunt mulieres plus sciæ, sunt nocturnæ, et quod sursum est deorsum faciunt.—PETRONIUS.

B



THE bards and sages of departed Greece
Yet live, for mind survives material doom ;
Still, as of yore, beneath the myrtle bloom
They strike their golden lyres, in sylvan peace.
Wisdom and Liberty may never cease,
Once having been, to be : but from the tomb
Their mighty radiance streams along the gloom
Of ages evermore without decrease.
Among those gifted bards and sages old,
Shunning the living world, I dwell, and hear,
Reverent, the creeds they held, the tales they told :
And from the songs that charmed their latest ear,
A yet ungathered wreath, with fingers bold,
I weave, of bleeding love and magic mysteries
drear.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO I.

RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO I.

THE rose and myrtle blend in beauty
Round Thespian Love's hypæthric fane;
And there alone, with festal duty
Of joyous song and choral train,
From many a mountain, stream, and vale,
And many a city fair and free,
The sons of Greece commingling hail
Love's primogenial deity.

Central amid the myrtle grove
That venerable temple stands :
Three statues, raised by gifted hands,
Distinct with sculptured emblems fair,
His threefold influence imaged bear,
Creative, Heavenly, Earthly Love.¹
The first, of stone and sculpture rude,
From immemorial time has stood ;
Not even in vague tradition known
The hand that raised that ancient stone.
Of brass the next, with holiest thought,
The skill of Sicyon's artist wrought.²
The third, a marble form divine,
That seems to move, and breathe, and smile,
Fair Phryne to this holy shrine
Conveyed, when her propitious wile

Had forced her lover to impart
The choicest treasure of his art.³
Her, too, in sculptured beauty's pride,
His skill has placed by Venus' side ;
Nor well the enraptured gaze descries
Which best might claim the Hesperian prize,
 Fairest youths and maids assembling
Dance the myrtle bowers among :
Harps to softest numbers trembling
Pour the impassioned strain along,
Where the poet's gifted song
Holds the intensely listening throng.
Matrons grave and sages grey
Lead the youthful train to pay
Homage on the opening day
Of Love's returning festival :

Every fruit and every flower
Sacred to his gentler power,
Twined in garlands bright and sweet,
They place before his sculptured feet,
And on his name they call :
From thousand lips, with glad acclaim,
Is breathed at once that sacred name ;
And music, kindling at the sound,
Wafts holier, tenderer strains around :
The rose a richer sweet exhales :
The myrtle waves in softer gales ;
Through every breast one influence flies ;
All hate, all evil passion dies ;
The heart of man, in that blest spell,
Becomes at once a sacred cell,
Where Love, and only Love, can dwell.⁴

From Ladon's shores Anthemion came,
Arcadian Ladon, loveliest tide
Of all the streams of Grecian name
Through rocks and sylvan hills that glide.
The flower of all Arcadia's youth
Was he: such form and face, in truth,
As thoughts of gentlest maidens seek
In their day-dreams: soft glossy hair
Shadowed his forehead, snowy-fair,
With many a hyacinthine cluster:
Lips, that in silence seemed to speak,
Were his, and eyes of mild blue lustre:
And even the paleness of his cheek,
The passing trace of tender care,
Still shewed how beautiful it were
If its own natural bloom were there.

His native vale, whose mountains high
The barriers of his world had been,
His cottage home, and each dear scene
His haunt from earliest infancy,
He left, to Love's fair fame to bring
His simple wild-flower offering.
She with whose life his life was twined,
His own Calliröe, long had pined
With some strange ill, and none could find
What secret cause did thus consume
That peerless maiden's roseate bloom :
The Asclepian sage's skill was vain ;
And vainly have their vows been paid
To Pan, beneath the odorous shade
Of his tall pine ; and other aid
Must needs be sought to save the maid :

And hence Anthemion came, to try
In Thespia's old solemnity,
If such a lover's prayers may gain
From Love in his primæval fane.

He mingled in the votive train,
That moved around the altar's base.
Every statue's beauteous face
Was turned towards that central altar.
Why did Anthemion's footsteps falter?
Why paused he, like a tale-struck child,
Whom darkness fills with fancies wild?
A vision strange his sense had bound:
It seemed the brazen statue frowned—
The marble statue smiled.
A moment, and the semblance fled:
And when again he lifts his head,

Each sculptured face alone presents
Its fixed and placid lineaments.

He bore a simple wild-flower wreath :
Narcissus, and the sweet-briar rose ;
Vervain, and flexile thyme, that breathe
Rich fragrance ; modest heath, that glows
With purple bells ; the amaranth bright,
That no decay nor fading knows,
Like true love's holiest, rarest light ;
And every purest flower, that blows
In that sweet time, which Love most blesses,
When spring on summer's confines presses.

Beside the altar's foot he stands,
And murmurs low his suppliant vow,
And now uplifts with duteous hands
The votive wild-flower wreath, and now—

At once as when in vernal night
Comes pale frost or eastern blight,
Sweeping with destructive wing
Banks untimely blossoming,
Droops the wreath, the wild-flowers die;
One by one on earth they lie,
Blighted strangely, suddenly.

His brain swims round; portentous fear
Across his wildered fancy flies:
Shall death thus sieze his maiden dear?
Does Love reject his sacrifice?
He caught the arm of a damsel near,
And soft sweet accents smote his ear;
—“What ails thee, stranger? Leaves are sear,
“And flowers are dead, and fields are drear,

“ And streams are wild, and skies are bleak,
“ And white with snow each mountain’s peak,
“ When winter rules the year ;
“ And children grieve, as if for aye
“ Leaves, flowers, and birds were past away :
“ But buds and blooms again are seen,
“ And fields are gay, and hills are green,
“ And streams are bright, and sweet birds sing ;
“ And where is the infant’s sorrowing ? ” —

Dimly he heard the words she said,
Nor well their latent meaning drew ;
But languidly he raised his head,
And on the damsel fixed his view.
Was it a form of mortal mould
That did his dazzled sense impress ?
Even painful from its loveliness !

Her bright hair, in the noon-beams glowing,
A rose-bud wreath above confined,
From whence, as from a fountain flowing,
Long ringlets round her temples twined,
And fell in many a graceful fold,
Streaming in curls of feathery lightness
Around her neck's marmoreal whiteness.
Love, in the smile that round her lips,
Twin roses of persuasion, played,
—Nectaries of balmier sweets than sips
The Hymettian bee,—his ambush laid ;
And his own shafts of liquid fire
Came on the soul with sweet surprise,
Through the soft dews of young desire
That trembled in her large dark eyes ;

But in those eyes there seemed to move
A flame, almost too bright for love,
That shone, with intermitting flashes,
Beneath their long deep-shadowy lashes.

—“What ails thee, youth?”—her lips repeat,
In tones more musically sweet
Than breath of shepherd’s twilight reed,
From far to woodland echo borne,
That floats like dew o’er stream and mead,
And whispers peace to souls that mourn.

“What ails thee, youth?”—“A fearful sign
“For one whose dear sake led me hither:
“Love repels me from his shrine,
“And seems to say; That maid divine
“Like these ill-omened flowers shall wither.”

—“Flowers may die on many a stem ;

“Fruits may fall from many a tree ;

“Not the more for loss of them

“Shall this fair world a desert be :

“Thou in every grove wilt see

“Fruits and flowers enough for thee.

“Stranger ! I with thee will share

“The votive fruits and flowers I bear,

“Rich in fragrance, fresh in bloom ;

“These may find a happier doom :

“If they change not, fade not now,

“Deem that Love accepts thy vow.”—

The youth, mistrustless, from the maid

Received, and on the altar laid

The votive wreath : it did not fade ;

And she on his her offering threw.
Did fancy cloud Anthemion's view?
Or did those sister garlands fair
Indeed entwine and blend again,
Wreathed into one, even as they were,
Ere she, their brilliant sweets to share,
Unwove their flowery chain?
She fixed on him her radiant eyes,
And—"Love's propitious power,"—she said,
"Accepts thy second sacrifice.
"The sun descends tow'rds ocean's bed.
"Day by day the sun doth set,
"And day by day the sun doth rise,
"And grass with evening dew-drops wet
"The morning radiance dries :

“ And what if beauty slept, where peers
“ That mossy grass ? and lover’s tears
“ Were mingled with that evening dew ?
“ The morning sun would dry them too.
“ Many a loving heart is near,
“ That shall its plighted love forsake :
“ Many lips are breathing here,
“ Vows a few short days will break ;
“ Many, lone amidst mankind,
“ Claim from Love’s unpitying power
“ The kindred heart they ne’er shall find :
“ Many, at this festal hour,
“ Joyless in the joyous scene,
“ Pass, with idle glance unmoved,
“ Even those whom they could best have loved,
“ Had means of mutual knowledge been :

“ Some meet for once and part for aye,

“ Like thee and me, and scarce a day

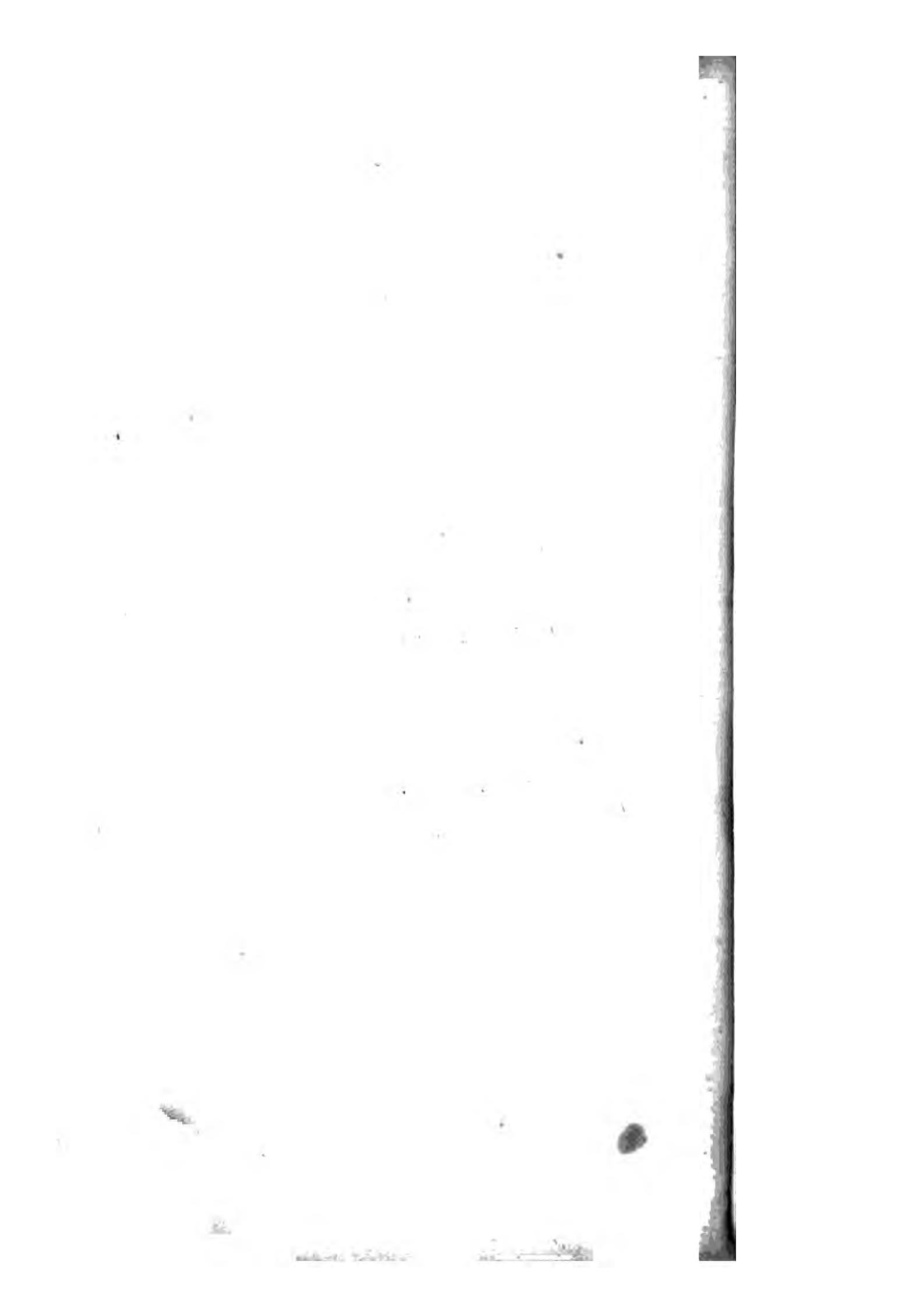
“ Shall each by each remembered be :

“ But take the flower I give to thee,

“ And till it fades remember me.”—

Anthemion answered not : his brain
Was troubled with conflicting thought :
A dim and dizzy sense of pain
That maid's surpassing beauty brought ;
And strangely on his fancy wrought
Her mystic moralisings, fraught
With half-prophetic sense, and breathed
In tones so sweetly wild.
Unconsciously the flower he took,
And with absorbed admiring look

Gazed as with fascinated eye
The lone bard gazes on the sky,
Who, in the bright clouds rolled and wreathed
Around the sun's descending car,
Sees shadowy rocks sublimely piled,
And phantom standards wide unfurled,
And towers of an aërial world
Embattled for unearthly war.
So stood Anthemion, till among
The mazes of the festal throng
The damsel from his sight had past.
Yet well he marked that once she cast
A backward look, perchance to see
If he watched her still so fixedly.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO II.

D

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RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO II.

DOES Love so weave his subtle spell,
So closely bind his golden chain,
That only one fair form may dwell
In dear remembrance, and in vain
May other beauty seek to gain
A place that idol form beside
In feelings all pre-occupied?
Or does one radiant image, shrined
Within the inmost soul's recess,

Exalt, expand, and make the mind
A temple, to receive and bless
All forms of kindred loveliness ?

HOWBEIT, as from those myrtle bowers,
And that bright altar crowned with flowers,
Anthemion turned, as thought's wild stream
Its interrupted course resumed,
Still, like the phantom of a dream,
Before his dazzled memory bloomed
The image of that maiden strange :
Yet not a passing thought of change
He knew, nor once his fancy strayed
From his long-loved Arcadian maid.
Vaguely his mind the scene retraced,
Image on image wildly driven,

As in his bosom's fold he placed
The flower that radiant nymph had given.
With idle steps, at random bent,
Through Thespia's crowded ways he went ;
And on his troubled ear the strains
Of choral music idly smote ;
And with vacant eye he saw the trains
Of youthful dancers round him float,
As the musing bard from his sylvan seat
Looks on the dance of the noon-tide heat,
Or the play of the watery flowers, that quiver
In the eddies of a lowland river.

Around, beside him, to and fro,
The assembled thousands hurrying go.
These the palæstric sports invite,
Where courage, strength, and skill contend ;

The gentler Muses those delight,
Where throngs of silent listeners bend,
While rival bards, with lips of fire,
Attune to Love the impassioned lyre ;
Or where the mimic scene displays
Some solemn tale of elder days,
Despairing Phædra's vengeful doom,
Alcestis' love too dearly tried,
Or Hæmon dying on the tomb
That closes o'er his living bride.⁵

But choral dance, and bardic strain,
Palæstric sport, and scenic tale,
Around Anthemion spread in vain
Their mixed attractions : sad and pale
He moved along, in musing sadness,
Amid all sights and sounds of gladness.

A sudden voice his musings broke.

He looked ; an aged man was near,

Of rugged brow, and eye severe.

—“ What evil,”—thus the stranger spoke,—

“ Has this our city done to thee,

“ Ill-omened boy, that thou should'st be

“ A blot on our solemnity ?

“ Or what Alastor bade thee wear

“ That laurel-rose, to Love profane,

“ Whose leaves, in semblance falsely fair

“ Of Love's maternal flower, contain

“ For purest fragrance deadliest bane ?”

“ Art thou a scorner ? dost thou throw

“ Defiance at his power ? Beware !

“ Full soon thy impious youth may know

“ What pangs his shafts of anger bear :

“ For not the sun’s descending dart,
“ Nor yet the lightning-brand of Jove,
“ Fall like the shaft that strikes the heart
“ Thrown by the mightier hand of Love.”—
—“ Oh stranger ! not with impious thought
“ My steps this holy rite have sought.
“ With pious heart and offerings due
“ I mingled in the votive train ;
“ Nor did I deem this flower profane ;
“ Nor she, I ween, its evil knew,
“ That radiant girl, who bade me cherish
“ Her memory till its bloom should perish.”—
—“ Who, and what, and whence was she ?”
—“ A stranger till this hour to me.”—
—“ Oh youth, beware ! that laurel-rose
“ Around Larissa’s evil walls

“ In tufts of rank luxuriance grows,
“ ’Mid dreary valleys, by the falls
“ Of haunted streams ; and magic knows
“ No herb or plant of deadlier might,
“ When impious footsteps wake by night
“ The echoes of those dismal dells,
“ What time the murky midnight dew
“ Trembles on many a leaf and blossom,
“ That draws from earth’s polluted bosom
“ Mysterious virtue, to imbue
“ The chalice of unnatural spells.
“ Oft, those dreary rocks among,
“ The murmurs of unholy song,
“ Breathed by lips as fair as her’s
“ By whose false hands that flower was given,

“ The solid earth’s firm breast have riven,
“ And burst the silent sepulchres,
“ And called strange shapes of ghastly fear,
“ To hold, beneath the sickening moon,
“ Portentous parle, at night’s deep noon,
“ With beauty skilled in mysteries drear.
“ Oh, youth! Larissa’s maids are fair ;
“ But the dæmons of the earth and air
“ Their spells obey, their councils share,
“ And wide o’er earth and ocean bear
“ Their mandates to the storms that tear
“ The rock-enrooted oak, and sweep
“ With whirlwind wings the labouring deep.
“ Their words of power can make the streams
“ Roll reflux on their mountain-springs,

“ Can torture sleep with direful dreams,
“ And on the shapes of earthly things,
“ Man, beast, bird, fish, with influence strange,
“ Breathe foul and fearful interchange,
“ And fix in marble bonds the form
“ Erewhile with natural being warm,
“ And give to senseless stones and stocks
“ Motion, and breath, and shape that mocks,
“ As far as nicest eye can scan,
“ The action and the life of man.
“ Beware ! yet once again beware !
“ Ere round thy inexperienced mind,
“ With voice and semblance falsely fair,
“ A chain Thessalian magic bind,
“ Which never more, oh youth ! believe,
“ Shall either earth or heaven unweave.”—

While yet he spoke, the morning scene,
In more portentous hues arrayed,
Dwelt on Anthemion's mind: a shade
Of deeper mystery veiled the mien
And words of that refulgent maid.
The frown, that, ere he breathed his vow,
Dwelt on the brazen statue's brow ;
His votive flowers, so strangely blighted ;
The wreath her beauteous hands untwined
To share with him, that, self-combined,
Its sister tendrils re-united,
Strange sympathy ! as in his mind
These forms of troubled memory blended
With dreams of evil undefined,
Of magic and Thessalian guile,
Now by the warning voice portended

Of that mysterious man, awhile,
Even when the stranger's speech had ended,
He stood as if he listened still.

At length he said :—“ Oh, reverend stranger!

“ Thy solemn words are words of fear.

“ Not for myself I shrink from danger;

“ But there is one to me more dear

“ Than all within this earthly sphere,

“ And many are the omens ill

“ That threaten her: to Jove's high will

“ We bow; but if in human skill

“ Be ought of aid or expiation

“ That may this peril turn away,

“ For old Experience holds his station

“ On that grave brow, oh stranger! say.”—

—“ Oh youth! experience sad indeed

“ Is mine ; and should I tell my tale,
“ Therein thou might'st too clearly read
“ How little may all aid avail
“ To him, whose hapless steps around
“ Thessalian spells their chains have bound :
“ And yet such counsel as I may
“ I give to thee. Ere close of day
“ Seek thou the planes, whose broad shades fall
“ On the stream that laves yon mountain's base :
“ There on thy Natal Genius call
“ For aid, and with averted face
“ Give to the stream that flower, nor look
“ Upon the running wave again ;
“ For, if thou should'st, the sacred plane
“ Has heard thy suppliant vows in vain ;
“ Nor then thy Natal Genius can,

“Nor Phœbus, nor Arcadian Pan,

“Dissolve thy tenfold chain.”—

The stranger said, and turned away.

Anthemion sought the plane-grove's shade.

'Twas near the closing hour of day,

The slanting sunbeam's golden ray,

That through the massy foliage made

Scarce here and there a passage, played

Upon the silver-eddy stream,

Even on the rocky channel throwing

Through the clear flood its golden gleam.

The bright waves danced beneath the beam

To the music of their own sweet flowing.

The flowering shallows on the bank,

Beneath the o'ershadowing plane-trees wreath-

ing

In sweet association, drank
The grateful moisture, round them breathing
Soft fragrance through the lonely wood.
There, where the mingling foliage wove
Its closest bower, two altars stood,
This to the Genius of the Grove,
That to the Naiad of the Flood.
So light a breath was on the trees,
That rather like a spirit's sigh
Than motion of an earthly breeze,
Among the summits broad and high
Of those tall planes its whispers stirred ;
And save that gentlest symphony
Of air and stream, no sound was heard,
But of the solitary bird,

“ With this false flower those spells away,

“ If such be lingering there.”—

Then from the stream he turned his view,
And o'er his back the flower he threw.

Hark! from the wave a sudden cry,

Of one in last extremity,

A voice as of a drowning maid!

The echoes of the sylvan shade

Gave response long and drear.

He starts: he does not turn. Again!

It is Calliroë's cry! In vain

Could that dear maiden's cry of pain

Strike on Anthemion's ear?

At once, forgetting all beside,

He turned to plunge into the tide,

But all again was still:

“ These banks, be mixed injurious dread
“ Of thy fair thoughts, the fears of love
“ Must with thy injured kindness plead
“ My pardon for the wrongful deed.
“ Ye Nymphs and Sylvan Gods, that rove
“ The precincts of this sacred wood !
“ Thou, Achelöus’ gentle daughter,
“ Bright Naiad of this beauteous water !
“ And thou, my Natal Genius good !
“ Lo! with pure hands the crystal flood
“ Collecting, on these altars blest,
“ Libation holiest, brightest, best,
“ I pour. If round my footsteps dwell
“ Unholy sign or evil spell,
“ Receive me in your guardian sway ;
“ And thou, oh gentle Naiad ! bear

“ With this false flower those spells away,
“ If such be lingering there.”—

Then from the stream he turned his view,
And o'er his back the flower he threw.

Hark ! from the wave a sudden cry,

Of one in last extremity,

A voice as of a drowning maid !

The echoes of the sylvan shade

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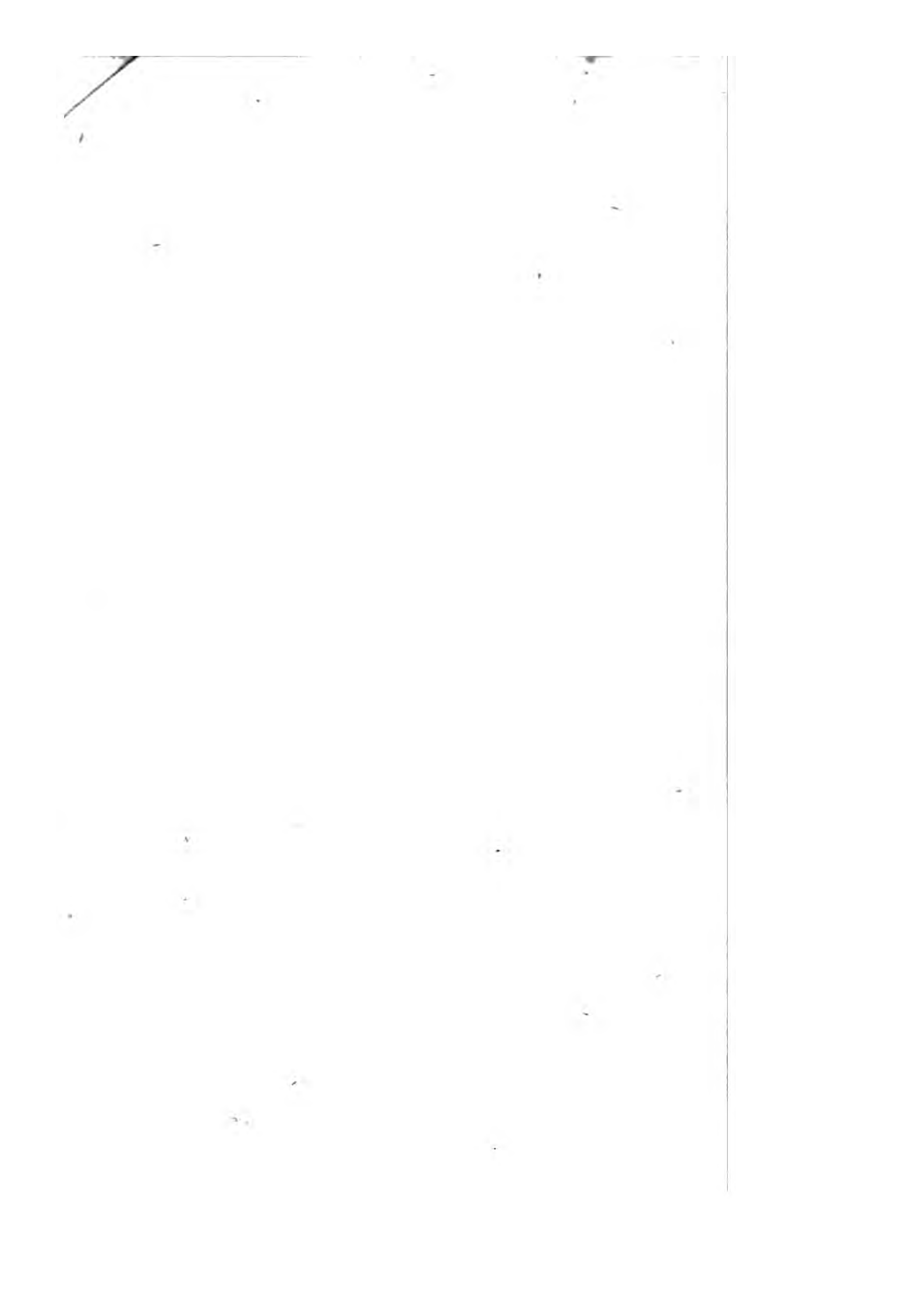
He turned to plunge into the tide,

But all again was still :

The sun upon the surface bright
Poured his last line of crimson light,
Half-sunk behind the hill :
But through the solemn plane-trees past
The pinions of a mightier blast,
And in its many-sounding sweep,
Among the foliage broad and deep,
Aërial voices seemed to sigh,
As if the spirits of the grove
Mourned, in prophetic sympathy
With some disastrous love.

RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO III.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO III.

BY living streams, in sylvan shades,
Where winds and waves symphonious make
Sweet melody, the youths and maids
No more with choral music wake
Lone Echo from her tangled brake,
On Pan, or Sylvan Genius, calling,
Naiad or Nymph, in suppliant song:
No more by living fountain, falling
The poplar's circling bower among,

Where pious hands have carved of yore
Rude bason for its lucid store
And reared the grassy altar nigh,
The traveller, when the sun rides high,
For cool refreshment lingering there,
Pours to the Sister Nymphs his prayer.
Yet still the green vales smile : the springs
Gush forth in light : the forest weaves
Its own wild bowers ; the breeze's wings
Make music in their rustling leaves ;
But 'tis no spirit's breath that sighs
Among their tangled canopies :
In ocean's caves no Nereid dwells :
No Oread walks the mountain-dells :
The streams no sedge-crowned Genii roll
From bounteous urn : great Pan is dead :

The life, the intellectual soul
Of vale, and grove, and stream, has fled
For ever with the creed sublime
That nursed the Muse of earlier time.

THE broad moon rose o'er Thespia's walls,
And on the light wind's swells and falls
Came to Anthemion's ear the sounds
Of dance, and song, and festal pleasure,
As slowly tow'rd the city's bounds
He turned, his backward steps to measure.
But with such sounds his heart confessed
No sympathy : his mind was pressed
With thoughts too heavy to endure
The contrast of a scene so gay ;

And from the walls he turned away,
To where, in distant moonlight pure,
Mount Helicon's conspicuous height
Rose in the dark-blue vault of night.
Along the solitary road
Alone he went ; for who but he
On that fair night would absent be
From Thespia's joyous revelry ?
The sounds that on the soft air flowed
By slow degrees in distance died :
And now he climbed the rock's steep side,
Where frowned o'er sterile regions wide
Neptunian Ascra's ruined tower :³
Memorial of gigantic power :
But thoughts more dear and more refined
Awakening, in the pensive mind,

Of him, the Muses' gentlest son,
The shepherd-bard of Helicon,
Whose song, to peace and wisdom dear,
The Aonian Dryads loved to hear.

By Aganippe's fountain-wave
Anthemion passed : the moon-beams fell
Pale on the darkness of the cave,
Within whose mossy rock-hewn cell
The sculptured form of Linus stood,
Primæval bard. The Nymphs for him
Through every spring, and mountain flood,
Green vale, and twilight woodland dim,
Long wept : all living nature wept
For Linus ; when, in minstrel strife,
Apollo's wrath from love and life
The child of music swept.

The Muses' grove is nigh. He treads
Its sacred precincts. O'er him spreads
The palm's aërial canopy,
That, nurtured by perennial springs,
Around its summit broad and high
Its light and branchy foliage flings,
Arching in graceful symmetry.
Among the tall stems jagg'd and bare
Luxuriant laurel interweaves
An undershade of myriad leaves,
Here black in rayless masses, there
In partial moonlight glittering fair ;
And wheresoe'er the barren rock
Peers through the grassy soil, its roots
The sweet andrachne strikes, to mock^o

Sterility, and profusely shoots
Its light boughs, rich with ripening fruits.
The moonbeams, through the chequering shade,
Upon the silent temple played,
The Muses' fane. The nightingale,
Those consecrated bowers among,
Poured on the air a warbled tale,
So sweet, that scarcely from her nest,
Where Orpheus' hallowed relics rest,
She breathes a sweeter song.¹⁰

A scene, whose power the maniac sense
Of passion's wildest mood might own!
Anthemion felt its influence:
His fancy drank the soothing tone
Of all that tranquil loveliness;
And health and bloom returned to bless

His dear Calliroë, and the groves
And rocks where pastoral Ladon roves
Bore record of their blissful loves.

List ! there is music on the wind !
Sweet music ! seldom mortal ear
On sounds so tender, so refined,
Has dwelt. Perchance some Muse is near,
Euterpe, or Polymnia bright,
Or Erato, whose gentle lyre
Responds to love and young desire !
It is the central hour of night :
The time is holy, lone, severe,
And mortals may not linger here !

Still on the air those wild notes fling
Their airy spells of voice and string,



In sweet accordance, sweeter made
By response soft from caverned shade.
He turns to where a lovely glade
Sleeps in the open moonlight's smile,
A natural fane, whose ample bound
The palm's columnar stems surround,
A wild and stately peristyle ;
Save where their interrupted ring
Bends on the consecrated cave,
From whose dark arch, with tuneful wave,
Libethrus issues, sacred spring.
Beside its gentle murmuring,
A maiden, on a mossy stone,
Full in the moonlight, sits alone :
Her eyes, with humid radiance bright,
As if a tear had dimmed their light,

Are fixed upon the moon ; her hair
Flows long and loose in the light soft air ;
A golden lyre her white hands bear ;
Its chords, beneath her fingers fleet,
To such wild symphonies awake,
Her sweet lips breathe a song so sweet,
That the echoes of the cave repeat
Its closes with as soft a sigh,
As if they almost feared to break
The magic of its harmony.

Oh ! there was passion in the sound,
Intensest passion, strange and deep ;
Wild breathings of a soul, around
Whose every pulse one hope had bound,
One burning hope, which might not sleep.

But hark ! that wild and solemn swell !

And was there in those tones a spell,

Which none may disobey ? For lo !

Anthemion from the sylvan shade

Moves with reluctant steps and slow,

And in the lonely moonlight glade

He stands before the radiant maid.

She ceased her song, and with a smile

She welcomed him, but nothing said :

And silently he stood the while,

And tow' rds the ground he drooped his head,

As if he shrunk beneath the light

Of those dark eyes so dazzling bright.

At length she spoke :—"The flower was fair

"I bade thee till its fading wear :

“ And didst thou scorn the boon,

“ Or died the flower so soon ? ” —

—“ It did not fade,

“ Oh radiant maid !

“ But Thespia’s rites its use forbade,

“ To Love’s vindictive power profane :

“ If soothly spoke the reverend seer,

“ Whose voice rebuked, with words severe,

“ Its beauty’s secret bane.” —

—“ The world, oh youth ! deems many wise

“ Who dream at noon with waking eyes,

“ While spectral fancy round them flings

“ Phantoms of unexisting things ;

“ Whose truth is lies, whose paths are error,

“ Whose gods are fiends, whose heaven is terror ;

“ And such a slave has been with thee,

“ And thou, in thy simplicity,

“ Hast deemed his idle sayings truth.

“ The flower I gave thee, thankless youth !

“ The harmless flower thy hand rejected,

“ Was fair ; my native river sees

“ Its verdure, and its bloom reflected-

“ Wave in the eddies and the breeze,

“ My mother felt its beauty's claim,

“ And gave, in sportive fondness wild,

“ Its name to me, her only child.”—

—“ Then RHODODAPHNE is thy name ?”—

Anthemion said : the maiden bent

Her head in token of assent.

—“ Say once again, if sooth I deem,

“ Penëus is thy native stream ?”—

—“ Down Pindus’ steep Penëus falls,
“ And swift and clear through hill and dale
“ It flows, and by Larissa’s walls,
“ And through wild Tempe, loveliest vale :
“ And on its banks the cypress gloom
“ Waves round my father’s lonely tomb.
“ My mother’s only child am I :
“ Mid Tempe’s sylvan rocks we dwell ;
“ And from my earliest infancy,
“ The darling of our cottage-del.
“ For its bright leaves and clusters fair,
“ My namesake flower has bound my hair.
“ With costly gift and flattering song,
“ Youths, rich and valiant, sought my love.
“ They moved me not. I shunned the throng
“ Of suitors, for the mountain-grove

“ Where Sylvan gods and Oreads rove.
“ The Muses, whom I worship here,
“ Had breathed their influence on my being,
“ Keeping my youthful spirit clear
“ From all corrupting thoughts, and freeing
“ My footsteps from the crowd, to tread
“ Beside the torrent’s echoing bed,
“ Mid wind-tost pines, on steeps aërial,
“ Where elemental Genii throw
“ Effluence of natures more ethereal
“ Than vulgar minds can feel or know.
“ Oft on those steeps, at earliest dawn,
“ The world in mist beneath me lay,
“ Whose vapory curtains, half withdrawn,
“ Revealed the flow of Therma’s bay,
“ Red with the nascent light of day ;

“ Till full from Athos’ distant height
“ The sun poured down his golden beams
“ Scattering the mists like morning dreams,
“ And rocks and lakes and isles and streams
“ Burst, like creation, into light.
“ In noontide bowers the bubbling springs,
“ In evening vales the winds that sigh
“ To eddyng rivers murmuring by,
“ Have heard to these symphonious strings
“ The rocks and caverned glens reply.
“ Spirits that love the moonlight hour
“ Have met me on the shadowy hill:
“ Dream’st thou of Magic? of the power
“ That makes the blood of life run chill,
“ And shakes the world with dæmon skill?

“ Beauty is Magic ; grace and song ;
“ Fair form, light motion, airy sound :
“ Frail webs ! and yet a chain more strong
“ They weave the strongest hearts around,
“ Than e'er Alcides' arm unbound :
“ And such a chain I weave round thee,
“ Though but with mortal witchery.”—

His eyes and ears had drank the charm.

The damsel rose, and on his arm
She laid her hand. Through all his frame
The soft touch thrilled like liquid flame ;
But on his mind Calliroë came
All pale and sad, her sweet eyes dim
With tears which for herself and him
Fell : by that modest image mild
Recalled, inspired, Anthemion strove

Against the charm that now beguiled
His sense, and cried, in accents wild,
—“ Oh maid ! I have another love ! ”—

But still she held his arm, and spoke
Again in accents thrilling sweet :
— “ In Tempe’s vale a lonely oak
“ Has felt the storms of ages beat :
“ Blasted by the lightning-stroke,
“ A hollow, leafless, branchless trunk
“ It stands ; but in its giant cell
“ A mighty sylvan power doth dwell,
“ An old and holy oracle.
“ Kneeling by that ancient tree,
“ I sought the voice of destiny,
“ And in my ear these accents sunk :

“ ‘ Waste not in loneliness thy bloom :
“ ‘ With flowers the Thespian altar dress :
“ ‘ The youth whom Love’s mysterious doom
“ ‘ Assigns to thee, thy sight shall bless
“ ‘ With no ambiguous loveliness ;
“ ‘ And thou, amid the joyous scene,
“ ‘ Shalt know him, by his mournful mien,
“ ‘ And by the paleness of his cheek,
“ ‘ And by the sadness of his eye,
“ ‘ And by his withered flowers, and by
“ ‘ The language thy own heart shall speak.’
“ And I did know thee, youth ! and thou
“ Art mine, and I thy bride must be.
“ Another love ! the gods allow
“ No other love to thee or me !”—

She gathered up her glittering hair,
And round his neck its tresses threw,
And twined her arms of beauty rare
Around him, and the light curls drew
In closer bands : ethereal dew
Of love and young desire was swimming
In her bright eyes, albeit not dimming
Their starry radiance, rather brightning
Their beams with passion's liquid lightning.
She clasped him to her throbbing breast,
And on his lips her lips she prest,
And cried the while
With joyous smile :
—“ These lips are mine ; the spells have won
“ them,
“ Which round and round thy soul I twine ;

“ And be the kiss I print upon them

“ Poison to all lips but mine !”—

Dizzy awhile Anthemion stood,
With thirst-parched lips and fevered blood,
In those enchanting ringlets twined :
The fane, the cave, the moonlight wood,
The world, and all the world enshrined,
Seemed melting from his troubled mind :
But those last words the thought recalled
Of his Calliroë, and appalled
His mind with many a nameless fear
For her, so good, so mild, so dear.
With sudden start of gentle force
From Rhododaphne’s arms he sprung,
And swifter than the torrent’s course
From rock to rock in tumult flung,

Adown the steeps of Helicon,
By spring, and cave, and tower, he fled,
But turned from Thespia's walls, and on
Along the rocky way, that led
Tow'rds the Corinthian Isthmus, sped,
Impatient to behold again
His cottage-home by Ladon's side,
And her, for whose dear sake his brain
Was giddy with foreboding pain,
Fairest of Ladon's virgin train,
His own long-destined bride.

RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO IV.



RHODÓDAPHNE.

CANTO IV.

MAGIC and mystery, spells Circean,
The Siren voice, that calmed the sea,
And steeped the soul in dews Lethæan :
The enchanted chalice, sparkling free
With wine, amid whose ruby glow
Love couched, with madness linked, and wo :
Mantle and zone, whose woof beneath
Lurked wily grace, in subtle wreath

With blandishment and young desire
And soft persuasion, intertwined,
Whose touch, with sympathetic fire,
Could melt at once the sternest mind ;
Have passed away : for vestal Truth
Young Fancy's foe, and Reason chill,
Have chased the dreams that charmed the
youth

Of nature and the world, which still,
Amid that vestal light severe,
Our colder spirits leap to hear
Like echoes from a fairy hill.
Yet deem not so. The Power of Spells
Still lingers on the earth, but dwells
In deeper folds of close disguise,
That baffle Reason's searching eyes :

Nor shall that mystic Power resign
To Truth's cold sway his webs of guile,
Till woman's eyes have ceased to shine,
And woman's lips have ceased to smile,
And woman's voice has ceased to be
The earthly soul of melody.

A night and day had passed away :
A second night. A second day
Had risen. The noon on vale and hill
Was glowing, and the pensive herds
In rocky pool and sylvan rill
The shadowy coolness sought. The birds
Among their leafy bowers were still,
Save where the red-breast on the pine,
In thickest ivy's sheltring nest,

Attuned a lonely song divine,
To soothe old Pan's meridian rest.¹¹
The stream's eternal eddies played
In light and music ; on its edge
The soft light air scarce moved the sedge :
The bees a pleasant murmuring made
On thymy bank and flowery hedge :
From field to field the grasshopper
Kept up his joyous descant shrill ;
When once again the wanderer,
With arduous travel faint and pale,
Beheld his own Arcadian vale.

From Oryx, down the sylvan way,
With hurried pace the youth proceeds.
Sweet Ladon's waves beside him stray
In dear companionship : the reeds

Seem, whispering on the margin clear,
The doom of Syrinx to rehearse,
Ladonian Syrinx, name most dear
To music and Mænalian verse.

It is the Aphrodisian grove.

Anthemion's home is near. He sees
The light smoke rising from the trees
That shade the dwelling of his love.
Sad bodings, shadowy fears of ill,
Pressed heavier on him, in wild strife
With many-wandering hope, that still
Leaves on the darkest clouds of life
Some vestige of her radiant way :
But soon those torturing struggles end ;
For where the poplar silver-gray
And dark associate cedar blend

Their hospitable shade, before
One human dwelling's well-known door,
Old Pheidon sits, and by his side
His only child, his age's pride,
Herself, Anthemion's destined bride.

She hears his coming tread. She flies
To meet him. Health is on her cheeks,
And pleasure sparkles in her eyes,
And their soft light a welcome speaks
More eloquent than words. Oh, joy!
The maid he left so fast consuming,
Whom death, impatient to destroy,
Had marked his prey, now rosy-blooming,
And beaming like the morning star
With loveliness and love, has flown

To welcome him : his cares fly far,
Like clouds when storms are overblown ;
For where such perfect transports reign
Even memory has no place for pain.

The poet's task were passing sweet,
If, when he tells how lovers meet,
One half the flow of joy, that flings
Its magic on that blissful hour,
Could touch, with sympathetic power,
His lyre's accordant strings.

It may not be. The lyre is mute,
When venturous minstrelsy would suit
Its numbers to so dear a theme :
But many a gentle maid, I deem,
Whose heart has known and felt the like,

Can hear, in fancy's kinder dream,
The chords I dare not strike.

They spread a banquet in the shade
Of those old trees. The friendly board
Calliroë's beauteous hands arrayed,
With self-requiting toil, and poured
In fair-carved bowl the sparkling wine.
In order due Anthemion made
Libation, to Olympian Jove,
Arcadian Pan, and Thespian Love,
And Bacchus, giver of the vine.
The generous draught dispelled the sense
Of weariness. His limbs were light :
His heart was free : Love banished thence
All forms but one most dear, most bright :
And ever with insatiate sight

He gazed upon the maid, and listened,
Absorbed in ever new delight,
To that dear voice, whose balmy sighing
To his full joy blest response gave,
Like music doubly-sweet replying
From twilight echo's sylvan cave ;
And her mild eyes with soft rays glistened,
Imparting and reflecting pleasure ;
For this is Love's terrestrial treasure,
That in participation lives,
And evermore, the more it gives,
Itself abounds in fuller measure.

Old Pheidon felt his heart expand.
With joy that from their joy had birth
And said :—“ Anthemion ! Love's own hand
“ Is here, and mighty on the earth

“ Is he, the primogenial power,
“ Whose sacred grove and antique fane
“ Thy prompted footsteps, not in vain,
“ Have sought ; for, on the day and hour
“ Of his incipient rite, most strange
“ And sudden was Calliroë’s change.
“ The sickness under which she bowed,
“ Swiftly, as though it ne’er had been,
“ Passed, like the shadow of a cloud
“ From April’s hills of green.
“ And bliss once more is yours ; and mine
“ In seeing yours, and more than this ;
“ For ever, in our children’s bliss,
“ The sun of our past youth doth shine
“ Upon our age anew. Divine

“ No less than our own Pan must be

“ To us Love’s bounteous deity ;

“ And round our old and hallowed pine

“ The myrtle and the rose must twine,

“ Memorial of the Thespian shrine.”—

’Twas strange indeed, Anthemion thought,
That, in the hour when omens dread
Most tortured him, such change was wrought ;
But love and hope their lustre shed
On all his visions now, and led
His memory from the mystic train
Of fears which that strange damsel wove
Around him in the Thespian fane
And in the Heliconian grove.

Eve came, and twilight’s balmy hour :
Alone, beneath the cedar bower,

The lovers sate, in converse dear
Retracing many a backward year,
Their infant sports in field and grove,
Their mutual tasks, their dawning love,
Their mingled tears of past distress,
Now all absorbed in happiness ;
And oft would Fancy intervene,
To throw, on many a pictured scene
Of life's untrodden path, such gleams
Of golden light, such blissful dreams,
As in young Love's enraptured eye
Hope almost made reality.

So in that dear accustomed shade,
With Ladon flowing at their feet,
Together sate the youth and maid,

In that uncertain shadowy light
When day and darkness mingling meet.
Her bright eyes ne'er had seemed so bright,
Her sweet voice ne'er had seemed so sweet,
As then they seemed. Upon his neck
Her head was resting, and her eyes
Were raised to his, for no disguise
Her feelings knew ; untaught to check,
As in these days more worldly wise,
The heart's best, purest sympathies.

Fond youth ! her lips are near to thine :
The ringlets of her temples twine
Against thy cheek : Oh ! more or less
Than mortal wert thou not to press
Those ruby lips ! Or does it dwell
Upon thy mind, that fervid spell

Which Rhododaphne breathed upon
Thy lips erewhile in Helicon?

Ah! pause, rash boy! bethink thee yet;
And canst thou then the charm forget?
Or dost thou scorn its import vain
As vision of a fevered brain?

Oh! he has kissed Calliroë's lips!
And with the touch the maid grew pale,
And sudden shade of strange eclipse
Drew o'er her eyes its dusky veil.
As droops the meadow-pink its head,
By the rude scythe in summer's prime
Cleft from its parent stem, and spread
On earth to wither ere its time:
Even so the flower of Ladon faded,
Swifter than when the sun hath shaded

In the young storm his setting ray,
The western radiance dies away.

He pressed her heart : no pulse was there.
Before her lips his hand he placed :
No breath was in them. Wild despair
Came on him, as, with sudden waste,
When snows dissolve in vernal rain,
The mountain-torrent on the plain
Descends ; and with that fearful swell
Of passionate grief, the midnight spell
Of the Thessalian maid recurred,
Distinct in every fatal word ;

—“ These lips are mine ; the spells have won

“ them,

“ Which round and round thy soul I twine ;

“ And be the kiss I print upon them

“ Poison to all lips but mine !”—

“ Oh, thou art dead, my love !”— he cried,

“ Art dead, and I have murdered thee !”—

He started up in agony.

The beauteous maiden from his side

Sunk down on earth. Like one who slept

She lay, still, cold, and pale of hue ;

And her long hair all loosely swept

The thin grass, wet with evening dew.

He could not weep ; but anguish burned

Within him like consuming flame.

He shrieked : the distant rocks returned

The voice of wo. Old Pheidon came

In terror forth : he saw ; and wild

With misery fell upon his child,

And cried aloud, and rent his hair.

Stung by the voice of his despair,

And by the intolerable thought

That he, how innocent soe'er,

Had all this grief and ruin wrought,

And urged perchance by secret might

Of magic spells, that drew their chain

More closely round his phrensied brain,

Beneath the swiftly-closing night

Anthemion sprang away, and fled

O'er plain and steep, with frantic tread,

As Passion's aimless impulse led.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO V.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO V.

THOUGH Pity's self has made thy breast
Its earthly shrine, Oh gentle maid !
Shed not thy tears, where Love's last rest
Is sweet beneath the cypress shade ;
Whence never voice of tyrant power,
Nor trumpet-blast from rending skies,
Nor winds that howl, nor storms that lower,
Shall bid the sleeping sufferer rise.

But mourn for them, who live to keep
Sad strife with fortune's tempests rude ;
For them, who live to toil and weep
In loveless, joyless solitude ;
Whose days consume in hope, that flies
Like clouds of gold that fading float,
Still watched with fondlier lingering eyes
As still more dim and more remote.
Oh ! wisely, truly, sadly sung
The bard by old Cephisus' side,¹²
(While not with sadder, sweeter tongue,
His own loved nightingale replied :)
—" Man's happiest lot is NOT TO BE ;
" And when we tread life's thorny steep,
" Most blest are they, who, earliest free,
" Descend to death's eternal sleep."—

LONG, wide, and far, the youth has strayed,
Forlorn, and pale, and wild with wo,
And found no rest. His loved, lost maid,
A beauteous, sadly-smiling shade,
Is ever in his thoughts, and slow
Roll on the hopeless, aimless hours.
Sunshine, and grass, and woods, and flowers,
Rivers, and vales, and glittering homes
Of busy men, where'er he roams,
Torment his sense with contrast keen,
Of that which is, and might have been.

The mist that on the mountains high
Its transient wreath light-hovering flings,
The clouds and changes of the sky,
The forms of unsubstantial things,



The voice of the tempestuous gale,
The rain-swoln torrent's turbid moan,
And every sound that seems to wail
For beauty past and hope o'erthrown,
Attemper with his wild despair ;
But scarce his restless eye can bear
The hills, and rocks, and summer streams,
The things that still are what they were
When life and love were more than dreams.

It chanced, along the rugged shore,
Where giant Pelion's piny steep
O'erlooks the wide Ægean deep,
He shunned the steps of humankind,
Soothed by the multitudinous roar
Of ocean, and the ceaseless shock

Of spray, high-scattering from the rock
In the wail of the many-wandering wind.
A crew, on lawless venture bound,
Such men as roam the seas around,
Hearts to fear and pity strangers,
Seeking gold through crimes and dangers,
Sailing near, the wanderer spied.
Sudden, through the foaming tide,
They drove to land, and on the shore
Springing, they seized the youth, and bore
To their black ship, and spread again
Their sails, and ploughed the billowy main.

Dark Ossa on their watery way
Looks from his robe of mist ; and, gray
With many a deep and shadowy fold,
The sacred mount, Olympus old,

Appears : but where with Therma's sea
Penëus mingles tranquilly,
They anchor with the closing light
Of day, and through the moonless night
Propitious to their lawless toil,
In silent bands they prowl for spoil.

Ere morning dawns, they crowd on board ;
And to their vessel's secret hoard
With many a costly robe they pass,
And vase of silver, gold, and brass.
A young maid too their hands have torn
From her maternal home, to mourn
Afar, to some rude master sold,
The crimes and woes that spring from gold.

“ There sit!—”cried one in rugged tone,—
“ Beside that boy. A well-matched pair

“Ye seem, and will, I doubt not, bear,

“In our good port, a value rare.

“There sit, but not to wail and moan :

“The lyre, which in those fingers fair

“We leave, whose sound through night’s thick

“shade

“To unwished ears thy haunt bewrayed,

“Strike ; for the lyre, by beauty played,

“To glad the hearts of men was made.”—

The damsel by Anthemion’s side

Sate down upon the deck. The tide

Blushed with the deepening light of morn.

A pitying look the youth forlorn

Turned on the maiden. Can it be ?

Or does his sense play false ? Too well

He knows that radiant form. ’Tis she,

The magic maid of Thessaly
'Tis Rhododaphne ! By the spell,
That ever round him dwelt, opprest,
He bowed his head upon his breast,
And o'er his eyes his hand he drew,
That fatal beauty's sight to shun.
Now from the orient heaven the sun
Had clothed the eastward waves with fire :
Right from the west the fair breeze blew :
The full sails swelled, and sparkling through
The sounding sea the vessel flew :
With wine and copious cheer the crew
Caroused : the damsel o'er the lyre
Her rapid fingers lightly flung,
And thus, with feigned obedience, sung.

—“The Nereid’s home is calm and bright,
“The ocean-depths below,
“Where liquid streams of emerald light
“Through caves of coral flow.
“She has a lyre of silver strings
“Framed on a pearly shell,
“And sweetly to that lyre she sings
“The shipwrecked seaman’s knell.
“The ocean-snake in sleep she binds ;
“The dolphins round her play :
“His purple conch the Triton winds
“Responsive to the lay :
“Proteus and Phorcys, sea-gods old,
“Watch by her coral cell,
“To hear, on watery echoes rolled,
“The shipwrecked seaman’s knell.”

“ Cease ! ” —cried the chief in accents rude—
“ From songs like these mishap may rise.
“ Thus far have we our course pursued
“ With smiling seas and cloudless skies.
“ From wreck and tempest, omen’s ill,
“ Forbear ; and sing, for well I deem
“ Those pretty lips possess the skill,
“ Some ancient tale of happier theme ;
“ Some legend of imperial Jove,
“ In uncouth shapes disguised by love ;
“ Or Hercules, and his hard toils ;
“ Or Mercury, friend of craft and spoils ;
“ Or Jove-born Bacchus, whom we prize,
“ O’er all the Olympian deities.”—

He said, and drained the bowl. The crew
With long coarse laugh applauded. Fast

With sparkling keel the vessel flew,
For there was magic in the breeze
That urged her through the sounding seas.
By Chanastræum's point they past,
And Ampelos. Gray Athos, vast,
With woods far-stretching to the sea,
Was full before them, while the maid
Again her lyre's wild strings assayed,
In notes of bolder melody :

—“ Bacchus by the lonely ocean
“ Stood in youthful semblance fair :
“ Summer winds, with gentle motion,
“ Waved his black and curling hair.
“ Streaming from his manly shoulders
“ Robes of gold and purple dye

- “ Told of spoil to fierce beholders
“ In their black ship sailing by.
“ On the vessel’s deck they placed him
“ Strongly bound in triple bands;
“ But the iron rings that braced him
“ Melted, wax-like, from his hands.
“ Then the pilot spake in terror :
 “ — ‘ ’Tis a god in mortal form !
“ ‘ Seek the land ; repair your error
“ ‘ Ere his wrath invoke the storm.’—
“ — ‘ Silence ! ’—cried the frowning master,—
“ ‘ Mind the helm : the breeze is fair :
“ ‘ Coward ! cease to bode disaster :
“ ‘ Leave to men the captive’s care.’—
“ While he speaks and fiercely tightens
“ In the full free breeze the sail,

- “ From the deck wine bubbling lightens,
“ Winy fragrance fills the gale.
“ Gurgling in ambrosial lustre
“ Flows the purple-eddying wine :
“ O’er the yard-arms trail and cluster
“ Tendrils of the mantling vine :
“ Grapes, beneath the broad leaves springing,
“ Blushing as in vintage-hours,
“ Droop, while round the tall mast clinging
“ Ivy twines its buds and flowers,
“ Fast with graceful berries blackening :—
“ Garlands hang on every oar :
“ Then in fear the cordage slackening,
“ One and all they cry,—‘ To shore !’—
“ Bacchus changed his shape, and glaring
“ With a lion’s eyeballs wide,

“ Roared : the pirate-crew, despairing,
“ Plunged amid the foaming tide.
“ Through the azure depths they flitted
“ Dolphins by transforming fate :
“ But the god the pilot pitied,
“ Saved, and made him rich and great.”—

The crew laid by their cups, and frowned.
A stern rebuke the leader gave.
With arrowy speed the ship went round
Nymphæum. To the ocean-wave
The mountain-forest sloped, and cast
O'er the white surf its massy shade.
They heard, so near the shore they past,
The hollow sound the sea-breeze made,
As those primæval trees it swayed.

“Curse on thy songs!”—the leader cried,—
“False tales of evil augury!”—
—“Well hast thou said,”—the maid replied,—
“They augur ill to thine and thee.”—

She rose, and loosed her radiant hair,
And raised her golden lyre in air.
The lyre, beneath the breeze's wings,
As if a spirit swept the strings,
Breathed airy music, sweet and strange,
In many a wild fantastic change,
Most like a daughter of the Sun¹³
She stood : her eyes all radiant shone
With beams unutterably bright ;
And her long tresses, loose and light,
As on the playful breeze they rolled,
Flamed with rays of burning gold.

His wondering eyes Anthemion raised
Upon the maid : the seamen gazed
In fear and strange suspense, amazed.

From the forest-depths profound
Breathes a low and sullen sound :
'Tis the woodland spirit's sigh,
Ever heard when storms are nigh.
On the shore the surf that breaks
With the rising breezes makes
More tumultuous harmony.
Louder yet the breezes sing ;
Round and round, in dizzy ring,
Sea-birds scream on restless wing :
Pine and cedar creak and swing
To the sea-blast's murmuring.

Far and wide on sand and shingle
Eddying breakers boil and mingle :
Beetling cliff and caverned rock
Roll around the echoing shock,
Where the spray, like snow-dust whirled,
High in vapoury wreaths is hurled.
 Clouds on clouds, in volumes driven,
Curtain round the vault of heaven.
—“ To shore ! to shore ! ”—the seamen cry.
The damsel waved her lyre on high,
And to the powers that ruled the sea
It whispered notes of witchery.
Swifter than the lightning-flame
The sudden breath of the whirlwind came.
Round at once in its mighty sweep
The vessel whirled on the whirling deep.

Right from shore the driving gale
Bends the mast and swells the sail :
Loud the foaming ocean raves :
Through the mighty waste of waves
Speeds the vessel swift and free,
Like a meteor of the sea.

Day is ended. Darkness shrouds
The shoreless seas and lowering clouds.
Northward now the tempest blows :
Fast and far the vessel goes :
Crouched on deck the seamen lie ;
One and all, with charmed eye,
On the magic maid they gaze :
Nor the youth with less amaze
Looks upon her radiant form

Shining by the golden beams
Of her refulgent hair, that streams
Like waving star-light on the storm ;
And hears the vocal blast that rings
Among her lyre's enchanted strings.

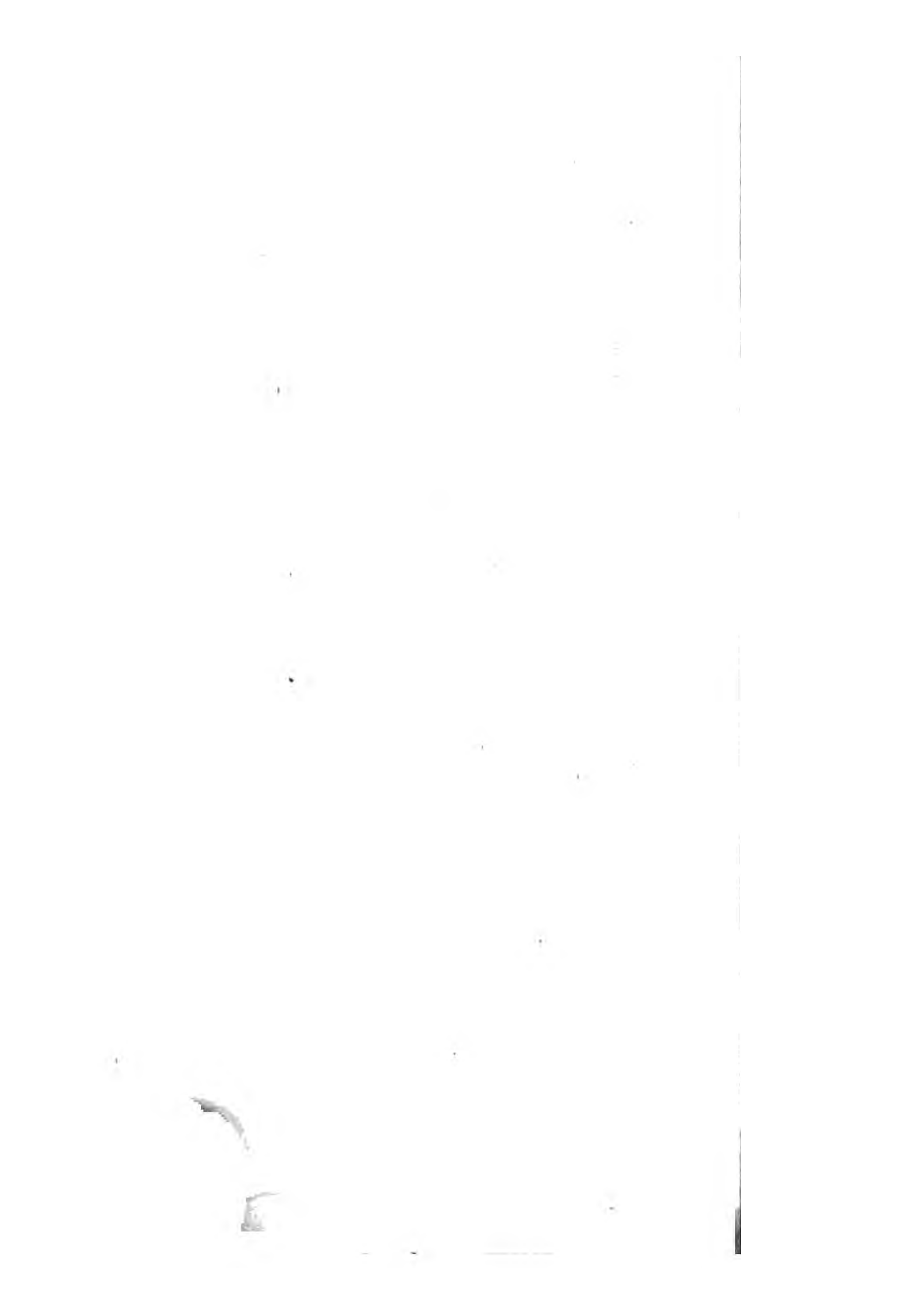
Onward, onward flies the bark,
Through the billows wild and dark.
From her prow the spray she hurls ;
O'er her stern the big wave curls ;
Fast before the impetuous wind
She flies—the wave bursts far behind.

Onward, onward flies the bark,
Through the raging billows :—Hark !
'Tis the stormy surge's roar
On the Ægean's northern shore.

Tow'rds the rocks, through surf and surge,
The destined ship the wild winds urge.
High on one gigantic wave
She swings in air. From rock and cave
A long loud wail of fate and fear
Rings in the hopeless seaman's ear.
Forward, with the breaker's dash,
She plunges on the rock. The crash
Of the dividing bark, the roar
Of waters bursting on the deck,
Are in Anthemion's ear : no more
He hears or sees : but round his neck
Are closely twined the silken rings
Of Rhododaphne's glittering hair,
And round him her bright arms she flings,

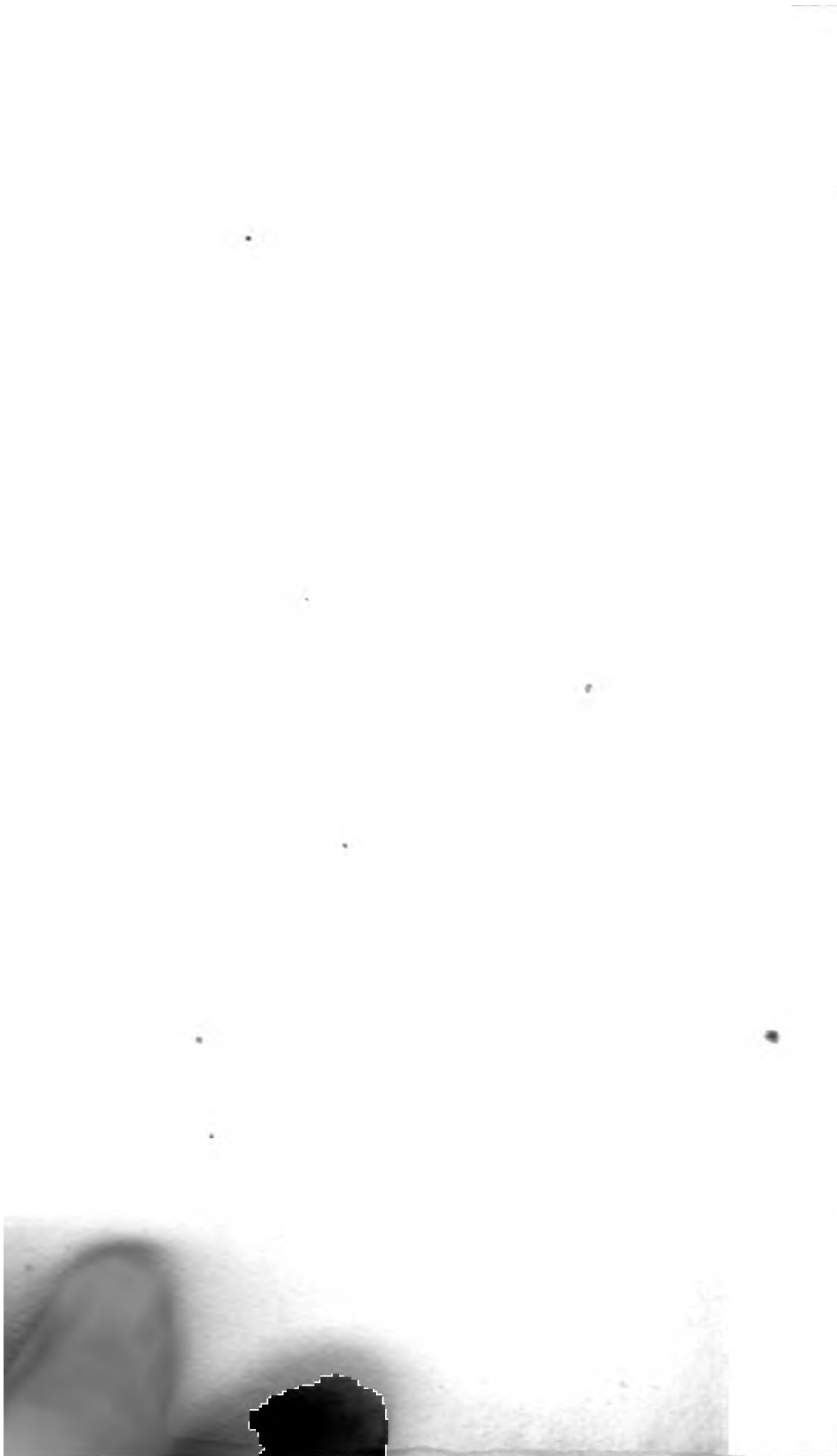


And cinctured thus in loveliest bands
The charmed waves in safety bear
The youth and the enchantress fair,
And leave them on the golden sands.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO VI.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO VI.

HAST thou, in some safe retreat,
Waked and watched, to hear the roar
Of breakers on the wind-swept shore?
Go forth at morn. The waves, that beat
Still rough and white when blasts are o'er,
May wash, all ghastly, to thy feet
Some victim of the midnight storm.
From that drenched garb and pallid form

Shrink not : but fix thy gaze, and see
Thy own congenial destiny.

For him, perhaps, an anxious wife
On some far coast o'erlooks the wave :

A child, unknowing of the strife

Of elements, to whom he gave

His last fond kiss, is at her breast :

The skies are clear, the seas at rest

Before her, and the hour is nigh

Of his return : but black the sky

To him, and fierce the hostile main,

Have been. He will not come again.

But yesterday, and life, and health,

And hope, and love, and power, and wealth,

Were his : to-day, in one brief hour,

Of all his wealth, of all his power,

He saved not, on his shattered deck,
A plank, to waft him from the wreck.
Now turn away, and dry thy tears,
And build long schemes for distant years !
Wreck is not only on the sea.
The warrior dies in victory :
The ruin of his natal roof
O'erwhelms the sleeping man : the hoof
Of his prized steed has struck with fate
The horseman in his own home gate :
The feast and mantling bowl destroy
The sensual in the hour of joy.
The bride from her paternal porch
Comes forth among her maids : the torch,
That led at morn the nuptial choir,
Kindles at night her funeral pyre.

Now turn away, indulge thy dreams,
And build for distant years thy schemes !

ON Thracia's coast the morn was grey.
Anthemion, with the opening day,
From deep entrancement on the sands
Stood up. The magic maid was there
Beside him on the shore. Her hands
Still held the golden lyre : her hair
In all its long luxuriance hung
Unringleted, and glittering bright
With briny drops of diamond light :
Her thin wet garments lightly clung
Around her form's rare symmetry.
Like Venus risen from the sea

She seemed : so beautiful : and who

With mortal sight such form could view,

And deem that evil lurked beneath ?

Who could approach those starry eyes,

Those dewy coral lips, that breathe

Ambrosial fragrance, and that smile

In which all Love's Elysium lies,

Who this could see, and dream of guile,

And brood on wrong and wrath the while ?

If there be one, who ne'er has felt

Resolve, and doubt, and anger melt,

Like vernal night-frosts, in one beam

Of Beauty's sun, 'twere vain to deem,

Between the Muse and him could be

A link of human sympathy.

Fain would the youth his lips unclose
In keen reproach for all his woes
And his Calliroë's doom. In vain :
For closer now the magic chain
Of the inextricable spell
Involved him, and his accents fell
Perplexed, confused, inaudible.
And so awhile he stood. At length,
In painful tones, that gathered strength
With feeling's faster flow, he said :
—“ What would'st thou with me, fatal maid ?
“ That ever thus, by land and sea,
“ Thy dangerous beauty follows me ?”—
She speaks in gentle accents low,
While dim thro' tears her bright eyes move :

—“Thou askest what thou well dost know ;

“I love thee, and I seek thy love.”—

—“My love ! It sleeps in dust for ever

“Within my lost Calliroë’s tomb :

“The smiles of living beauty never

“May my soul’s darkness re-illumine.

“We grew together, like twin flowers,

“Whose opening buds the same dews cherish ;

“And one is reft, ere noon-tide hours,

“Violently ; one remains, to perish

“By slow decay ; as I remain

“Even now, to move and breathe in vain.

“The late, false love, that worldlings learn,

“When hearts are hard, and thoughts are stern,

“And feelings dull, and Custom’s rule

“Omnipotent, that love may cool,

“ And waste, and change: but this—which

“ flings

“ Round the young soul its tendril rings,

“ Strengthening their growth and grasp with

“ years,

“ Till habits, pleasures, hopes, smiles, tears,

“ All modes of thinking, feeling, seeing,

“ Of two congenial spirits, blend

“ In one inseparable being,—

“ Deem'st thou this love can change or end?

“ There is no eddy on the stream,


“ No bough that light winds bend and toss,

“ No chequering of the sunny beam

“ Upon the woodland moss,

“ No star in evening's sky, no flower

“ Whose beauty odorous breezes stir,

- “ No sweet bird singing in the bower,
“ Nay, not the rustling of a leaf,
“ That does not nurse and feed my grief
“ By wakening thoughts of her.
“ All lovely things a place possessed
“ Of love in my Calliroë’s breast :
“ And from her purer, gentler spirit,
“ Did mine the love and joy inherit,
“ Which that blest maid around her threw.
“ With all I saw, and felt, and knew,
“ The image of Calliroë grew,
“ Till all the beauty of the earth
“ Seemed as to her it owed its birth,
“ And did but many forms express
“ Of her reflected loveliness.
“ The sunshine and the air seemed less
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“ The sources of my life : and how
“ Was she torn from me ? Earth is now
“ A waste, where many echoes tell
“ Only of her I loved—how well
“ Words have no power to speak :--and thou—
“ Gather the rose-leaves from the plain
“ Where faded and defiled they lie,
“ And close them in their bud again,
“ And bid them to the morning sky
“ Spread lovely as at first they were :
“ Or from the oak the ivy tear,
“ And wreathe it round another tree
“ In vital growth : then turn to me,
“ And bid my spirit cling on thee,
“ As on my lost Calliroë !”—

—“ The Genii of the earth, and sea,
“ And air, and fire, my mandates hear.
“ Even the dread Power, thy Ladon’s fear,
“ Arcadian Dæmogorgon, knows¹⁴
“ My voice : the ivy or the rose,
“ Though torn and trampled on the plain,
“ May rise, unite, and bloom again,
“ If on his aid I call : thy heart
“ Alone resists and mocks my art.”—
—“ Why lov’st thou me, Thessalian maid ?
“ Why hast thou, cruel beauty, torn
“ Asunder two young hearts, that played
“ In kindred unison so blest,
“ As they had filled one single breast
“ From life’s first opening morn ?

“ Why lov’st thou me ? The kings of earth
“ Might kneel to charms and power like thine :
“ But I, a youth of shepherd birth—
“ As well the stately mountain-pine
“ Might coil around the eglantine,
“ As thou thy radiant being twine
“ Round one so low, so lost as mine.”
—“ Sceptres and crowns, vain signs that
“ move
“ The souls of slaves, to me are toys.
“ I need but love : I seek but love :
“ And long, amid the heartless noise
“ Of cities, and the woodland peace
“ Of vales, through all the scenes of Greece
“ I sought the fondest and the fairest
“ Of Grecian youths, my love to be :

“ And such a heart and form thou bearest,
“ And my soul sprang at once to thee,
“ Like an arrow to its destiny.
“ Yet shall my lips no spell repeat,
“ To bid thy heart responsive beat
“ To mine : thy love’s spontaneous smile,
“ Nor forced by power, nor won by guile,
“ I claim : but yet a little while,
“ And we no more may meet.
“ For I must find a dreary home,
“ And thou, where’er thou wilt, shalt roam :
“ But should one tender thought awake
“ Of Rhododaphne, seek the cell,
“ Where she dissolved in tears doth dwell
“ Of blighted hope, and she will take
“ The wanderer to her breast, and make

“ Such flowers of bliss around him blow,
“ As kings would yield their thrones to know.”
—“ It must not be. The air is laden
“ With sweetness from thy presence born :
“ Music and light are round thee, maiden,
“ As round the Virgin Power of Morn :
“ I feel, I shrink beneath, thy beauty :
“ But love, truth, wo, remembrance, duty,
“ All point against thee, though arrayed
“ In charms whose power no heart could shun
“ That ne'er had loved another maid
“ Or any but that loveliest one,
“ Who now, within my bosom's void,
“ A sad pale shade, by thee destroyed,
“ Forbids all other love to bind
“ My soul : thine least of womankind.”—

Faltering and faint his accents broke,
As those concluding words he spoke:
No more she said, but sadly smiled,
And took his hand ; and like a child
He followed her. All waste and wild,
A pathless moor before them lies.
Beyond, long chains of mountains rise :
Their summits with eternal snow
Are crowned : vast forests wave below,
And stretch, with ample slope and sweep,
Down to the moorlands and the deep.
Human dwelling see they none,
Save one cottage, only one,
Mossy, mildewed, frail, and poor,
Even as human home can be,

Where the forest skirts the moor,
By the inhospitable sea.
There, in tones of melody,
Sweet and clear as Dian's voice
When the rocks and woods rejoice
In her steps the chase impelling,
Rhododaphne, pausing, calls.
Echo answers from the walls :
Mournful response, vaguely telling
Of a long-deserted dwelling.
Twice her lips the call repeat,
Tuneful summons, thrilling sweet.
Still the same sad accents follow,
Cheerless echo, faint and hollow.
Nearer now, with curious gaze,
The youth that lonely cot surveys.

Long grass chokes the path before it,
Twining ivy mantles o'er it,
On the low roof blend together
Beds of moss and stains of weather,
Flowering weeds that trail and cluster,
Scaly lichen, stone-crop's lustre,
All confused in radiance mellow,
Red, grey, green, and golden yellow.
Idle splendor! gleaming only
Over ruins rude and lonely,
When the cold hearth-stone is scattered,
When the ember-dust is scattered,
When the grass that chokes the portal
Bends not to the tread of mortal.

The maiden dropped Anthemion's hand,
And forward, with a sudden bound,

She sprung. He saw the door expand,
And close, and all was silence round,
And loneliness : and forth again
She came not. But within this hour,
A burthen to him, and a chain,
Had been her beauty and her power :
But now, thus suddenly forsaken,
In those drear solitudes, though yet
His early love remained unshaken,
He felt within his breast awaken
A sense of something like regret.

But he pursued her not : his love,
His murdered love, such step forbade.
He turned his doubtful feet, to rove
Amid that forest's maze of shade.
Beneath the matted boughs, that made

A noonday twilight, he espied
No trace of man ; and far and wide
Through fern and tangling briar he strayed,
Till toil, and thirst, and hunger weighed
His nature down, and cold and drear
Night came, and no relief was near.

But now at once his steps emerge
Upon the forest's moorland verge,
Beside the white and sounding surge.
For in one long self-circling track,
His mazy path had led him back,
To where that cottage old and lone
Had stood : but now to him unknown
Was all the scene. Mid gardens, fair
With trees and flowers of fragrance rare,

A rich and ample pile was there,
Glittering with myriad lights, that shone
Far-streaming through the dusky air.

With hunger, toil, and weariness,
Outworn, he cannot choose but pass
Tow'rds that fair pile. With gentle stress
He strikes the gate of polished brass.

Loud and long the portal rings,
As back with swift recoil it swings,
Disclosing wide a vaulted hall,
With many columns bright and tall
Encircled. Throned in order round,
Statues of dæmons and of kings
Between the marble columns frowned
With seeming life : each throne beside,
Two humbler statues stood, and raised

Each one a silver lamp, that wide
With many-mingling radiance blazed.
High reared on one surpassing throne,
A brazen image sate alone,
A dwarfish shape, of wrinkled brow,
With sceptered hand and crowned head.
No sooner did Anthemion's tread
The echoes of the hall awake,
Than up that image rose, and spake,
As from a trumpet:—"What would'st thou?"—
Anthemion, in amaze and dread,
Replied:—"With toil and hunger worn,
"I seek but food, and rest till morn."—
The image spake again, and said:
—"Enter: fear not; thou art free
"To my best hospitality."—

Spontaneously, an inner door
Unclosed. Anthemion from the hall
Passed to a room of state, that wore
Aspect of destined festival.
Of fragrant cedar was the floor,
And round the light-pilastered wall,
Curtains of crimson and of gold
Hung down in many a gorgeous fold.
Bright lamps, through that apartment gay
Adorned like Cytherëa's bowers
With vases filled with odorous flowers,
Diffused an artificial day.
A banquet's sumptuous order there,
In long array of viands rare,
Fruits, and ambrosial wine, was spread.
A golden boy, in semblance fair

Of actual life, came forth, and led
Anthemion to a couch, beside
That festal table, canopied
With cloth by subtlest Tyrian dyed,
And ministered the feast : the while,
Invisible harps symphonious wreathed
Wild webs of soul-dissolving sound,
And voices, alternating round,
Songs, as of choral maidens, breathed.

Now to the brim the boy filled up
With sparkling wine a crystal cup.
Anthemion took the cup, and quaffed,
With reckless thirst, the enchanted draught.
That instant came a voice divine,
A maiden voice :—" Now art thou mine !"—

The golden boy is gone. The song
And the symphonious harps no more
Their Siren minstrelsy prolong.
One crimson curtain waves before
His sight, and opens. From its screen,
The nymph of more than earthly mien,
The magic maid of Thessaly,
Came forth, her tresses loosely streaming,
Her eyes with dewy radiance beaming,
Her form all grace, and symmetry,
In silken vesture light and free
As if the woof were air, she came,
And took his hand, and called his name.

“Now art thou mine!”—again she cried,—
“My love’s indissoluble chain

“Has found thee in that goblet’s tide,
“And thou shalt wear my flower again.”—

She said, and in Anthemion’s breast
She placed the laurel-rose : her arms
She twined around him, and imprest
Her lips on his, and fixed on him
Fond looks of passionate love : her charms
With tenfold radiance on his sense
Shone through the studied negligence
Of her light vesture. His eyes swim
With dizziness. The lamps grow dim,
And tremble, and expire. No more.
Darkness is there, and Mystery :
And Silence keeps the golden key
Of Beauty’s bridal door.

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RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO VII.



RHODODAPHNE.

CANTO VII.

FIRST, fairest, best, of powers supernal,
Love waved in heaven his wings of gold,
And from the depths of Night eternal,
Black Erebus, and Chaos old,
Bade light, and life, and beauty rise
Harmonious from the dark disguise
Of elemental discord wild,
Which he had charmed and reconciled.

Love first in social bonds combined
The scattered tribes of humankind,
And bade the wild race cease to roam,
And learn the endearing name of home.
From Love the sister arts began,
That charm, adorn, and soften man.
To Love the feast, the dance, belong,
The temple-rite, the choral song ;
All feelings that refine and bless,
All kindness, sweetness, gentleness.
Him men adore, and gods admire,
Of delicacy, grace, desire,
Persuasion, bliss, the bounteous sire ;
In hopes, and toils, and pains, and fears,
Sole dryer of our human tears ;

Chief ornament of heaven, and king
Of earth, to whom the world doth sing
One chorus of accordant pleasure,
Of which he taught and leads the measure.
He kindles in the inmost mind
One lonely flame—for once—for one—
A vestal fire, which, there enshrined,
Lives on, till life itself be done.
All other fires are of the earth,
And transient : but of heavenly birth
Is Love's first flame, which howsoever
Fraud, power, wo, chance, or fate may sever,
From its congenial source, must burn
Unquenched, but in the funeral urn.

AND thus Anthemion knew and felt,
As in that palace on the wild,
By dæmon art adorned, he dwelt
With that bright nymph, who ever smiled
Refulgent as the summer morn
On eastern ocean newly born.
Though oft, in Rhododaphne's sight,
A phrensied feeling of delight,
With painful admiration mixed
Of her surpassing beauty, came
Upon him, yet of earthly flame
That passion was. Even as betwixt
The night-clouds transient lightnings play,
Those feelings came and passed away,
And left him lorn. Calliroë ever

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Those feelings came and passed away,
And left him lorn. Calliroë ever

Pursued him like a bleeding shade,
Nor all the magic nymph's endeavour
Could from his constant memory sever
The image of that dearer maid.

Yet all that love and art could do
The enchantress did. The pirate-crew
Her power had snatched from death, and pent
Awhile in ocean's bordering caves,
To be her ministers and slaves :
And there, by murmured spells, she sent
On all their shapes fantastic change.
In many an uncouth form and strange,
Grim dwarf, or bony Æthiop tall,
They plied, throughout the enchanted hall,
Their servile ministries, or sate
Gigantic mastiffs in the gate,

Or stalked around the garden-dells

In lion-guise, gaunt centinels.

And many blooming youths and maids,

A joyous Bacchanalian train,

(That mid the rocks and piny shades

Of mountains, through whose wild domain

Ægrian Hebrus, swift and cold,

Impels his waves o'er sands of gold,

Their orgies led) by secret force

Of her far-scattered spells compelled,

With song, and dance, and shout, their course

Tow'rd that enchanted dwelling held.

Oft, 'mid those palace-gardens fair,

The beauteous nymph (her radiant hair

With mingled oak and vine-leaves crowned)

Would grasp the thyrsus ivy-bound,

And fold, her festal vest around,
The Bacchic nebris, leading thus
The swift and dizzy thiasus :
And as she moves, in all her charms,
With springing feet and flowing arms,
'Tis strange in one fair shape to see
How many forms of grace can be.
The youths and maids, her beauteous train,
Follow fast in sportive ring,
Some the torch and mystic cane,
Some the vine-bough, brandishing ;
Some, in giddy circlets fleeting,
The Corybantic timbrel beating :
Maids, with silver flasks advancing,
Pour the wine's red-sparkling tide,

Which youths, with heads recumbent dancing,
Catch in goblets as they glide :

All upon the odorous air
Lightly toss their leafy hair,
Ever singing, as they move,

—“ Io Bacchus ! son of Jove ! ” —

And oft, the Bacchic fervors ending,
Among those garden-bowers they stray,
Dispersed, where fragrant branches blending
Exclude the sun's meridian ray,
Or on some thymy bank repose,
By which a tinkling rivulet flows,
Where birds, on each o'ershadowing spray,
Make music through the live-long day.
The while, in one sequestered cave,
Where roses round the entrance wave,

And jasmine sweet and clustering vine
With flowers and grapes the arch o'ertwine,
Anthemion and the nymph recline,
While in the sunny space, before
The cave, a fountain's lucid store
Its crystal column shoots on high,
And bursts, like showery diamonds flashing,
So falls, and with melodious dashing
Shakes the small pool. A youth stands by,
A tuneful rhapsodist, and sings,
Accordant to his changeful strings,
High strains of ancient poesy.
And oft her golden lyre she takes,
And such transcendent strains awakes,
Such floods of melody, as steep
Anthemion's sense in bondage deep

Of passionate admiration : still
Combining with intenser skill
The charm that holds him now, whose bands
May ne'er be loosed by mortal hands.

And oft they rouse with clamorous chace
The forest, urging wide and far
Through glades and dells the sylvan war.
Satyrs and Fauns would start around,
And through their ferny dingles bound,
To see that nymph, all life and grace
And radiance, like the huntress-queen,
With sandaled feet and vest of green,
In her soft fingers grasp the spear,
Hang on the track of flying deer,
Shout to the dogs as fast they sweep
Tumultuous down the woodland steep,

And hurl, along the tainted air,
The javelin from her streaming hair.

The bath, the dance, the feast's array,
And sweetest rest, conclude the day.
And 'twere most witching to disclose,
Were there such power in mortal numbers,
How she would charm him to repose,
And gaze upon his troubled slumbers,
With looks of fonder love, than ever
Pale Cynthia on Endymion cast,
While her forsaken chariot passed
O'er Caria's many-winding river.
The love she bore him was a flame
So strong, so total, so intense,
That no desire beside might claim
Dominion in her thought or sense.

The world had nothing to bestow
On her : for wealth and power were hers :
The dæmons of the earth (that know
The beds of gems and fountain-springs
Of undiscovered gold, and where,
In subterranean sepulchres
The memory of whose place doth bear
No vestige, long-forgotten kings
Sit gaunt on monumental thrones,
With massy pearls and costly stones
Hanging on their half-mouldered bones)
Were slaves to her. The fears and cares
Of feebler mortals—Want, and Wo
His daughter, and their mutual child
Remorseless Crime,—keen Wrath, that tears
The breast of Hate unreconciled,—

Ambition's spectral goad,—Revenge,
That finds in consummation food
To nurse anew her hydra brood,—
Shame, Misery's sister,—dread of change,
The bane of wealth and worldly might,—
She knew not : Love alone, like ocean,
Filled up with one unshared emotion
Her soul's capacity : but right
And wrong she recked not of, nor owned
A law beyond her soul's desire ;
And from the hour that first enthroned
Anthemion in her heart, the fire,
That burned within her, like the force
Of floods swept with it in its course
All feelings that might barriers prove
To her illimitable love.

Thus, wreathed with ever-varying flowers,
Went by the purple-pinioned hours ;
Till once, returning from the wood
And woodland chace, at evening-fall,
Anthemion and the enchantress stood
Within the many-columned hall,
Alone. They looked around them. Where
Are all those youths and maidens fair,
Who followed them but now? On high
She waves her lyre. Its murmurs die
Tremulous. They come not whom she calls.
Why starts she? Wherefore does she throw
Around the youth her arms of snow,
With passion so intense, and weep?
What mean those murmurs, sad and low,
That like sepulchral echoes creep

Along the marble walls?

Her breath is short and quick; and, dim

With tears, her eyes are fixed on him:

Her lips are quivering and apart:

He feels the fluttering of her heart:

Her face is pale. He cannot shun

Her fear's contagion. Tenderly

He kissed her lips in sympathy,

And said:—"What ails thee, lovely one?"

Low, trembling, faint, her accents fall:—

—"Look round: what seest thou in the hall?"—

Anthemion looked, and made return:

—"The statues, and the lamps that burn:

"No more."—"Yet look again, where late

"The solitary image sate,

“The monarch-dwarf. Dost thou not see
“An image there which should not be?”—

Even as she bade he looked again :

From his high throne the dwarf was gone.

Lo ! there, as in the Thespian fane,

Uranian Love ! His bow was bent :

The arrow to its head was drawn ;

His frowning brow was fixed intent

On Rhododaphne. Scarce did rest

Upon that form Anthemion's view,

When, sounding shrill, the arrow flew,

And lodged in Rhododaphne's breast.

It was not Love's own shaft, the giver

Of life and joy and tender flame ;

But, borrowed from Apollo's quiver,

The death-directed arrow came.

Long, slow, distinct in each stern word,
A sweet deep-thrilling voice was heard :
—“ With impious spells hast thou profaned
“ My altars ; and all-ruling Jove,
“ Though late, yet certain, has unchained
“ The vengeance of Uranian Love !” —¹⁵

The marble palace burst asunder,
Riven by subterranean thunder.
Sudden clouds around them rolled,
Lucid vapour, fold on fold.
Then Rhododaphne closer prest
Anthemion to her bleeding breast,
As, in his arms upheld, her head
All languid on his neck reclined ;
And in the curls, that overspread
His cheek, her temple-ringlets twined :

Her dim eyes drew, with fading sight,
From his their last reflected light,
And on his lips, as nature failed,
Her lips their last sweet sighs exhaled.

—“ Farewell ! ”—she said—“ another bride
“ The partner of thy days must be ;
“ But do not hate my memory :
“ And build a tomb, by Ladon’s tide,
“ To her, who, false in all beside,
“ Was but too true in loving thee ! ”—

The quivering earth beneath them stirred.
In dizzy trance upon her bosom
He fell, as falls a wounded bird
Upon a broken rose’s blossom.

WHAT sounds are in Anthemion's ear?
It is the lark that carols clear,
And gentle waters murmuring near.
He lifts his head : the new-born day
Is round him, and the sun-beams play
On silver eddies. Can it be?
The stream he loved in infancy?
The hills? the Aphrodisian grove?
The fields that knew Calliroë's love?
And those two sister trees, are they
The cedar and the poplar gray,
That shade old Pheidon's door? Alas!

Sad vision now ! Does Phantasy
Play with his troubled sense, made dull
By many griefs ? He does not dream :
It is his own Arcadian stream,
The fields, the hills : and on the grass,
The dewy grass of Ladon's vale,
Lies Rhododaphne, cold and pale,
But even in death most beautiful :
And there, in mournful silence by her,
Lies on the ground her golden lyre.

He knelt beside her on the ground :
On her pale face and radiant hair
He fixed his eyes, in sorrow drowned.
That one so gifted and so fair,
All light and music, thus should be
Quenched like a night-star suddenly.

Might move a stranger's tears ; but he
Had known her love ; such love, as yet
Never could heart that knew forget !

He thought not of his wrongs. Alone
Her love and loveliness possest

His memory, and her fond cares, shewn
In seeking, nature's empire through,
Devices ever rare and new,

To make him calm and blest.

Two maids had loved him ; one, the light

Of his young soul, the morning star

Of life and love ; the other, bright

As are the noon-tide skies, when far

The vertic sun's fierce radiance burns ;

The world had been too brief to prove

The measure of each single love :

Yet, from this hour, forlorn, bereft,
Companionless, where'er he turns,
Of all that love on earth is left
No trace but their cinereal urns.

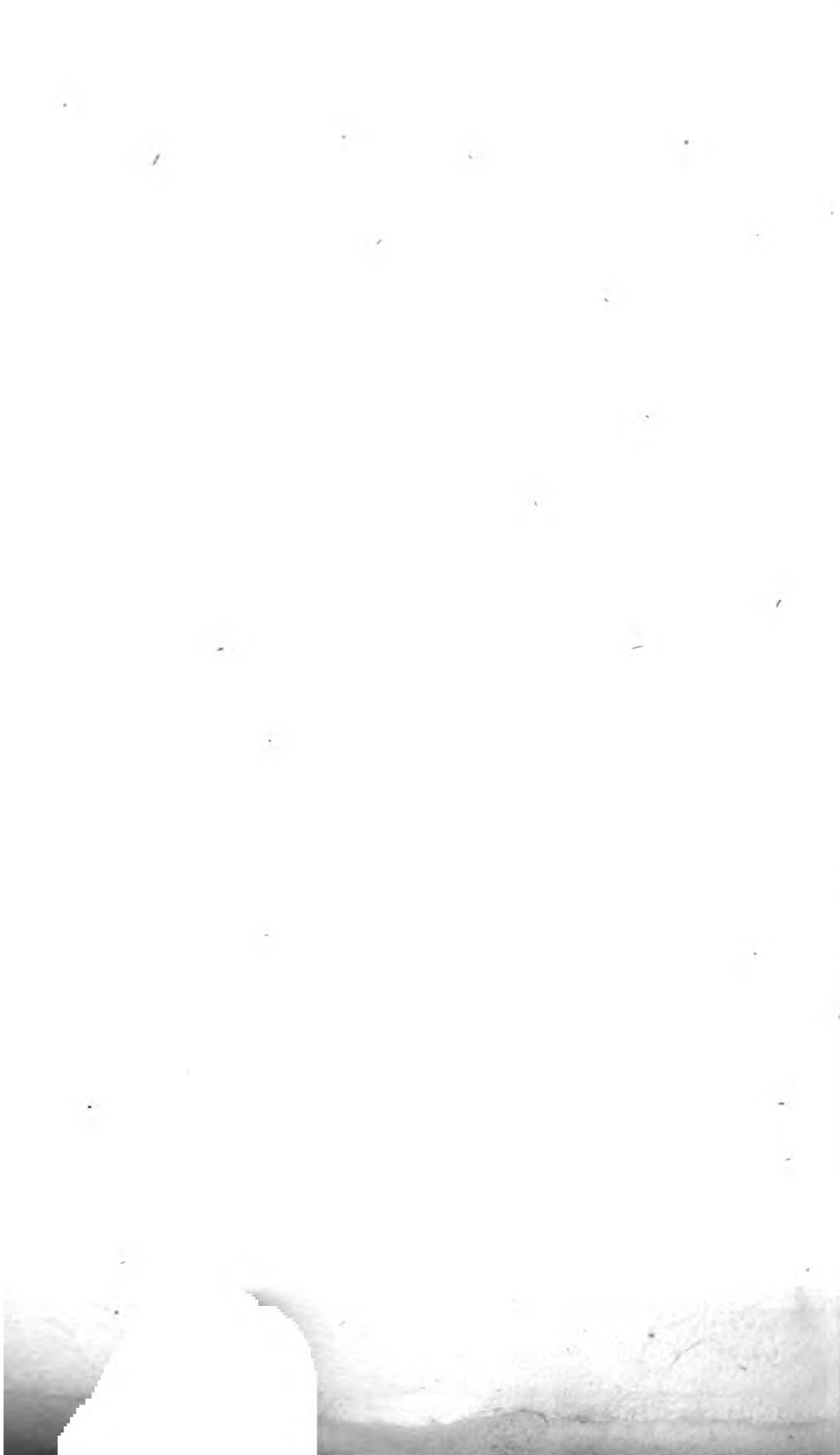
But Pheidon's door unfolds; and who
Comes forth in beauty? Oh! 'tis she,
Herself, his own Calliroë!
And in that burst of blest surprise,
Like Lethe's self upon his brain
Oblivion of all grief and pain
Descends, and tow'rds her path he flies.
The maiden knew
Her love, and flew
To meet him, and her dear arms threw
Around his neck, and wept for bliss,
And on his lips impressed a kiss

He had not dared to give. The spell
Was broken now, that gave before
Not death, but magic slumber. More
The closing measure needs not tell,
Love, wonder, transport wild and high,
Question that waited not reply,
And answer unrequired, and smiles
Through such sweet tears as bliss beguiles,
Fixed, mutual looks of long delight,
Soft chiding for o'erhasty flight,
And promise never more to roam,
Were theirs. Old Pheidon from his home
Came forth, to share their joy, and bless
Their love, and all was happiness.

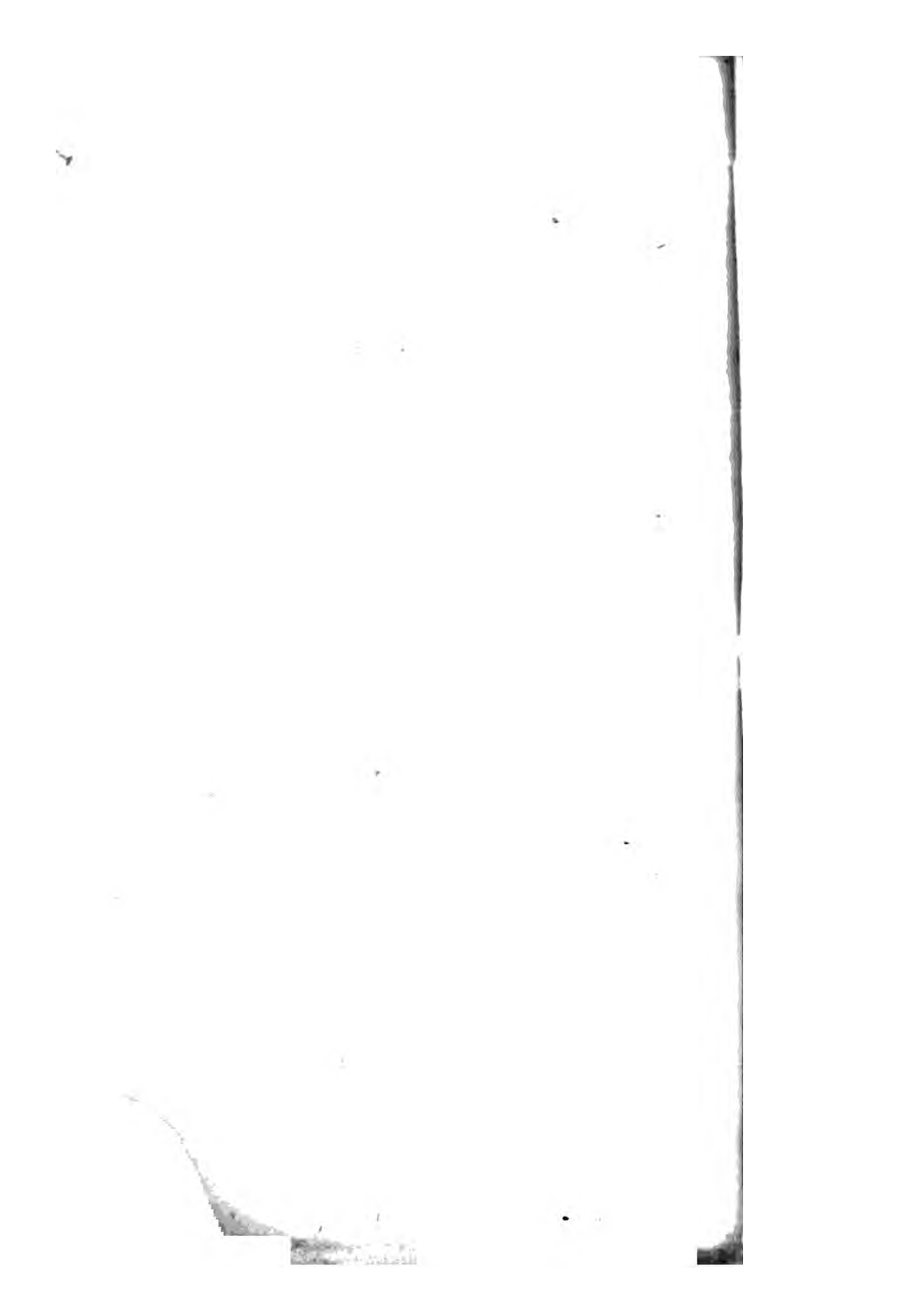
But when the maid Anthemion led
To where her beauteous rival slept

The long last sleep, on earth dispread,
And told her tale, Calliroë wept
Sweet tears for Rhododaphne's doom ;
For in her heart a voice was heard :
—“ 'Twas for Anthemion's love she erred !”—
They built by Ladon's banks a tomb ;
And when the funeral pyre had burned,
With seemly rites they there inurned
The ashes of the enchantress fair ;
And sad sweet verse they traced, to show
That youth, love, beauty, slept below ;
And bade the votive marble bear
The name of RHODODAPHNE. There
The laurel-rose luxuriant sprung,
And in its boughs her lyre they hung,

And often, when, at evening hours,
They decked the tomb with mournful flowers,
The lyre upon the twilight breeze
Would pour mysterious symphonies.



NOTES.



NOTES.

¹ P. 20. v. 6. Primogenial, or Creative Love, in the Orphic mythology, is the first-born of Night and Chaos, the most ancient of the gods, and the parent of all things. According to Aristophanes, Night produced an egg in the bosom of Erebus, and golden-winged Love burst in due season from the shell. The Egyptians, as Plutarch informs us in his Erotic dialogue, recognised three distinct powers of Love: the Uranian, or Heavenly; the Pandemian, Vulgar or Earthly; and the Sun. That the identity of the Sun and Primogenial Love was recognised also by the Greeks, appears from the

community of their epithets in mythological poetry, as in this Orphic line : Πρωτογονος Φαιδων περιμηκεος ηερος υιος. Lactantius observes that Love was called Πρωτογονος, which signifies both first-produced and first-producing, because nothing was born before him, but all things have proceeded from him. Primogenial Love is represented in antiques mounted on the back of a lion, and, being of Egyptian origin, is traced by the modern astronomical interpreters of mythology to the Leo of the Zodiac. Uranian Love, in the mythological philosophy of Plato, is the deity or genius of pure mental passion for the good and the beautiful; and Pandemian Love, of ordinary sexual attachment.

² P. 20. v. 12.—Lysippus.

³ P. 21. v. 2. Phryne was the mistress of Praxiteles. She requested him to give her his most beautiful work, which he promised to do, but refused to tell which of his works was in his own estimation the best. One day when he was with Phryne, her servant running in announced to him that his house was on fire. Praxiteles started up in great agitation, declaring that all the fruit of his labour would be lost, if his Love should be injured by the flames. His mistress dispelled his alarm, by telling him that the report of the fire was merely a stratagem, by which she obtained the information she desired. Phryne thus became possessed of the masterpiece of Praxiteles, and bestowed it on her native Thespia. Strabo names, instead of Phryne, Glycera, who was also a Thespian ; but in addition to the testimony of Pausanias and Athenæus, Ca-

suabon cites a Greek epigram on Phryne, which mentions her dedication of the Thespian Love.

⁴ P. 22. v. 16. Sacrifices were offered at this festival for the appeasing of all public and all private dissensions. Autobulus, in the beginning of Plutarch's Erotic dialogue, says, that his father and mother, when first married, went to the Thespian festival, to sacrifice to Love, on account of a quarrel between their parents.

⁵ P. 42. v. 10. The allusions are to the *Hippolytus* and *Alcestis* of Euripides, and to the *Antigone* of Sophocles.

⁶ P. 43. v. 12.—Τα δὲ ῥόδα ἐκείνα καὶ ἢ ῥόδα ἀληθινὰ· τὰ δ' ἦν ἐκ τῆς ἀγρίας δαφνῆς φουμιστὰ· ῥοδοδαφνὴν αὐτὴν καλεῖσιν ἀνθρώποι· κακὸν κριστὸν οἶφι τῆτο παντι, καὶ ἰππῶ· φασι γὰρ τὸν φαγοντὰ ἀποθνή-

~~PLINY HISTOR.~~ Lucianus in Asiño.—“ These roses were not true roses : they were flowers of the wild laurel, which men call rhododaphne, or rose-laurel.

It is a bad dinner for either horse or ass, the eating of it being attended by immediate death.” *Apulei-*

Lucianus has amplified this passage : “ I observed from afar the deep shades of a leafy grove, through whose diversified and abundant verdure shone the snowy colour of refulgent roses. As my perceptions and feelings were not asinine like my shape*, I judged it to be a sacred grove of Venus and the Graces, where, the celestial splendor of their genial flower glittered through the dark-green shades. I invoked the propitious power of joyful Event,

* This is spoken in the character of Lucius, who has been changed to an ass by a Thessalian ointment, and can be restored to his true shape only by the eating of roses.

and sprang forward with such velocity, as if I were not indeed an ass, but the horse of an Olympic charioteer. But this splendid effort of energy could not enable me to outrun the cruelty of my fortune. For on approaching the spot, I saw, not those tender and delicate roses, the offspring of auspicious bushes, whose fragrant leaves make nectar of the morning-dew ; nor yet the deep wood I had seemed to see from afar : but only a thick line of trees skirting the edge of a river. These trees, clothed with an abundant and laurel-like foliage, from which they stretch forth the cups of their pale and inodorous flowers, are called among the unlearned rustics, by the far from rustic appellation of laurel-roses : the eating of which is mortal to all quadrupeds. Thus entangled by evil fate, and despairing of safety, I was on the point of swallowing the poison of

those fictitious roses, &c." Pliny says, that this plant, though poison to quadrupeds, is an antidote to men against the venom of serpents.

⁷ P. 50. v. 11.—The plane was sacred to the Genius, as the oak to Jupiter, the olive to Minerva, the palm to the Muses, the myrtle and rose to Venus, the laurel to Apollo, the ash to Mars, the beech to Hercules, the pine to Pan, the fir and ivy to Bacchus, the cypress to Sylvanus, the cedar to the Eumenides, the yew and poppy to Ceres, &c. "I swear to you," says Socrates in the Phædrus of Plato, "by any one of the gods, if you will, by this plane."

⁸ P. 62. v. 13.—Ascra derived its name from a nymph, of whom Neptune was enamoured. She bore him a son named Cœclus, who built Ascra in conjunction with the giants Ophus and Ephialtes,

who were also sons of Neptune, by Iphimedia, the wife of Alcæus. Pausanias mentions, that nothing but a solitary tower of Ascra was remaining in his time. Strabo describes it as having a lofty and rugged site. It was the birth-place of Hesiod, who gives a dismal picture of it.

⁹ P. 64. v. 15.—“The andrachne,” says Pausanias, “grows abundantly in Helicon, and bears fruit of incomparable sweetness.”—Pliny says, “It is the same plant which is called in Latin illecebra: it grows on rocks, and is gathered for food.”

¹⁰ P. 65. v. 10.—It was said by the Thracians, that those nightingales which had their nests about the tomb of Orpheus, sang more sweetly and powerfully than any others. Pausanias, L. IX.

¹¹ P. 86. v. 2.—It was the custom of Pan to repose from the chase at noon. Theocritus, Id. I.

¹² P. 104. v. 10.—Sophocles, Œd. Col. Μη φυναι τον άπαντα νικα λόγον· Το δ', επει φαινη, Βηναι κειθεν οθεν περ ηκει, Πολυ δευτερον, ως ταχιστα. This was a very favourite sentiment among the Greeks. The same thought occurs in Ecclesiastes, iv. 2, 3.

¹³ P. 117. v. 11.—The children of the Sun were known by the splendor of their eyes and hair. Πασα γαρ ηελιου γενεη αριδηλος ιδεσθαι Ηεν· επει βλεφαρων αποτηλοθι μαρμαρυγησιν Οιον εκ χρυσεων αντωπιον ισσαν αιγλην. Apollonius, IV. 727. And in the Orphic Argonautics Circe is thus described:—εκ δ'αρα παντες Θαμβειον εισορωντες· απο κρατος γαρ ιδειραι Πυρσαις ακτινεσσιν αλιγκιοι

ἠώρητο· Στίλβει δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα, φλογος δ' ἀπελαμ-
πεν αὐτῆ.

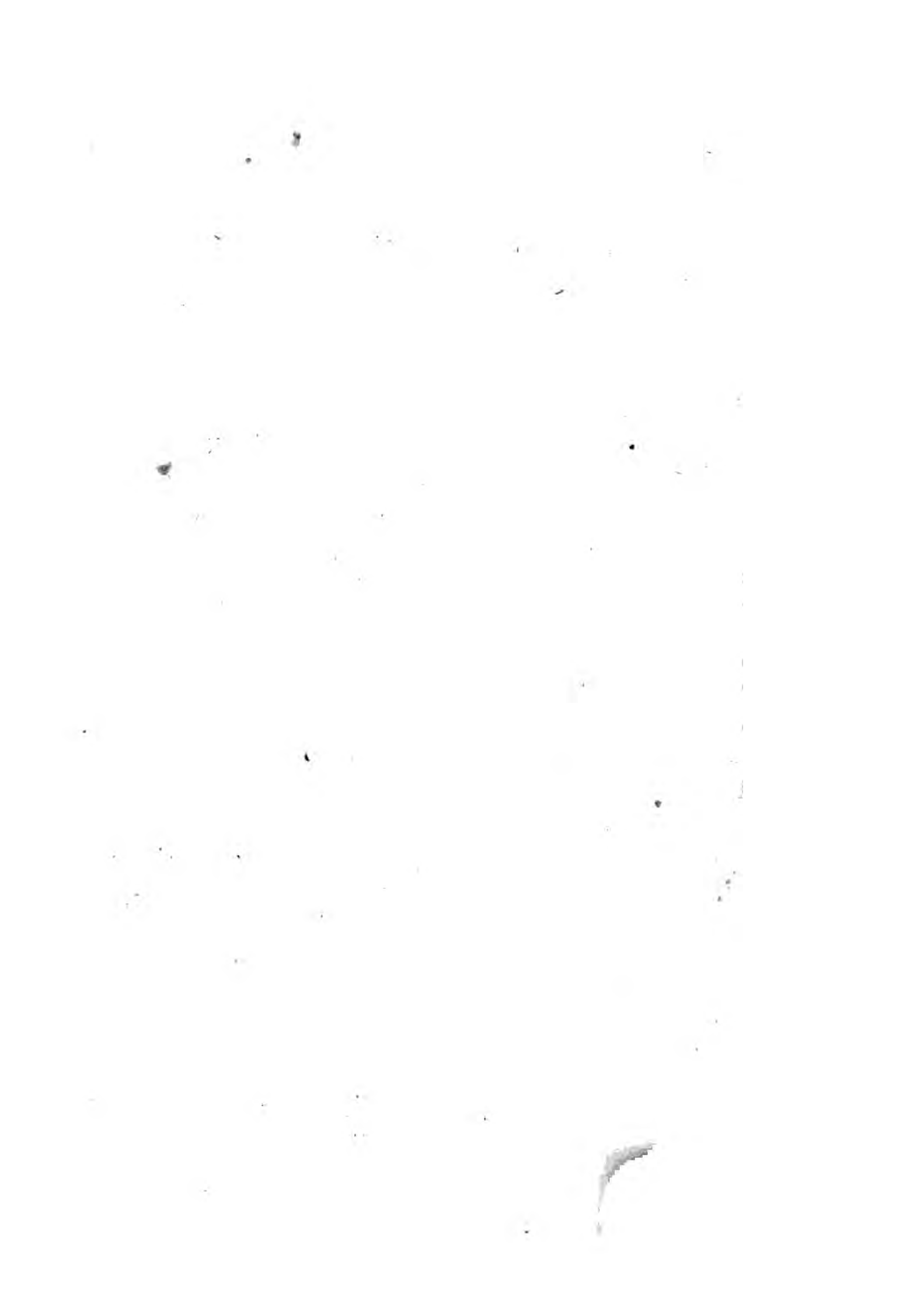
¹⁴ P. 137. v. 14.—“The dreaded name of Dæmogorgon” is familiar to every reader, in Milton’s enumeration of the Powers of Chaos. Mythological writers in general afford but little information concerning this terrible Divinity. He is incidentally mentioned in several places by Natalis Comes, who says, in treating of Pan, that Pronapides, in his Protocosmus, makes Pan and the three sister Fates the offspring of Dæmogorgon. Boccaccio, in a Latin treatise on the Genealogy of the Gods, gives some account of him on the authority of Theodotion and Pronapides. He was the Genius of the Earth, and the Sovereign Power of the Terrestrial Dæmons. He dwelt originally with

Eternity and Chaos, till, becoming weary of inaction, he organised the chaotic elements, and surrounded the earth with the heavens. In addition to Pan and the Fates, his children were Uranus, Titæa, Pytho, Eris, and Erebus. This awful Power was so sacred among the Arcadians, that it was held impious to pronounce his name. The impious, however, who made less scruple about pronouncing it, are said to have found it of great virtue in magical incantations. He has been supposed to be a philosophical emblem of the principle of vegetable life. The silence of mythologists concerning him, can only be attributed to their veneration for his "dreaded name;" a proof of genuine piety which must be pleasing to our contemporary Pagans, for some such there are.

¹⁶ P. 171. v. 6.—The late but certain ven-

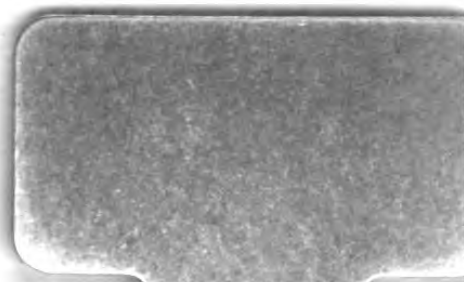
geance of the gods, occurs in many forms as a sentence among the classical writers; and is the subject of an interesting dialogue, among the moral works of Plutarch, which concludes with the fable of Thespesius, a very remarkable prototype of the *Inferno* of Dante.

THE END.









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