



THE SERENADE.

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'Tis midnight, and there is a world of stars  
 Hanging in the blue heaven, bright and clear,  
 And shining, as if they were only made  
 To sparkle in the mirror of the lake,  
 And light up flower-gardens and green groves.  
 By yonder lattice, where the thick vine-leaves  
 Are canopy and curtain, set with gems  
 Rich in the autumn's gift of ruby grapes,  
 A maiden leans :—it is a lovely night,  
 But, lovely as it is, the hour is late  
 For beauty's vigil, and to that pale cheek  
 Sleep might give back the roses watching steals.  
 Slumber, and happy slumber, such as waits  
 On youth, and hope, and innocence, was made  
 To close those soft blue eyes. What can they know  
 Of this world's sorrow, strife, and anxiousness?  
 What can Wealth be to the young mind that has  
 A mine of treasure in its own fresh feelings?  
 And Fame, oh woman! has no part in it; and Hate,  
 Those sweet lips cannot know it; and Remorse,  
 That waits on guilt,—and Guilt has set no sign  
 On that pure brow: 'tis none of these that keep



Her head from its down pillow, but there is  
A visitant in that pale maiden's breast  
Restless as Avarice, anxious as Fame,—  
Cruel as Hate, and pining as Remorse,—  
Secret as Guilt; a passion and a power  
That has from every sorrow taken a sting,—  
A flower from every pleasure, and distilled  
An essence where is blent delight and pain;  
And deep has she drained the bewildering cup,  
For Isadore watches and wakes with Love.

Hence is it that of the fair scene below  
She sees one only spot; in vain the lake  
Spreads like a liquid sky, o'er which the swans  
Wander, fleece-clouds around the one small isle,  
Where lilies glance like a white marble floor,  
In the tent made by pink acacia boughs;  
In vain the garden spreads, with its gay banks  
Of flowers, o'er which the summer has just pass'd,  
The bride-like rose,—the rich anemone,—  
The treasurer of June's gold; the hyacinth,  
A turret of sweet colours; and, o'er all,  
The silver fountains playing:—but in vain!  
Isadore's eye rests on that cypress grove:  
A bright warm crimson is upon her cheek,  
And her red lip is opened as to catch

The air that brought the sound upon the gale.  
There is a sweet low tone of voice and lute,  
And, oh! Love's eyes are lightening,—she has caught  
A shadow, and the wave of a white plume  
Amid those trees, and, with her hair flung back,  
She listens to the song:—

Lady sweet, this is the hour  
Time's loveliest to me;  
For now my lute may breathe of love,  
And it may breathe to thee.

All day I sought some trace of thine,  
But never likeness found;  
But still to be where thou hast been  
Is treading fairy ground.

I watched the blushing evening fling  
Her crimson o'er the skies,—  
I saw it gradual fade, and saw,  
At length, the young moon rise.

And very long it seemed to me  
Before her zenith hour,  
When sleep and shade conspire to hide  
My passage to thy bower.

I will not say—wake not, dear love,—

I know thou wilt not sleep ;

Wilt thou not from thy casement lean,

And one lone vigil keep ?

Ah ! only thus to see thee, love,

And watch thy bright hair play

Like gold around thine ivory arm,

Is worth a world of day.

Gradual he had drawn nearer and more near,  
And now he stood so that his graceful shape  
Was visible, and his flashing eyes were raised  
With all the eloquence of love to her's :  
She took an azure flower from her hair,  
And flung it to him.—Flowers are funeral gifts,—  
And, ere his hand could place upon his heart  
The fragile leaves, another hand was there—  
The hand of Death.

Alas for her proud kinsmen !

'Tis their work ! the gallant and the young  
Lies with the dagger in his faithful breast,—  
The destiny of love.

L. E. L.



