

I S R A F E L . *

BY EDGAR A. POE.

In Heaven a spirit doth dwell,
 " Whose heart-strings are a lute ;"
 None sing so wildly well
 As the angel Israfel,
 And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
 Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
 Of his voice, all mute.

Tottering above
 In her highest noon
 The enamoured moon
 Blushes with love,
 While, to listen, the red levin
 Pauses in Heaven,
 With the rapid Pleiads, even,
 Which were seven.

And they say (the starry choir
 And the other listening things)
 That Israfeli's fire
 Is due unto that lyre
 By which he sits and sings—
 That trembling living lyre
 With those unusual strings.

But the Heavens that angel trod,
 Where deep thoughts are a duty—
 Where Love is a grown God—
 Where Houri glances are
 Imbued with all the beauty

Which we worship in the star—
 The more lovely, the more far !

Thou art not, therefore, wrong,
 Israfeli, who despisest
 An unimpassioned song.
 To thee the laurels belong,
 Best bard, because the wisest.
 Merrily live, and long !

The ecstasies above
 With thy burning measures suit—
 Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
 With the fervor of thy lute.
 Well may the stars be mute !

Yes, Heaven is thine ; but this
 Is a world of sweets and sour—
 Our flowers are merely—flowers ;
 And the shadow of thy bliss
 Is the sunshine of ours.

If I did dwell
 Where Israfel
 Hath dwelt, and he where I,
 He might not sing one half so well,
 One half so passionately,
 While a bolder note than this might swell
 From my lyre within the sky !

* And the angel Israfel, or Israfeli, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who is the most musical of all God's creatures.
 KORAN.