

THE INITIATION.

THERE is a bare bleak headland which the sea
Incessantly devours,
A rock impregnable, where herb and tree
Are not. A vision of it came to me
In night's most ghastly hours.

I who desire, beyond all named desire,
To pass the envious bounds of air and fire,
And penetrate the bosom of the night,
Saw in a vision such a neophyte
Stand on the forehead of the rock; I saw
The armies of unalterable law
Shudder within their spheres, as to him came
His master's spirit, like a tongue of flame,
To touch his lips and ears and eyes and hands
With that pale amber that divides the lands
Of sense and spirit, and beheld him quail
As fell from all his shaken soul the veil.
Then on the night began the awful gale
That did assume a voice
Whereat the air was peopled with such forms
As ride abroad upon the path of storms,
And in the awe rejoice.
They gather, chanting, round that noble head.

The master of the prisons of the dead
Loosens the bonds and bids the furies spring
For their last struggle ere they own a king.
This pæan of the sky they sing.

CHANT OF DEMONS.

*We ride upon the fury of the blast,
Fast, fast.
We race upon the horses of the wind :
The tameless thunder follows hard behind,
Fast, and too fast.
The lightning heralds us ; the iron blast
Lends us its splendour for a steed fire-shod,
The steed of God !*

From all the caverns of the hollow sea,
And all the fortresses that guard the air,
And all the fearful palaces of fire,
And all the earth's dwarf-ridden secrecy,
They come, they gather, and they ride, to bear
Destruction and disorder and desire ;
They cling to him who braves the gale of night,
And mock his might ;
They rush upon him like a wave, and break
In fiery foam against him, and they shake
Life in its citadel,
They open Hell
To let the Furies and the Fates spring forth

On their wild chargers of the icy North
To quench the holy lamp.
His spirit and his life within him quail,
And all the armaments of sin assail
With deadly tramp
And swordless fury that devours and bites
And tears and clutches him, whom heavenly lights
The heart of any a man, whom heavenly airs
Shield and lead on afar,
Where beyond storm and passion is the sky,
And where the sacred hand of the Most High
Holds out a star.
He stands amid the storm, a mighty rock,
His long hair blows about, the demons mock
His entry to their kingdom, and despair.
Groans in the blackness, infamous and bare,
And hateful shapes and eyes surround his head—
O for the magic of those mightier dead
To scatter them, and utterly destroy
Their likeness, and to penetrate the joy
Of yonder places past the realm of fear!
O that some mighty seer
Came to avenge, that might deliver him
From this grim fight, whose horrid ranks are dim
With mist of spuméd blood, whose long chill hour
Beats out each second with the ghastly power,
Reluctant till the morning. Shall they cease,
These black battalions, and the dawn bring peace
To a head holier? Or shall he succumb,
Fight through long agonies and perish dumb,

Sword gripped hard to the last? or shall he fall
Recreant, coward, and no more at all
Reach the dim martyr-hall of heroes? Yet
The surging shapes gape hideous, to beget
Fresh arméd foemen to destroy the king.
And first, on black imperishable wing,
 That Nameless Thing.

Darkness, a dragon, now devours
The vision of those deadly powers,
The legions of the lords of sin
It is an hour till dawn begin.