

October

Mellow-fac'd, with eyes of faery, wistful clad in tinted leaves,
 See the brown October tarry by the golden rows of sheaves;
 Oak and acorn in his garland, fruit and wineskin in his hands,
 Mystic pilgrim from a far land down the road to farther lands.

Softly treading, gently breathing, casting spells on wood and wold, 5
 Vines with purple clusters wreathing, witching boughs to red and gold;
 Bearing sicklemen their pleasure when the harvest toil is o'er,
 And the autumn's garner'd treasure lies within the festive door.

Bearing dreams to all who listen as he sounds his elfin horn
 Where the crystal vapours glisten past the farther hills at morn; 10
 Where the sunset hovers playing on the teeming cottage yard
 Till the cryptic night comes straying in a mitre tall and starr'd.

Dreams elusive and uncertain, fleeting as the dying year,
 Glimpses from behind the curtain, half to cherish, half to fear;
 Memories that charm and beckon, vanish'd scene and vanish'd face, 15
 Phantoms past the world we reckon, reaching from the wells of space.

Mounting as with necromancy, welcome visions hold the sight;
 Bygone fields assail the fancy, radiant in a golden light.
 Ancient lanes lead cool and bending past remember'd farms and byres,
 Where the curling smoke ascending tells of happy autumn fires. 20

I can catch the flaming riot of the oaks and elms I know,
 And the breathless ruddy quiet of the sunset's spectral glow;
 And the farmhouse chimney peeping thro' the scarlet maple shade,
 And the gorgeous fruits of reaping by the door in order laid.

Greens that red and yellow dapple, tints that match the blazing sky; 25
 Swelling pumpkin, rosy apple, cluster'd grapes of Tyrian dye;
 And behind the orchard reaching where the rolling meadows bide,
 I can see the corn-shocks bleaching and the stubble stretching wide.

V. SEASONAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL

Skies alive with southward winging, ravens perch'd on sheaf and stack,
Groves with eager trumpets ringing as the quarry flees the pack; 30
Swains with nuts and fagots plodding homeward to the twilight garth,
Soon to cluster, warm and nodding, round their cider and their hearth.

Notes of village bells are soaring, peaceful in their vesper tune,
As an eerie light comes pouring from the rising hunter's moon;
Wild above the wooded mountains, weirdly shining on the streams, 35
Yellow floods from haunted fountains, witches dancing in the beams.

Half-seen sights from outer distance, half-heard sounds from outer spheres,
Beat with goblin-born insistence on the spirit's eyes and ears.
Thoughts half-thought and yearnings sober, formless as the autumn smoke,
These thy gifts, obscure October, these the symbols of thy yoke. 40

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