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BORDERLAND

FANCIES

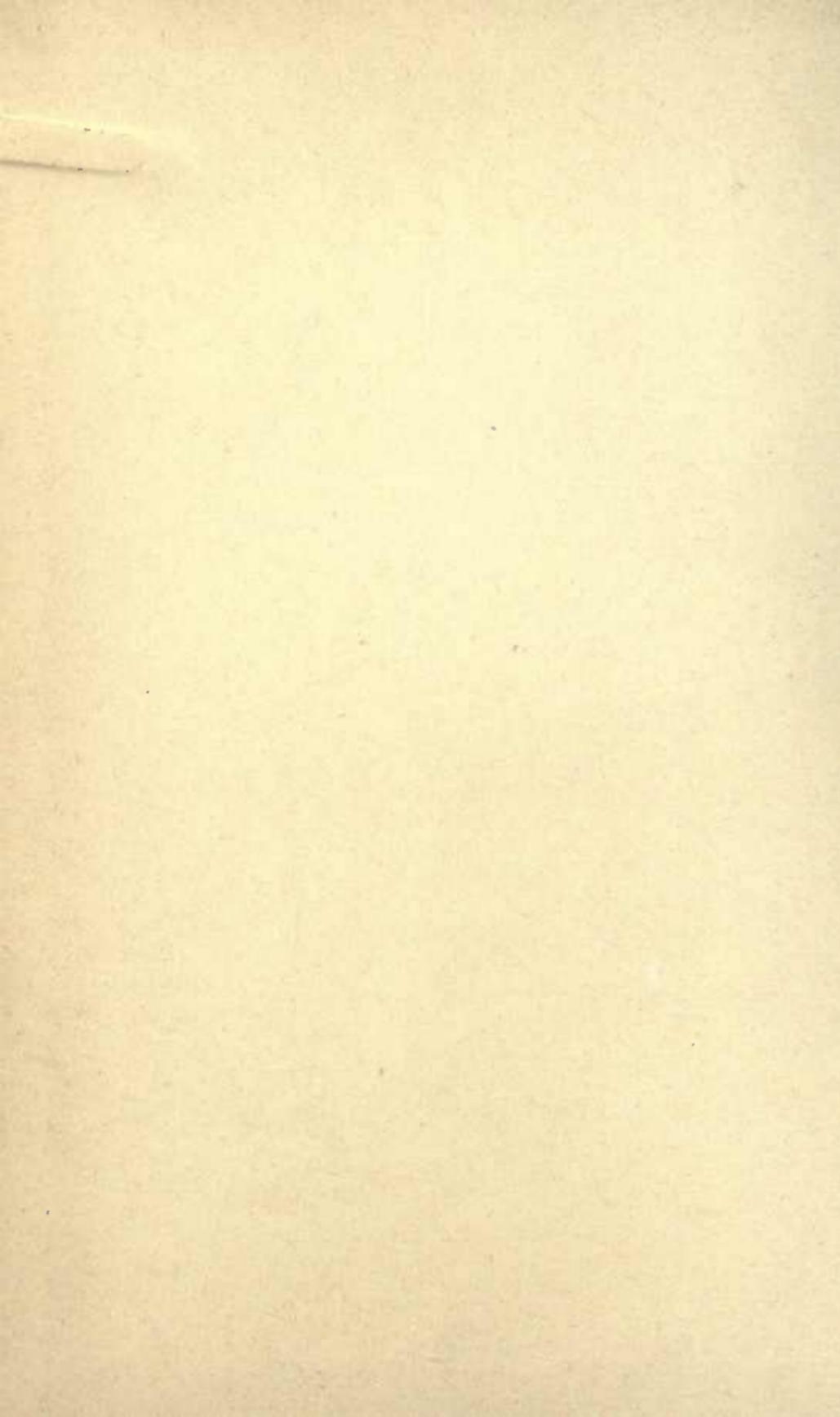


BY EVA BOULTON

ILLUSTRATED

130/263





# Borderland Fancies

BY

EVA BOULTON

WITH

*TWENTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS*

BY THE AUTHOR.



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T 4,661.

WHEN BY MY SOLITARY HEARTH I SIT,  
AND HATEFUL THOUGHTS ENWRAP MY SOUL IN GLOOM;  
WHEN NO FAIR DREAMS BEFORE MY "MIND'S EYE" FLIT,  
AND THE BARE HEATH OF LIFE PRESENTS NO BLOOM;  
SWEET HOPE, ETHEREAL BALM UPON ME SHED  
AND WAVE THY SILVER PINIONS O'ER MY HEAD.

*Keats.*





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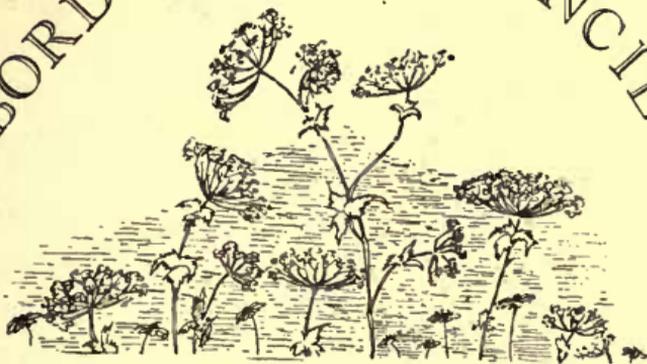
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# BORDERLAND FANCIES



## CHAPTER I.



### *INTRODUCTION.*

I HAVE so often been asked by my friends to write a description of some of the "dreams" or "imaginative brain-pictures" which from my earliest days I have been in the habit of experiencing, that, at the risk of the cynical expressions  
of

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of incredulity, and laughing comments and criticisms of some of my readers, I have at last consented to commit to writing a true account of one or two of the visions which, there is no doubt I have the power of "conjuring up" at my own desire and will.

I am a hard-working business man with little spare time at my disposal, and the practical working life, which it is my misfortune to lead every day, would not therefore be generally considered in any way conducive to the production of the moving pictures of the spirit-world, which I can so easily summon be-

fore

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fore my enchanted gaze whenever I am influenced by what I describe as my "visionary mood."

This creative power of the brain is to me a valuable possession, a wonderful gift, which I could not now do without, so much has it become a part of myself and my life.

Being by necessity and force of circumstances compelled to concentrate all my attention and intellectual energies on work which is entirely uncongenial to my natural tastes, (which are essentially artistic), I have unfortunately never had leisure time enough to indulge the  
passionate

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passionate love I have always had for music, poetry, and painting, in all of which arts I feel that, with proper cultivation and training, I could have attained to a certain proficiency. In these arts my soul would have found a voice, a means of expression.

As it is, with these faculties lying dormant and undeveloped within me, I experience at times, in the very depths of my being, an inexpressible longing for speech and expression. My real self feels a sense of neglect, and my soul seems forsaken and unexpressed.

An infinite sense of loneliness  
takes

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takes possession of me, and there sweeps over my spirit a terrible longing for something I cannot define. It is at these times, and when this dissatisfied mood is upon me, that I feel myself most susceptible to the influence of the spirits or phantoms, either of my own imagination, or of what is generally known as the "spiritual world."

An intense desire takes possession of me to lift the veil of the unseen, and longing to escape from the lingering thoughts connected with the harassing details of my day's work, I enter my study where all is quiet, throw myself upon a  
sofa

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sofa or into an arm-chair, and for a few minutes concentrate my gaze on any bright-looking object : a glass with the reflection of the fire playing upon it, a lamp, a diamond on a ring, anything in fact which is bright enough to attract the eye and retain the attention of the sight.

And the process seems so simple. . . . I wish to leave the material world for a short time, and indulge in a restful flight of imagination. I look round the room, choose the particular article for my eyes to rest upon, and then, as it appears to me, my sight as well as my will seem to be gradually  
drawn

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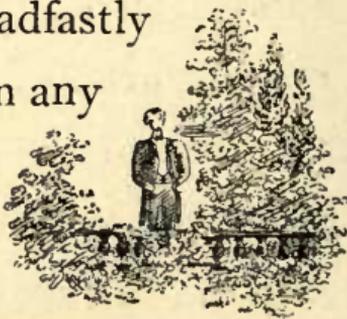
drawn and absorbed into the brightness of the object on which I have fixed my gaze. . . . The room, the surrounding objects, become more and more indistinct, finally invisible, I experience a sort of "rippling subdued murmuring" in my ears, like the rush of a returning wave when it has broken on a pebbly shore ; I seem to be rising gradually, higher and higher through a cool, still air, my temples throb, and with a slight effort I seem to throw off the weight of my material being. A feeling of lightness comes over me, I inhale a deep breath, and . . . I am free, a spirit soaring in unknown worlds,

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worlds, or, as a friend once cynically remarked to me, "an apparently aimless atom floating in space !"

Sometimes I attain to this state of the mind whilst out of doors, in the garden, by steadfastly fixing my gaze upon any particular object.

These "spirit-



manifestations" often come to me in the form of a "vision," and sometimes when this is the case, I am strangely enough able to realize that I am sitting in my own room with all its familiar objects around me, and at the same time witnessing the most curious

scenes

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scenes belonging to the "spirit-world." When these visions occur I am usually only a spectator, never moving among the figures of the vision, although I am sometimes able to hold conversations with those spirits in the picture that are nearest to me. . . . When, however, I am with the spirits in a "dream" it is different. My will is less under control, and my senses are not alive to the impressions of my material surroundings. I become a moving figure in the midst of a strange "dream-drama," and am involved among many others in taking an active part in what seems

to

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

to be a "plotless tangle of incident." I am, moreover, in my dream, so far from being my own natural self, that I seldom stop to consider how absolutely incongruous and impossible are the circumstances in which I find myself.

Another "delusion" to which I am subject takes the form of a conversation between myself and one or more passing spirits who drop in from space to have a chat, and with whom I am only too interested to have the opportunity of exchanging ideas!

\* \* \* \* \*

I hope my kind readers will  
view

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view the following pages with leniency, remembering that I do not hold myself in any way responsible for anything that is said or implied in these my "visionary flights." I merely give a faithful record of all that "occurs" to me whilst I am away among the spirits, and those who may have had similar experiences will not, I hope, treat with contempt the account of some of these strange journeys into the "Land of Spirits."





CHAPTER

## CHAPTER II.



### *THE DREAM OF THE "GARDEN OF LIGHT."*

---

THE MATTER OF WHICH DREAMS ARE MADE  
NOT MORE ENDOWED WITH ACTUAL LIFE  
THAN THIS PHANTASMAL PORTRAITURE  
OF WANDERING HUMAN THOUGHT.—*Shelley.*

ONE evening, having left the material world behind me, I found myself standing in a beautiful garden full of the most gorgeous flowers of every description that can possibly be imagined. There were flowers everywhere, the garden was one brilliant blaze of colour,

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colour, and the whole atmosphere seemed breathless with the overpowering scent of these blossoms. "Was it an enchanted spot? Where was I?" I asked myself. I could not compare it to anything I had ever seen before. My brain seemed on fire, pierced by the brilliant colours all around me, which were so dazzling in their varied beauty, that I could scarcely raise my eyes to look at them. Nor had I the power to lift a hand to shade my sight from the intense brightness of the light that was shining everywhere.

I longed to move forward and  
explore

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explore this wonderful place, but I could not stir. I was as one paralysed, my will seemed to have lost all control over my limbs, which were heavy with the weariness that comes after many hours ceaseless travelling. I tried to call out, but I was voiceless. I felt bewildered, and wondered with a vague sense of distress why I had been led to this beautiful flower-garden and left there all alone so helpless and so weary. My throat was parched with a great thirst, and I longed for a draught of cold water to moisten my burning lips. The wish had scarcely passed through my brain  
when

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when I realized that my voiceless cry had been heard. A cool air swept with a soft murmur over my head and fanned my burning temples, and a voice in my ear whispered "Drink."

I raised my eyes and saw standing before me the form of a beautiful spirit robed in white, holding out to me a transparent crystal bowl filled to the brim with some clear sparkling fluid.

"Weary mortal," said the Spirit, "you have journeyed far. Drink this, and you will soon revive. This spiritual essence will protect you from being blinded in this realm of  
light,





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light, it will also make your steps light as the air, and enable you to know and understand many strange things that do not belong to your own world." . . . As soon as I had finished the contents of the crystal bowl I felt a renewed vigour springing up within me, and movement was now no effort, for I seemed to float rather than walk. My senses were fully awake and strangely sensitive to every sound and sight and scent with which the air was full.

Floating by the side of my spirit-guide, I observed that the garden was filled with thousands  
of

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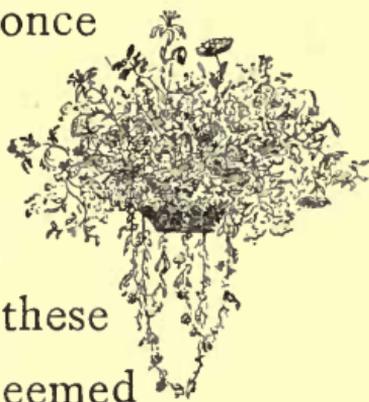
of bright-robed beings carrying silver baskets, some of which were full of flowers, whilst some were empty. I noticed that those whose baskets contained the beautiful blossoms, gathered from the garden, all winged their way in the direction of the boundary wall of this bright spot. Beyond this wall, which was made of gold inlaid with precious stones, I lost sight of them, for they seemed to disappear into the darkness beyond. . . . Those spirits carrying the empty baskets seemed to be returning from that "beyond," wherever that might be, and passing their flower-laden companions,





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panions, re-entered the garden to fill their baskets once more, and vanish again into the outer darkness.



The flight of these beauteous spirits seemed accompanied by a never-ceasing subdued murmur of exquisite music.

Never before had I heard such rare and thrilling notes of soul-stirring pathos. The whole atmosphere was quivering with waves of beautiful harmony. Over and above this marvellous music, my sense of hearing seemed alive to a subtler under-current

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under-current of melody, a hushed harmony, a musical silence.

Was it a feeling in my own heart? it certainly was not a sound, and yet it was a sweet strange music. How can I explain myself better than by repeating these lines, which I remember to have read somewhere.

“Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter.” “It is wonderful indeed,” I murmured, half aloud.

The Spirit at my side did not speak, but led me on farther into the garden.

I now found myself in one of the numerous winding paths that  
led

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

led from the edge of the garden into the centre, which consisted of a great heart-shaped diamond, supported by countless white-robed spirits, and surrounded by rare blossoms of every form and colour. The radiance that scintillated and flashed from this colossal diamond, diffusing itself in the most glorious light over the surrounding flowers, was bewildering to the gaze, but thanks to the liquid given me by the Spirit, I was able to brave its brilliance and beauty, and marvel at the sight.

Each of the paths leading up to this central gem of light and radiance,

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ance, was paved with gold and silver tablets, on which were engraved, in letters of diamonds, some of the choicest verses from the best-loved poets. Each poet chosen had a walk devoted to his own particular verses. Thus there was a "Tennyson walk," a "Shelley walk," a "Byron walk," and so on through all the well-remembered poets.

Pausing awhile at the side of one of these poetical paths, my eyes were attracted to a verse of Shelley's on a tablet just beneath my feet, and which seemed to be the written expression of my own thoughts at that particular moment.

The

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

The verse ran thus :

“ Do I dream ? Is this new feeling  
But a visioned ghost of slumber ?  
If indeed I am a soul,  
A free, a disembodied soul,  
Speak again to me.”

I glanced involuntarily at the phantom beside me, and divining my questioning thoughts, the Spirit replied in a gentle voice :

“ You are but a child of the earth, and do not as yet belong to our sphere, but your daring spirit, winged by a strong desire to soar in unknown worlds, is allowed for a short space of time to leave its mortal frame and wander wondering in a dream or vision.”

While

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While the Spirit was speaking, a brighter radiance than usual flashed from the great central diamond and illuminated, with a greater light, the golden tablets nearest to me, and on one of which was written :

“ Oh thou, who plumed with strong desire,  
Would float above the earth, beware ! ”

“ But,” the Spirit went on, in a gentle voice, “ although all around you now breathes of a glorious beauty and brightness, you will see presently ”—and my gaze was directed towards the boundary wall of the garden—“ what a limitless void of darkness there is around and beyond

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yond where we now are, bathed in the light of beauty. Away from here you must be prepared for gloom and sorrow beyond expression, and which to you will seem meaningless, infinite, and which you will not understand."

The Spirit was silent for awhile, and I thought within myself :

"How every pause is filled with under-notes, clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones, which pierce the sense, and live within the soul."

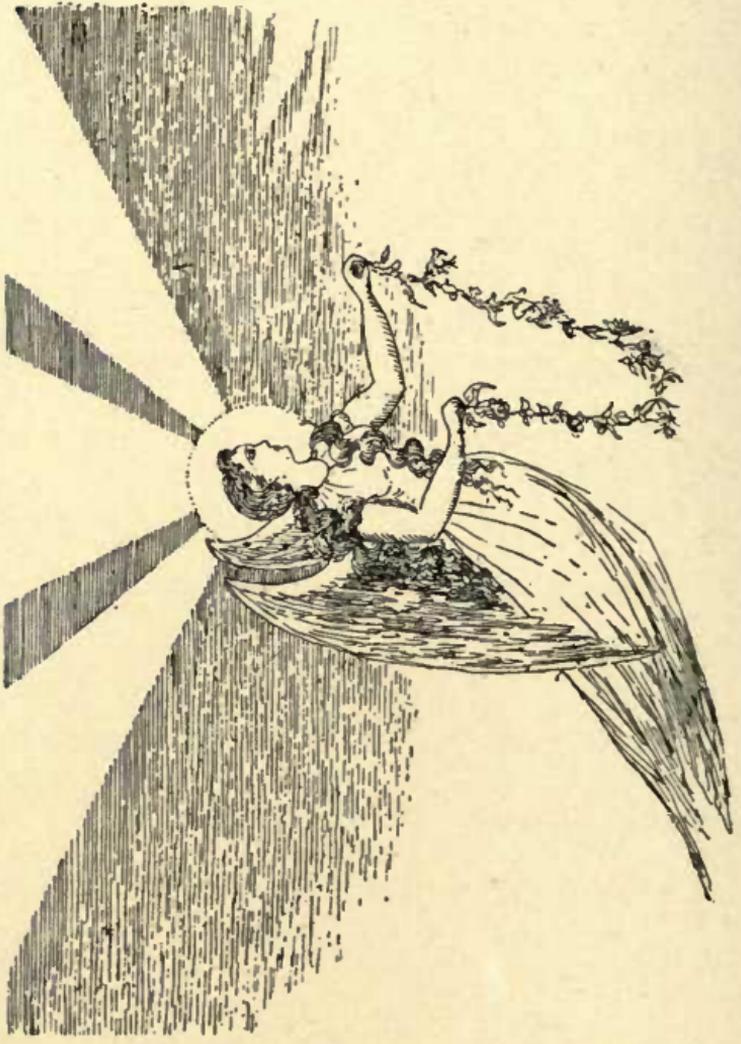
In a fascinated gaze I watched the everchanging rays of light playing and beaming among the flowers, over which the bright spirits were  
hovering

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hovering in an incessant adoration, seeming to float in the light of their own beauteous radiance, while the deep mysterious murmur of the melodious music surrounding them, and the subtle essence of the sweet scent of countless blossoms, were wafted to me over the garden by an invisible breeze.

“You must know,” continued the voice of the Spirit, “that this radiant spot is the temporary resting-place for the souls of broken-hearted mortals, who linger here for a short time on their journey from the earth to higher spheres, in order to gather strength from the Angels  
of



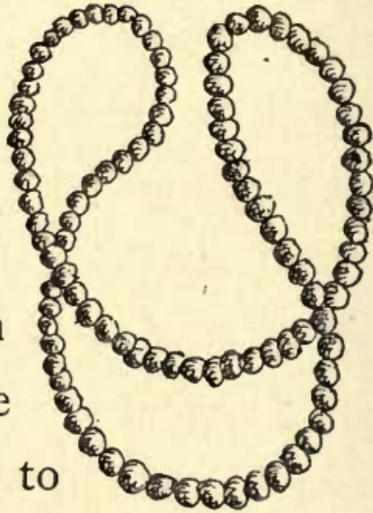


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of Hope and Consolation that dwell here. So many souls are wafted to us who have well-nigh perished on earth for the want of love and sympathy, blessings which alas!" sighed the Spirit, "are not bestowed on all. With us, however, they find ever a glad welcome and a tender care. Those spirits hovering yonder among the blossoms, are the messengers sent to earth to whisper words of comfort to these sorrowing souls; and, as you see, they carry with them bright flowers of Hope to guide them on their way. Moreover," continued the Spirit, "all the frozen, unshed tears, stored  
up

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up in those many aching hearts, melt in this bright atmosphere of love and pity, and are changed to precious pearls, which we collect, and stringing them into necklets, we give them as gifts to the departing souls as a charm against Despair."



The voice of the Spirit had been gradually becoming fainter and fainter, and the word "Despair" was uttered hardly above a whisper. With a sighing sense of change, I looked up, to find that the Spirit

had

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had fled, and without knowing why, I discovered that the power to see and hear all the wonderful things in the garden was suddenly vanishing.

In some unaccountable way the dream was changing, I felt myself being hurried away towards the golden wall, the light and the flowers were fading before my eyes, the colours were growing fainter, there was a misty veil closing down over everything, and I felt myself leaving the bright garden far behind. Without questioning, or feeling in any way surprised at the sudden transformation of my dream, I soon found myself floating in an appar-  
ently

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ently accustomed manner through an immeasurable space of darkness. . . . Straining my eyes I could now see in the far distance the fading brightness of the "Garden of my Vision," which resembled a dying oasis of light in a desert of limitless gloom.

Gradually the light seemed to fade from my gaze, till it looked



like a tiny star hanging as a clouded jewel in the immense vault of the hea-

vens, and then finally disappeared altogether in the engulfing gloom.

“Gone !

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“Gone! Gone for ever,” I cried, “the bright garden, the beauteous flowers, the glorious white-robed spirits, the golden paths of verse, the Voice, the music!” I felt that I had lost something, something very precious that I should never see again. “What was it?” The strings of my heart were quivering with the vibration of some sudden note of intense pain, which seemed to have been struck deep down in the very depths of my soul. “Where was I?” I now asked myself. . . . With straining eyes I pierced the darkness around me, seeking eagerly in all directions for  
some

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some break in the all-pervading veil of gloom.

But I could distinguish nothing, for I was blinded with the tears that rose to my eyes in answer to the pain at my heart.

“Why should I weep?” I thought, with an aching sense of misery, and these lines floated dreamily through my throbbing brain :

“Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,

Tears from the depth of some divine despair

Rise in the heart and gather to the eyes.” . . . .

Becoming gradually accustomed  
to

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to the darkness, and dashing away my tears, I looked with aching eyes once more into the surrounding gloom; and now I realized that everywhere—above, below, beyond, and all around, as far as the sight could penetrate—the air was full of pale silent shadows; gliding, gliding, in an endless rhythm of motion; on, on, on, through the illimitable space. The death-like silence that ruled over all was almost more than I could bear, and my spirit felt oppressed as with the knowledge of some impending unknown sorrow.

An infinite sense of pity and  
compassion

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compassion swept over my soul for the silent flitting phantoms who seemed for ever doomed to soar in the cold greyness of a measureless space. . . . "My God," I murmured, "how terrible! If they could but have one ray of light to guide them on their weary way!" But my voice died away unanswered into the silence, and there was no star . . . . no . . . . once more I looked around me, and this time surely I could see one small bright gleam of light!

"At last!"

One bright star rose on the horizon of gloom. A wild gleam  
of

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of hope flashed across my brain, that I might perchance be the means of guiding these sad wandering phantoms of the air to this one star above, where the shadow of their despair might melt in the radiant light of Hope. "If only there were time!" I thought; my breath came fast, I could hear the swift beating of my heart, and I felt that I was falling from a great height.

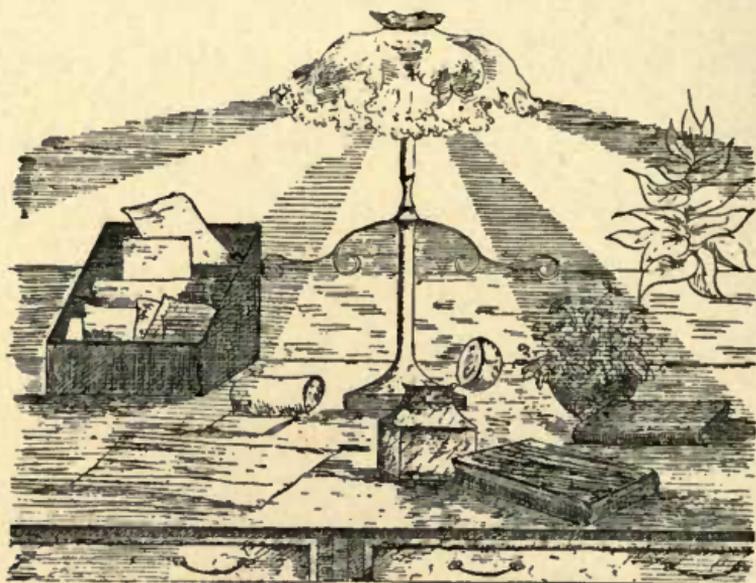
I waved my hand towards the light, and I saw with joy that they were obeying my wish, and one after the other, in quick succession, these grey phantoms were all fast disappearing and becoming absorb-  
ed

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ed into the now ever-increasing  
brightness of the light of this  
radiant . . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

Passing my hand slowly across  
my eyes, I found myself leaning



back in my chair and staring in-  
tently at the bright light of an  
electric lamp standing on my writ-  
ing

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ing table, which had just been turned on by someone entering at the door.

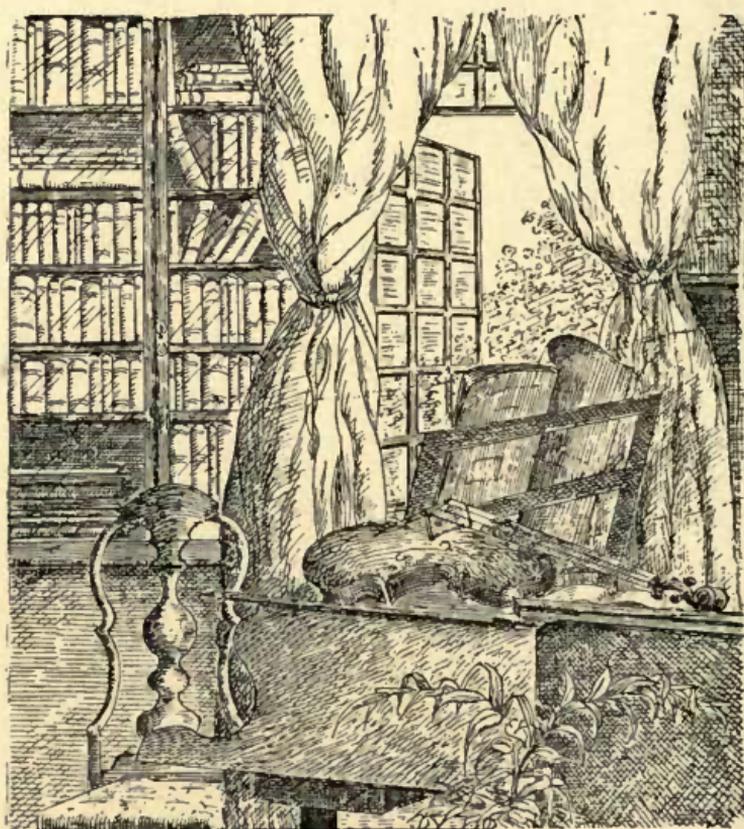
“My dear Alan,” said my sister, bustling into the room, and replacing a burning log of wood that had fallen from the fire, “do you know that it is ever so late, and you will never be ready for dinner if you do not make haste?”





CHAPTER





## CHAPTER III.



### *A MUSICAL "FLIGHT OF FANCY."*

---

I PINE FOR THE MUSIC THAT IS DIVINE;  
MY HEART IN ITS THIRST IS A WITHERED FLOWER.  
POUR FORTH THE SOUND LIKE ENCHANTED WINE,  
LOOSEN THE NOTES IN A SILVER SHOWER.—*Shelley.*

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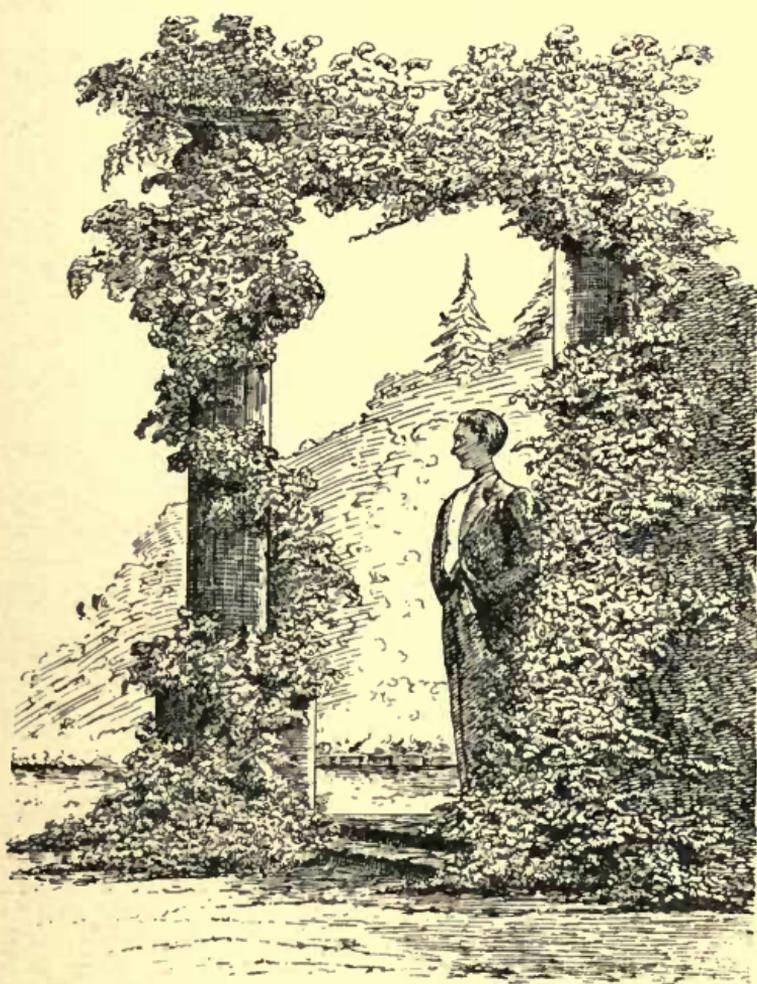
IMAGINATION IS THE WINGS OF THE MIND; THE  
UNDERSTANDING ITS FEET. WITH THESE IT MAY  
CLIMB HIGH, BUT CAN NEVER SOAR INTO THAT  
AMPLER ETHER AND DIVINER AIR WHENCE THE EYE  
DOMINATES SO UNCONTROLLED A PROSPECT ON EVERY  
HAND. THROUGH IMAGINATION ALONE IS SOMETHING  
LIKE A CREATIVE POWER POSSIBLE TO MAN.

—*Russell Lowell.*

I PUT down my fiddle and bow  
with a sigh of regret, and  
turned wearily from the piano,  
despising my inability to produce  
on either instrument an adequate  
expression of the music that had  
been with me all day and was now  
longing

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longing for a voice. I passed through the open window of my study into the verandah outside, and looked out on the peaceful quiet of the warm summer night, contrasting its calm still repose with the dissatisfied, turbulent unrest that was fretting within me. The beauty and quiet of the scene before me soothed me to a certain extent, and the fact of being absolutely alone was at least something to be thankful for, besides which I said to myself, "were not these musical whisperings divine messengers from the unseen world, whose portal I might even now pass through





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through if I so chose, and forget all else for a time in a mystic atmosphere of dreamy enchantment?"

I looked out beyond the shadows cast by the verandah, away over the garden, and my attention was drawn to a bed of white narcissus flowers bathed in dew, and glistening in the soft bright light of the moon. I gazed intently at the shimmering whiteness of the blossoms, and as I looked they united and merged into one bright luminous mass, which, fashioned perhaps out of my fancy, or from my intense desire for spiritual intercourse, took to itself a misty ethereal form.

The

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The moon paled, and the flowers  
were left in darkness, but the spirit  
arose, seeming to move at my com-  
mand, and floated towards me, a  
luminous Being all brightness and  
beauty, born of the moonlight and  
the flowers.

“Creations of the mind?—the mind can  
make

Substance, and people planets of its own  
With beings brighter than have been,  
and give

A breath to forms which can outlive  
all flesh.

I would recall a vision which I dream'd  
Perchance in sleep; for in itself a  
thought,

A slumbering thought, is capable of  
years,

And curdles a long life into one hour.”

I





*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

I gazed in a dream of wonder at the bright Being before me, but I neither moved nor uttered a word, for fear the charm should be broken and the vision fade away. Presently the voice of the Spirit broke the silence.

“Child of the Earth,” it began, in low clear tones, “I am with you, and I see that your soul to-night is full of a divine unspoken melody, and your spirit is weary and oppressed with an intense longing to interpret the beautiful music that has been sent to you from above.

“Do not be disheartened, for the power of your spirit is above  
that

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that usually assigned to mortals, and with my help your soul shall be filled with the inspiration of divine sound, and lighted with the reflected glory of the 'Music of the Spheres.' "

The Spirit ceased speaking, and pointed in the direction of the open window. Instinctively I re-entered the study, and going to the piano took up my fiddle and bow, which but a short while ago I had discarded, in despair at my feeble efforts to produce the music that was floating in my brain.

Stepping once more into the verandah, I found that the form of  
the

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the Spirit had disappeared, but all the brightness of its presence was left to me, and wrapt me round as it were on all sides with a dazzling cloak of radiant light, which for the time-being obliterated all surrounding material objects from my sight.

I could distinguish nothing beyond the encircling halo of brightness in which I was standing, and waiting motionless, instrument in hand, my nerves strung to the highest tension of expectancy, I listened, breathless with anticipation of what was to follow.

I seemed to be breathing in a golden dream of coming glory, and

I

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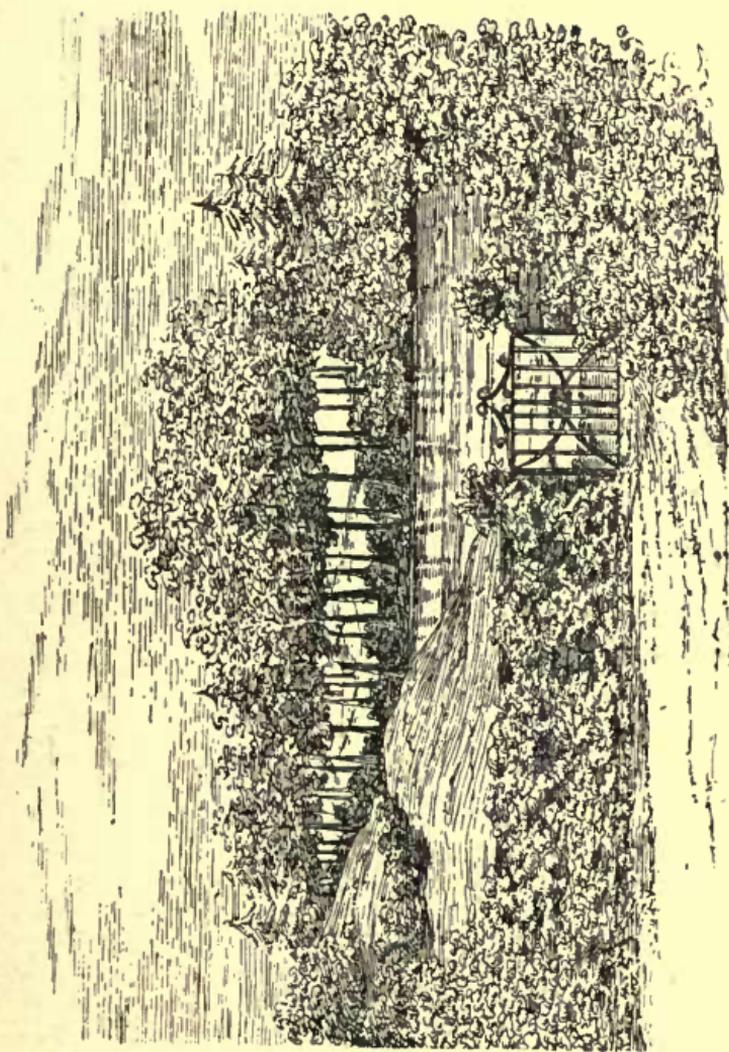
I felt that the dawn of song and hope was rising in my heart.

I listened and waited.

A nightingale in a distant wood was pouring out in thrilling notes her passionate song of joy to the listening night, when suddenly, in some unaccountable manner, the beautiful eager song changed into a melancholy plaintive wail of distress, the notes became fainter and fainter, and then gradually ceased altogether.

Still I waited and listened:

A low breeze murmured softly through the garden, coming nearer and nearer, wafting to me the fresh,  
fragrant





*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

fragrant breath of the sleeping flowers over which it had just passed with a lingering caress.

For a little while I could feel the cool, soft air playing about me, and gently lifting the hair from my forehead and temples, then with a low whisper the breeze left me to die away with a sigh among some willow trees that grew near. How still it was! Not a leaf stirred, not a sound disturbed the enchanting mystery of the silent night.

I seemed to be inhaling a purer atmosphere, and absorbing into my being a new and wonderful power of understanding. A sensation of  
exhilaration

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exhilaration and boundless capability took possession of me, and the glorious feeling of limitless strength and untiring energy of spirits that comes to one in the rarefied air of some high mountain range, swept over me. I felt that I had climbed to a great height, and was pausing, suspended as it were, between heaven and earth, and thinking of many things. Beautiful strange thoughts came to me at that time, which even now dwell wonderingly in my memory. Star-like thoughts, so bright and evanescent in their subtle suggestion, that they seemed to belong to some enchanted world  
of

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

of fancy, of which I was but dimly conscious, and which I felt to be unapproachable, owing to the baffling and blinding radiance of the intellectual atmosphere that guarded it on all sides from the perception and understanding of mortals like myself. . . . These wonderful thoughts, whose delicate meaning I could but slightly grasp, but never actually retain even in my visionary state of mind, I find impossible now to express in words. The thoughts are with me still, but I cannot interpret them into any form of sound or writing. They came to me as bright fleeting rays from some  
luminous

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luminous world of wonderful intelligence, flashing across my brain with the rapidity of lightning, as quickly come and as quickly gone, vanishing at the slightest touch of my will and endeavour, to form of them some permanent idea, and leaving but the remembered momentary daze of vivid brightness, to show that they had ever approached even to the edge of my understanding. These ethereal fancies and ideas now vanished from my power of thought, and in my imagination I watched them float from me in tiny waves of transparent colour, in shape like  
the

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

the petal of a rose, to lose themselves in a vast circle of light which revolved before me in a rapid whirl of dazzling white radiance.

As I gazed at this white "wheel of fancy," I noticed that its speed grew less and less, and was gradually taking to itself all the colours of a beautiful rainbow, which at first seemed to resemble those so often seen from earth ; but which, on watching more closely, I saw was composed not only of all the well-known colours, but was harmoniously interwoven with new tones and shades of indescribable delicacy. These wonderful tints  
asserted

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asserted themselves just at the subtle vanishing point where the rays of two distinct colours seem to melt into each other, delicately blending and at the same time absorbing the dying beauty of the fading colour on either side.

“How came it?” I thought, “that the knowledge of so many strange wonders, silently entering into my understanding, had been so long withheld?” I supposed that the exalted and rarefied state of the surrounding atmosphere acted on my sight like the powerful lens of a microscope ; and, like the latter, whose magnifying powers reveal so  
many

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many hidden mysteries, which to the naked eye are undiscernible, so the ether-laden air, through which I was looking, enabled me to distinguish the hitherto unseen colours that the ordinary veil of the earth's atmosphere shrouds from our sight.

. . . The revolution of the rainbow circle had been gradually getting slower and slower, till with an intense blaze of brilliant colouring it became absolutely still.

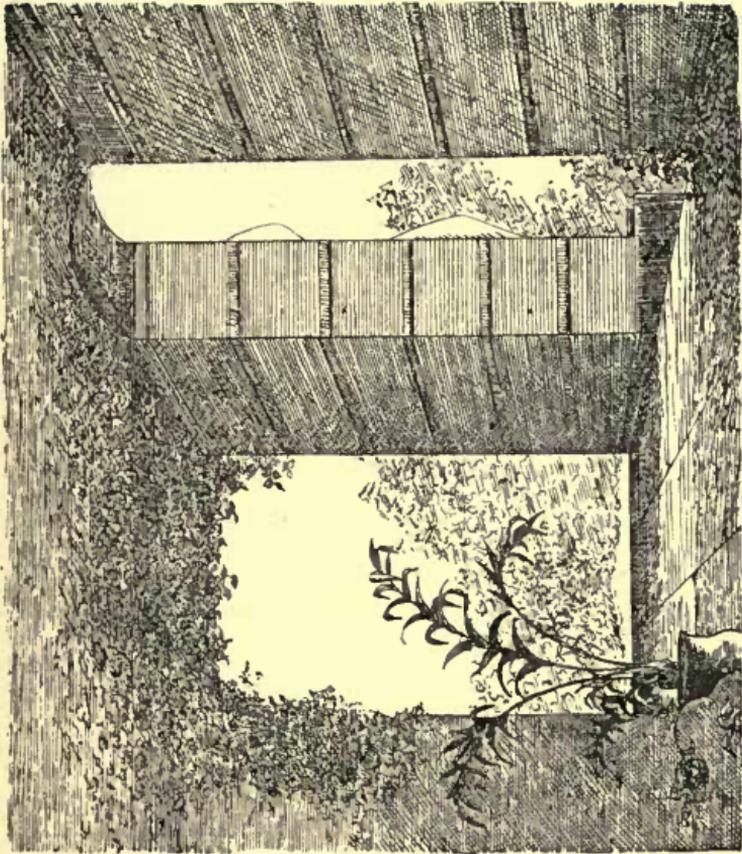
I closed my eyes for a moment to rest them from the strain of gazing so long at the dazzling radiance, and on opening them once more the vision of the wonderful

wheel

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

wheel had disappeared. . . . I was still standing waiting in a golden dream under the verandah ; and, listening, I could hear, softly at first, and gradually increasing in tone and strength, sweet and exquisite notes breathing and sighing in rhythmical motion around me.

Clearer and clearer grew the music, till the sounds floated towards me in circling strains of harmony, breaking over me wave after wave in a rippling tide of melody, till my senses were bathed in a swelling sea of sweet and soothing sound ; and all the music in my soul arose and went forth in  
joyful





*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

joyful response, and finding a voice at last, I began to play.

What a wondrous power was within me ! I played on and on, enchanting my own senses with the exquisite melodies that rose and fell, now loudly, now softly, in obedience to the touch of my bow.

The music was trembling in every fibre of my being. It came surging in continuous waves of inspiration through my brain, which was on fire with the fever of a burning activity.

I could feel the coming magic of the fast-flowing notes tingling in  
my

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

my finger-tips, even before they touched the answering vibration of the strings. For a time the notes rose in exulting strains of triumph and joy, but presently an indefinable sense of loneliness and indefinite yearning stole through my being, and my eyes became misty with the stinging up-springing tears that I could not stay.

It seemed as if my spirit, together with the strange music that I was interpreting, went out from me in waves of melancholy harmony, to lose themselves in the silence of the night. Plaintive quivering notes of telling pathos  
and

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and wild longing were wrung from me.

I paused a moment and listened. It sounded like the passionate cry of a breaking heart that, echoing through the vast silence unanswered, seemed to be losing itself in the hopeless distance of an unattainable land of love and sympathy.

My imprisoned heart was throbbing in wild beats of agony. "Where was I?" I felt that I was losing my identity and power of self-control, and was helplessly drifting into some all-absorbing shadowy mystery. By a supreme effort of will I was able to obtain the mastery  
over

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over my vanishing spirit, which was going from me in such a wandering unrest. Calling it back to me in subdued strains of consoling melody, I was able to re-ignite the lamp of hope, whose flame had so nearly expired in the storm of doubt and despair that had swept over my soul. The notes that followed told of an "unknown peace" that seemed to belong to another world; oh! how far away in the limitless distance seemed the possibility of such a state of rest; and yet I could feel in my heart the glow and reflection from the light of the divine content, which now

expressed

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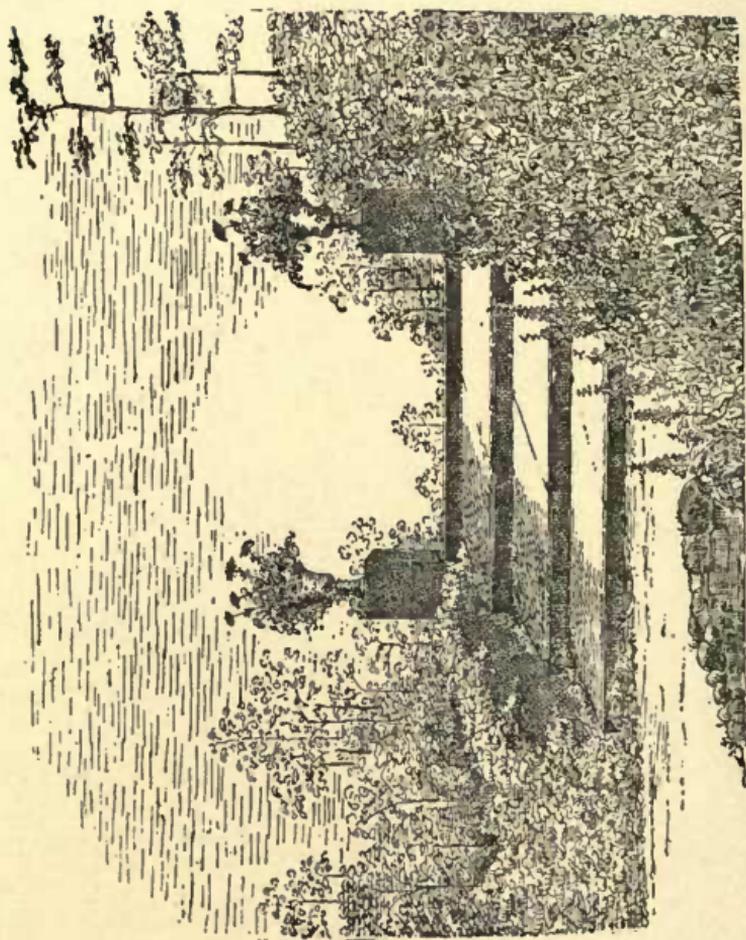
expressed itself, floating from me in soothing tones of perfect joy. The sweet strains of music poured down their refreshing streams of subtle sound into the dark and dreary waters of my soul, stirring its inmost depths, and flooding with a new hope its untouched springs of joy. My spirit rose, uplifted in a welling tide of nameless longing and dreamy half-guessed happiness. The radiant circle of light in which I was playing grew in intensity. Could the enchantment last much longer? The swelling notes seemed to be nearing the limit of their marvellous powers. One more wild  
burst

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burst of throbbing, triumphant sound, one more low plaintive murmur of soul-appealing pathos, and I knew that the power to produce the wonderful melodies would cease.

It was only too true. Gradually and slowly the inventive faculties of my brain were leaving me ; the force and fire of power that had been given me was burning itself away. My fingers no longer flew with such ease and rapidity over the strings, and the touch of my bow became more and more constrained and wavering. . . . The circle of light in which I had been wrapped





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wrapped was falling from me like a golden mist, and melting into the ordinary shadows of the night.

With a lingering wailing chord the music ceased. I looked up, and with a feeling of weariness and past joy I saw the garden lying calm and cold in the moonlight . . . the weird cry and noiseless flight of an owl struck upon my ear, and crossed my hitherto entranced vision. I watched the night-bird soaring majestically across the garden towards the cool green fields beyond, lying in their glistening robes of pearly dew, over which the moon was shining in a  
soft

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soft silver glow. There was a feel-  
within me of something begun but  
not completed. A definite purpose  
of action was suggesting itself in  
my brain, the matter of which I  
could not rightly grasp. Something  
outside myself, but very near, was  
compelling me to action, but I do  
not know to this day whether it  
was I myself, of my own free will  
and power, who wrote down so  
accurately the intricate arrange-  
ment of notes on the papers (that  
I found on my writing table when  
my dream was over), or whether  
the music was written by the power  
of the Spirits, using my hand merely

as

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

as the mechanical means of guiding the pencil to carry out the work.

All I can tell you is, that after the few minutes that elapsed when the light of inspiration left me, I seemed to pass through a period of darkness and trance, and although apparently unconscious for the time, I must, as I afterwards discovered, have been fully occupied for at least two hours, in writing down all that I could recollect of the music that came to me whilst playing in the verandah. . . . The next thing that I remember was the sharp vibrating sound caused by the breaking of one of my fiddle strings.

I

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

I roused myself with a start, and  
going over to the window I saw  
that the night had passed, and the  
first faint blush of dawn was glow-  
ing in the east, and

“Morn,

Waked by the circling hours with  
rosy hand

Unbarred the gates of light.”



CHAPTER





## CHAPTER IV.



### *THE VISION OF THE "CITY OF MELODY."*

---

AT SUCH A NIGHT'S NOON,  
I WATCHED THE STARS AND MOON  
TILL THEY AND I ALONE DID SEEM TO BE  
TILL IN THAT SILVER THROG  
SORELY MY SOUL DID LONG  
TO ROVE AT WILL AND MANY WONDERS SEE.  
*—Edwin Arnold.*

---

LOOK FROM THY DULL EARTH, SLUMBER-BOUND  
MY MOONLIKE FLIGHT THOU THEN MAY'ST MARK,  
ON HIGH FAR AWAY.—*Shelley.*

There are times (of which doubtless some are aware) when one feels completely "out of touch," as it were, with one's companions; however charming they may

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may be ; and the mere fact of mixing with other people, to say nothing of conversing with them, is an effort. Is it that the yearning soul or mind, at that particular moment, is striving to attain to a subtler and higher sphere of thought than is supplied by the usual routine of every-day life, and that the power of the brain is thus unconsciously raised above the ordinary level of ideas ?

I think it is, for in these moments one longs for, and seeks solitude. To be alone ! that is the one prevailing idea for the time being. To escape from all contact  
with

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with one's fellow creatures. To those who are not of an imaginative turn of mind, how can I best describe the feeling that I and some few others experience in this particular mood or phase of the brain?

It is not exactly a sense of superiority over others, and yet one cannot help acknowledging the presence of some higher influence and power at work within oneself, suggesting and goading one on to strive after a something undefined, but above the ordinary course of events. One feels for the time, in some inexplicable man-

ner

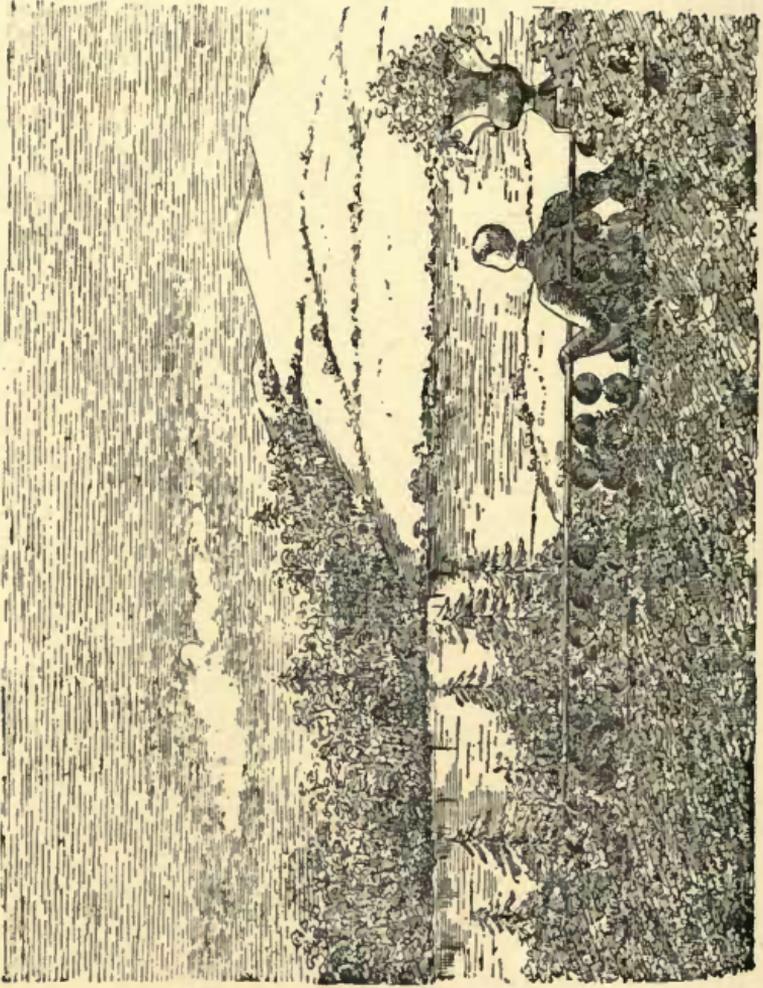
*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

ner "help up" and strengthened to a state of mind beyond the usual standard of reasoning and thought.

This condition or state of the brain may last a short or a long time, according to the surrounding circumstances, but there is no doubt whatever that during this period of unsociability, (which at times is most inconvenient) the only solace is absolute solitude and complete isolation of thought.

Till this can be attained, and if by force of circumstances one is thrown among a number of uncongenial people, no one, who has not experienced it, can realize the torture





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ture involved, in being forced to appear bright and "all there" when one's spirit is far away and silently crying out for seclusion and rest.

It was after one of these solitary musings, in which I had fortunately been able to indulge to my heart's content, that I found myself, one summer night, sitting out in the garden enjoying the cool fragrant freshness of the air after the intense heat of the day, gazing at the starlit heavens, and losing myself in a dreamy contemplation of the beauty of the surrounding scene.

A cloud passed across the moon,  
veiling for a few minutes the bright  
radiance

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radiance of her beams. I lowered my gaze from the sky above, to watch the dark shadows sweeping over the garden, which vanished silently and swiftly, as the wind-chased cloud was driven away from before the face of the moon, leaving the momentarily over-shadowed flowers smiling once more in a soft glow of light.

A sigh escaped me, I know not why, and with it the wish and longing to be away where my imprisoned soul could be free from the touch of earth, and soar into the region of the unknown.

I chanced to look towards some  
dark





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dark cedar trees at the further end of the garden, over which a strange white mist was rising wing-like and mysterious. Vaguely wondering at its appearance on so clear a night, I kept my eyes concentrated on the curious transparent haze till I lost sight of all intervening objects. The trees, the grass, the flowers all melted into nothing, and I became aware of something calling to me from out the midst of the mysterious cloud, and which I knew to be the voice of a spirit bidding me forth into the spiritual world. With the will and desire to obey the welcome summons, I found myself  
floating

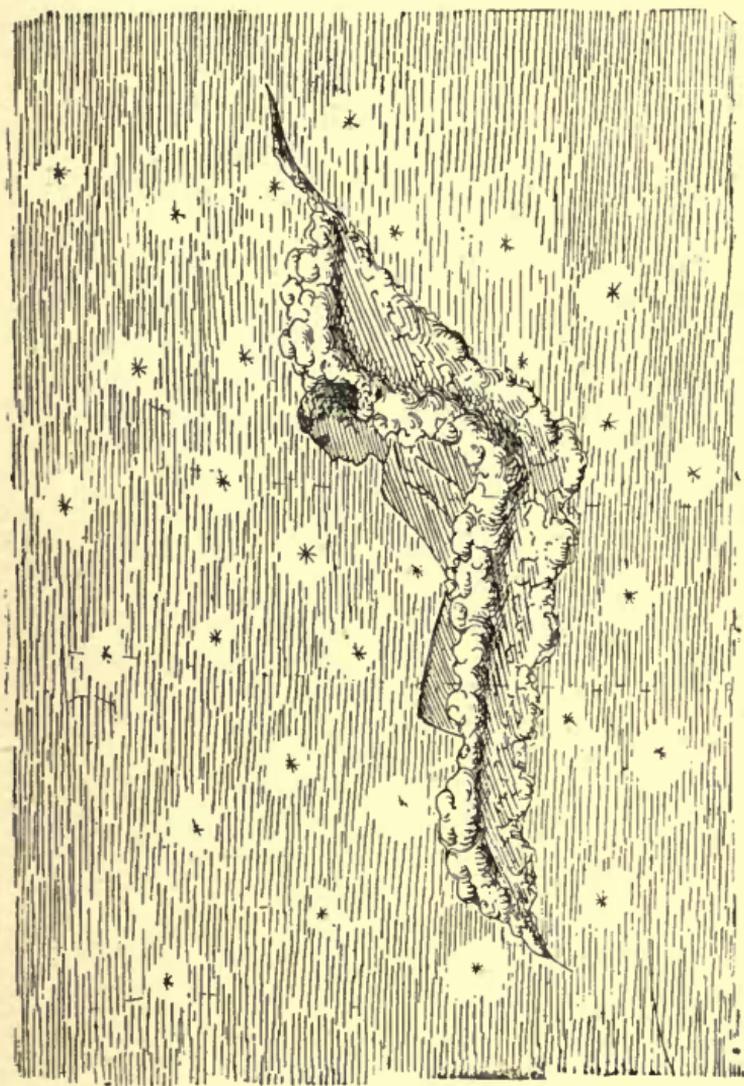
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floating nearer and nearer towards the cedars, till I felt my spirit passing out of me and being drawn into the white luminous cloud, the soft intangible folds of which enclosed me round and bore me gently away, rising higher and higher through the balmy air, upward and onward through the silent space, leaving the night-shrouded earth asleep far below.

How exquisite it was !

I was absolutely alone with my thoughts and the beautiful summer night, floating in a vague dream of delight towards the star-lit heavens above.

Once





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Once beyond the atmosphere of the earth, an intense brightness diffused itself on all sides, and I was wafted by the cloud through the lambent light of a limitless ether, glowing and glittering with the sparkling radiance of millions of stars extending in an endless and glorious array into the incalculable space of the surrounding heavens.

Gazing in a wondering ecstasy, I thought of these lines :

“Look now toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them.”

And I realized how impossible it was to attempt to understand the  
vastness

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

vastness of the space they filled ; but sailing ever onward through the wonderful sea of light-diffused ether, I still rose higher and higher, uplifted and guided by the unseen spirit that was with me, and awed by the marvellous beauty of the glowing heavens, I gazed around me in a wrapt dream of wonder. I was leaving countless tracts of brightness behind me, and yet the glory and number of those sparkling gems, seemed glistening and appearing in ever-increasing numbers and intensity, as I was borne through their midst.

As far as the eye could reach,

as

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as far as the understanding could go, beyond the most vivid imagination even, and again past the limit of the wildest flight of fancy, there arose the baffling bewildering idea of a never-ending distance of brightness—limitless, and immeasurable—strewn with these countless ever-glowing worlds of light, whose glorious beauty seemed almost past the comprehension of human understanding.

I felt bewildered and overpowered by the dazzling brilliance of light that was shining everywhere; and the Spirit, knowing this, bid me close my eyes for  
awhile

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

awhile and rest from the intensity of the mingled brightness of the stars, with which I was becoming almost blinded.

It seemed as if a dark veil had been drawn down before me to shield my gaze ; for, after a few minutes, when I opened my eyes once more, I could see nothing, for the total darkness that was brooding all around, but still I journeyed onwards, resting on the bosom of the enchanted cloud, and wrapt in a deep tranquility and silent restfulness.

How long I remained thus I cannot tell, but presently I became  
conscious

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

conscious of many and various sounds that were filling the hitherto silent air around me, and rising to my feet I stood beside the spiritual Presence, which for the first time since our flight from earth now became visible to me, taking to itself the beautiful form of an angel, and shining in the luminous light of its own spirituality, for all around was still enveloped in an impenetrable gloom.

The air was full of a strange music, some of the melodies of which were broken, detached and inconsecutive, seeming like songs begun but not completed.

“Surely,”

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“Surely,” I thought to myself, “these are human voices that I hear mingling among this strange aerial music,” for among the varied tones that filled the air, I could distinguish most clearly many of the musical sounds belonging to our earth. Sometimes I could hear the happy laugh of a child ringing through the air, and suggesting in its joyous freedom, the blessed unconsciousness of pain and sorrow. Anon the whispered prayer of a maiden for her absent lover would float dreamily by in a sweet soothing melody. Then again, in a pitying shudder, there broke upon the

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

the air the deep aching heart-rending sob of a strong man in distress, dying away in lonely bursts of grief, to be followed, perhaps, by the sweet united worship of many voices singing in some religious chant. These, and many other sounds not human, but belonging



to nature alone, were all about me. I could hear the sweet singing of birds, the happy purling of streams, the mysterious roar of the ocean,  
the

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the strange wailing of sea birds, the rapid rushing of waterfalls, and the thousands of minor notes that all in their appointed time and place, make our world so full of beauty and wonder.

“ These melodies,” said the Spirit, in answer to my wondering thoughts, “ belong to the earth, and are ever rising heavenwards to join the music of the spheres which belongs to, and is part of, the ‘ Eternal Harp of sound,’ which is even now close at hand, and which I will presently reveal to you.

“ All the sounds of poetry and music that are of the earth are  
with

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with these other human notes of prayer, distress and joy, set floating in this sea of pure ether, and flowing on and on in harmonious motion, they blend with the Divine music of the spheres, breaking wave by wave in a continuous tide of mixed melody against the 'Eternal Harp,' which is the centre of the Imperishable City of the 'Music of the Universe.'

“Besides the secret voices of the heart, which are seldom known to man, the moving music of the air contains all the loved and treasured songs of earth which have been unheeded and neglected, but which  
all

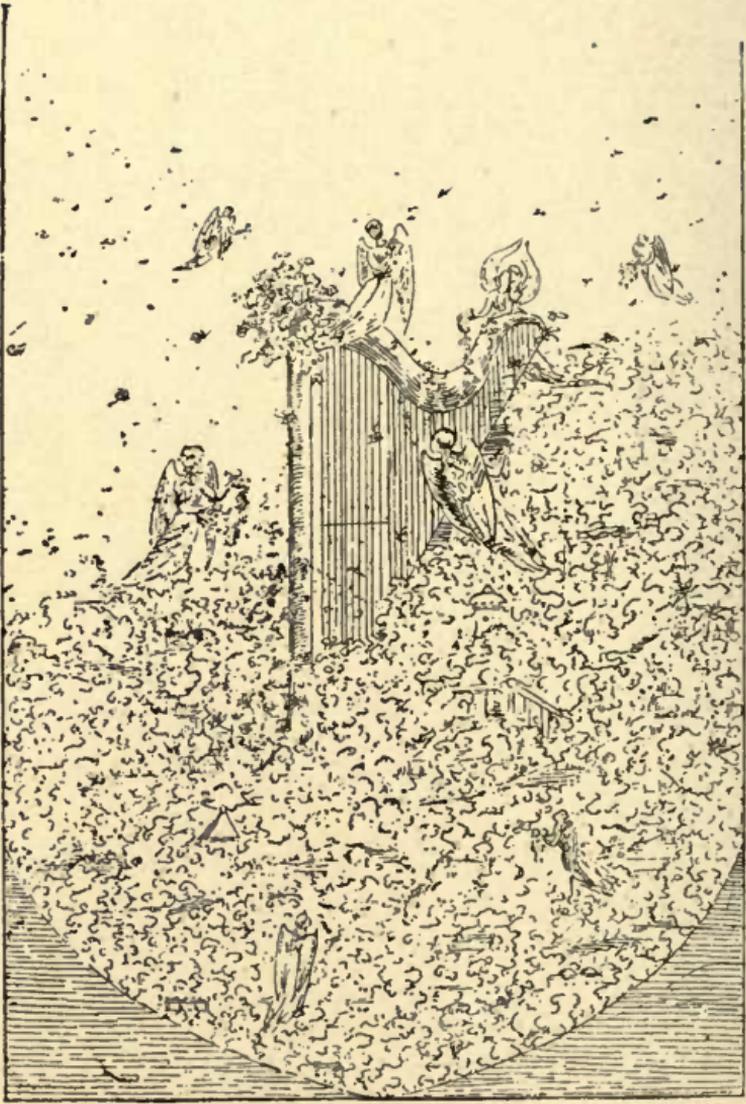
*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

all help to build up the everlasting edifice of 'the Eternal City of sound,' whose echoing vibrations reach us even now, and which for a brief space of time you may now behold." As the Spirit said these words the whole surrounding atmosphere seemed to quiver and vibrate with the beauty and force of the mysterious music that was borne upon the air.

"And all the while harmonious airs were  
heard  
Of chiming strings or charming pipes."

For a few brief moments I was allowed a glimpse of this marvellous aerial city. Out of the complete  
gloom





*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

gloom surrounding us, the heavens seemed all at once to divide as by a flash of vivid lightning, and through the opening of the darkness which rolled back on either side in dark purple clouds, I beheld the vision of a city of light, in the centre of which was a Golden Harp hanging, as it were, midway in the vault of the heavens, and surrounded and guarded on all sides by myriads of bright-robed spirits hovering and calling in an incessant adoration of song across its thrilling strings. Other spirits I could see winging their musical flight backwards and forwards over the harmoniously fashioned

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fashioned city, and building up, note by note, an everlasting edifice of Divine melody, with the continuous waves of the on-coming tide of sound from the music of the earth, the sea, and the sky.

During the brief glimpse that I had of this wonderful city, I realized that all the delicate ethereality of its beauty was actually made up of the separate notes or sounds that I could hear floating past me in such varied tones.

These tone-waves, on emerging from the darkness without, and entering within the radius of the soft brilliance of the vision, then actually

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ally became visible to me, and I watched them drawn and absorbed into the glory of the musical city, in the shape of flowers of every kind of beauty and form.

Wafted towards the Golden Harp, and descending in showering notes of blossoming melody, the strings were thus kept in constant touch with these fair flowers of song, and were for ever quivering and filling the air with harmonious circles of sound. The notes echoing back over the city in millions of bright blossoms were caught by the spirits to be used in building up, in lasting tones, the "Eternal  
Edifice

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

Edifice of the Music of the  
Spheres."

\* \* \* \* \*

The glowing beauty of the City with the Golden Harp faded all too soon, and as I watched the darkness gradually gather and close over the wonders of the vision, an overwhelming sense of loneliness came over my spirit, and crying out, I heard my own voice go forth into the gloom in a mournful song that seemed to be wrung from the depths of my soul. It was as if I myself were that voice floating onwards, and mingling with the rolling music around me, seeking with a yearning  
prayer

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prayer of hope to be admitted and become part of the vanished city of melody, now so entirely hidden away beyond an impenetrable wall of darkness.

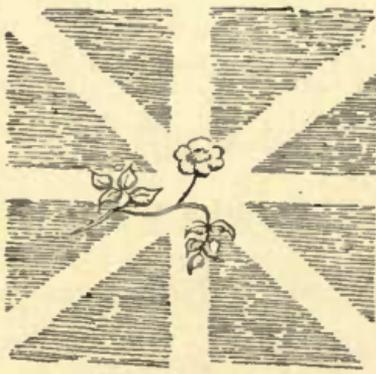
“Would my voice be heard?” I asked myself. “And would my humble song blossom into one of those beauteous flowers I had seen, and find its way to the Golden Harp whose ever vibrating strings would thrill in sweet tones of acknowledgement of the gift I fain would bestow?”

I turned anxiously towards the spirit in a questioning gaze.

“In very truth,” said the Voice  
beside

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beside me, "yours was a song so full of divine expression and soulful prayer that it will surely be heard. See," continued the Spirit, "the



notes are even now changing into a blossom of exquisite device, a flower of the earth, which

is made from the passionate pleading voice of a human soul striving to attain to the Divine."

I looked, and saw that the "fabric of my song" was a beautiful white rose, and I watched it float away from me into the distant  
gloom,

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gloom, bright and star-like, and I knew that it would pass through the veil of darkness that hid the enchanted city from my sight, and entering there, would perhaps nestle at the base of the great Golden Harp itself, where thousands of other blossoms were already resting in tuneful repose.

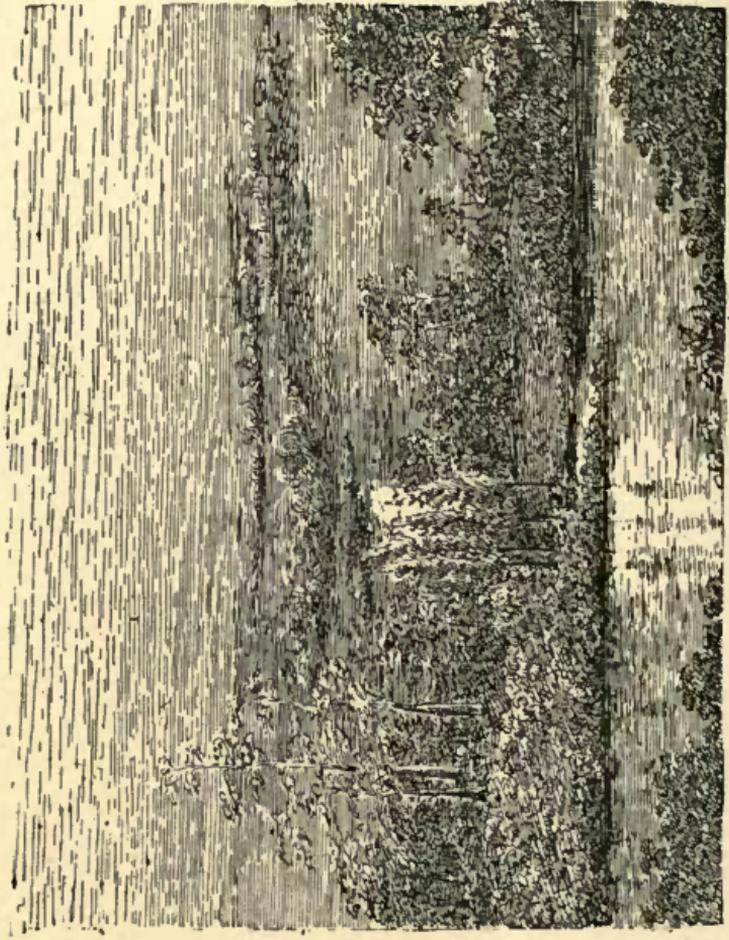
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I tried in vain to recall once more the picture of the visionary city, but I knew that it could not be, for the Spirit had vanished, and the voices and the music of the air were dying away into silence, and I could hear instead the low sonorous

*BORDERLAND FANCIES.*

ous sound of rolling thunder. The serene calm that had possessed me whilst with the Spirit, now left me, and I became distressed and ill at ease, and longing to escape from the intense darkness and oppression that accompanied the now incessant roll of thunder, I hailed with delight the bright vivid gleam of a flash of lightning such as had heralded the appearance of the "Vision"; but instead of the radiant glory of the Golden City, I opened my eyes to a stormy sky, hanging overhead in dark purple clouds, and I heard the trees in the garden sighing and swaying in a  
restless





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restless movement, as the wind  
moaned fitfully through their trem-  
bling branches in anticipation of  
the coming storm.

---

“These, and far more than these,  
The Poet sees! . . . . .  
. . . . .  
He can behold  
Things manifold  
That have not yet been wholly told.”







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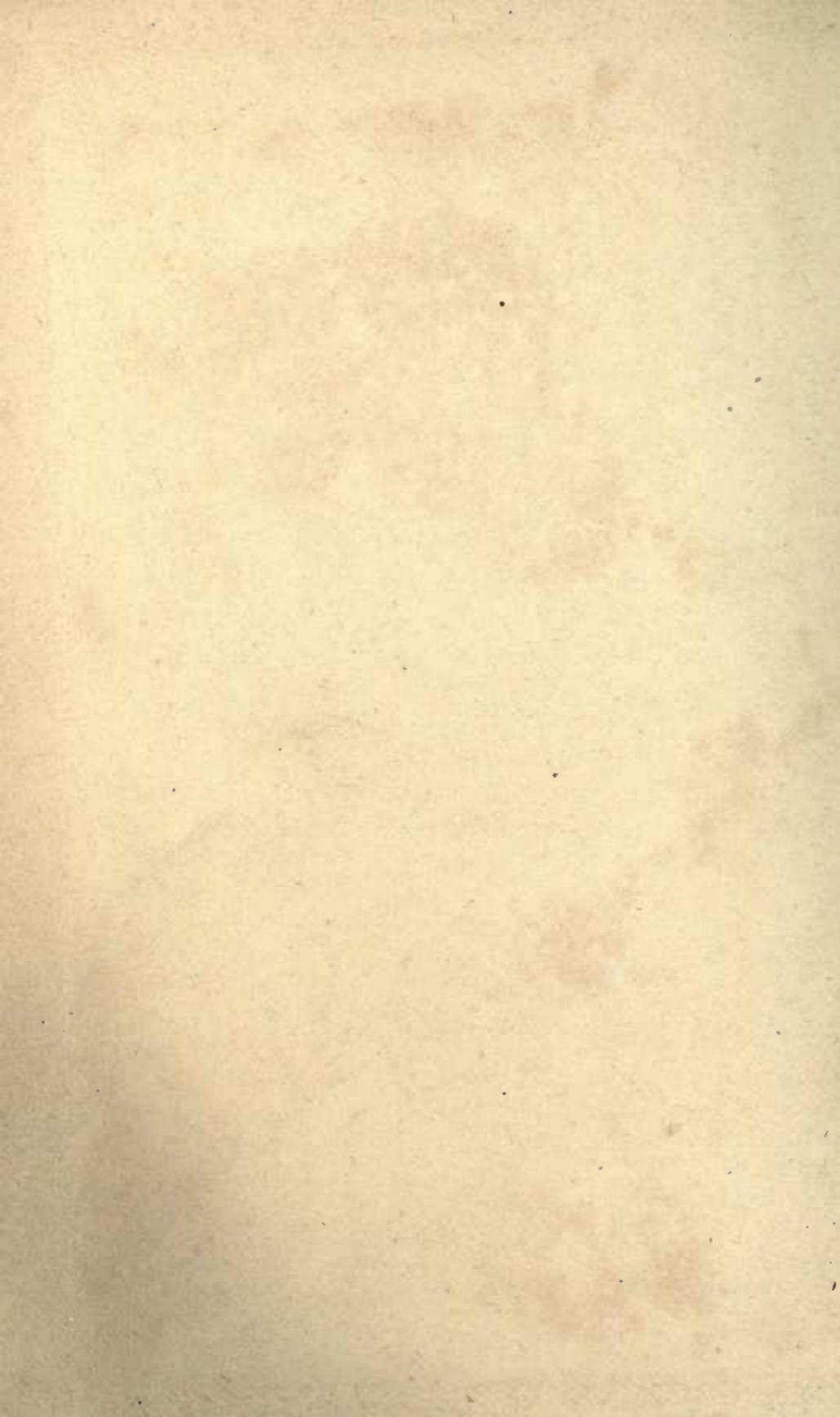
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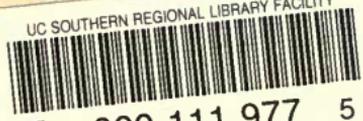






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