

THE SLEEPER.

At midnight, in the month of June,
 I stand beneath the mystic moon.
 An opiate vapour, dewy, dim,
 Exhales from out her golden rim,
 And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
 Upon the quiet mountain-top,
 Steals drowsily and musically
 Into the universal valley.
 The rosemary nods upon the grave;
 The lily lolls upon the wave;
 Wrapping the mist about its breast,
 The ruin moulders into rest;
 Looking like Lethe, see, the lake
 A conscious slumber seems to take,
 And would not for the world awake.
 All beauty sleeps!—and, lo! where lies,
 With casement open to the skies,
 Irene and her destinies!

O, lady bright, can it be right,
 This lattice open to the night?
 The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
 Flit through thy chamber, in and out,
 And wave the curtain-canopy
 So fitfully, so fearfully,
 Above the closed and fringed lid
 'Neath which thy slumbering soul lies hid,
 That o'er the floor and down the wall,
 Like ghosts, the shadows rise and fall.
 O, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
 Why and what art thou dreaming here?
 Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
 A wonder to our garden-trees!
 Strange is thy pallor—strange thy dress—
 Stranger thy glorious length of tress,
 And this all-solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps. O, may her sleep,
 Which is enduring, so be deep!
 Soft may the worms about her creep!
 This bed, being changed for one more holy
 This room for one more melancholy,
 I pray to God that she may lie
 Forever with uncloséd eye!
 My love she sleeps. O, may her sleep,
 As it is lasting, so be deep!
 Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
 Far in the forest, dim and old,
 For her may some tall tomb unfold—
 Some tomb that oft hath flung its black
 And wing-like pannels, fluttering back,
 Triumphant o'er the crested palls
 Of her grand family funerals,—
 Some sepulchre, remote, alone,
 Against whose portal she hath thrown,
 In childhood, many an idle stone,—
 Some vault from out whose sounding door
 She ne'er shall force an echo more,
 Nor thrill to think, poor child of sin,
 It was the dead who groan'd within.