

THE SERAPHIM
A STUDY OF NATURE



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Presented by *Miss D. E. Sims.*

Bequest of

Leaving Gift of

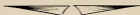
THE SERAPHIM.

I

Mixed with the opal-tinted vapours of a summer morning,
Interwoven with the soft grey light of dawn
(Which mist, with rolling motion, as of lazy seas
Recalled the slumbering Helios from his bed of golden cloud-belts),
Saw I the Seraphim. No movement made he,
As, with growing splendour, the vast sun
Unwrapped his golden vestments.
Then, as the clouds unfolded, permitting his bright rays to
Turn the early morning dew to diamonds,
Observed I the armour of the Seraphim.
Methought I saw the twilight of the Heavens
Wrapp'd in a glorious cloud-belt, shining ;
Visions of the unbelievable, delicate tints of colour
And beauty unthinkable ;
The wild dreams of the mortal, who,
Intoxicated by the scents of flowers from Sirens land,
Lies his weary limbs upon the gently coloured sea-shore,
Saw I, in his sword, the mighty lava streams of Erebus
In the chill of that summer morning ;
Appeared to me, his breath as of the pine tree column,
Which mighty Etna is wont to vomit forth.
His eyes were as the moon
Peeping from between the age-old branches of an oak tree,
Spreading her beams through the canopy of sleeping woodland flowers,
Which flowers, stirred by the gentle breeze of nightfall
Paled in the white and lovely beams of moonlight.
The sun rose in the sky ;
The rolling mists, which wooed the pearly dew,
Melted as a dream before the sun's awakening.
The sleeping flowers reared their curved petals,
Blessing the light which roused them from their slumbers,
Moving sleepily in that breeze of heaven,
Which cooled the brow of Nature.
The sun's rays, banishing the dreary shadows,
Called to life the woodland, filtering through the green leaves of the
They kissed the green earth, in one long ray of glory, [beech trees,
Then looked I for the Seraphim—
But he was gone ! 'Twas but a vision
O most mighty Helios.

Visions, they say, are rare,
 Yet saw I that same Seraphim once more.
 'Twas the same ; I recalled his features
 Of that loveliness which pen will not describe,
 Saw I the twilight of the Heavens,
 Saw I the delicate tints
 Of beauty unthinkable.
 Saw I in his shield, as of the wild dreams of mortals,
 Lost in the Sirens' dreamland,
 Sinking down upon the wave washed pebbles.
 'Twas then the twilight—the gold and glory of the sun
 Vanishing beneath a lake of crimson fire,
 Set with islands, beautiful and numerous,
 Containing snow-capped peaks, so strange in lustre ;
 Appeared he unto me, this Seraphim
 He was talking, talking—
 Of what I never knew.
 It seems he spake unto the black and lovely woodlands,
 Through which the failing sunlight struggled vainly,
 Talking unto the creatures of the pastures,
 Talking to the feathered birds
 That sing so sweetly when the sun is high ;
 Telling them of happiness and the other world—
 That other world, where mortals are excluded.
 Then it seemed to me that all the woodland rang with exultation,
 One mighty shout that rang into my ears,
 Like thunder at the distance of a hair's breadth
 And then 'twas gone—and so was Seraphim,
 O mighty Angel ! your words indeed were true,
 Exclude ! exclude this filthy race of mortals !
 And thrust them in the deepest pit of fire !.....

But no, the gentle beauty of the twilight,
 Ushering repose into this damnéd sphere,
 Inspires me to rest, to dream awhile
 And thus prevent my choler crushing me.
 'Twas but a vision, mighty sun !
 'Twill never come again ! I'll see no more.



A STUDY OF NATURE.

I

I lie and dream in the beauty of the summer day,
Watching the clouds race in a sky of blue intensity,
Watching their progress under the gentle Shepherd,
And thinking how at times he was not gentle.
I listen to the stories of the flapping leaves,
Stories of lazy times, long, long ago.
The world it dreams as I do not a doubt,
Encompassed in a bower of scented blossoms,
Driving the long hours, and thinking
Each of his neighbour, in that dreamy happiness,
That world of gentle singing,
Formed from within a wood of sweetly smelling flowers.
The birds sing, and strangely strike the notes upon my ears,
As of the rushing waters of a mighty river.
Now sounding like unto fairy voices singing,
Now crashing through my whirling brain
In one great song of everlasting joy and bliss.
It is in such parts as these among the woodland flowers,
Sweet scented flowers, that transport man into a land of joy ;
It is such gardens, filled with music
From the throats of these small birds,
That help the world to be but still more beautiful,
In such as these, the mind may get repose.
The evening falls—the silver mist rises,
Turning the world to silver ; while the dew
Which settles on the flowers, lulling them to sleep
Lies damp upon my garments, and I go
To dream away the hours as before,
And listen to the nightingale, enraptured,
Then sink down into slumber, and in that state,
Remain until the sun brings back the morning.

II

Methought I never had a happier day,
Roaming the woods without one single comrade,
Excepting the wild squirrels, who were careful
To keep away, amidst the scented carpet,
And peep at me with wicked, jaunty impudence.
From bough to bough they oftentimes hopped, until

The very woods were laughing with their joy.
The wildflowers nodded in the breeze so light,
The trees were swaying in a rythmic dance ;
I walked among the dead leaves and the bushes,
The mud adhering lightly to my sandals,
While the thrush sang gaily from a thornbush,
And the robin answered from the high tree tops.
I reached the sedgy pond—with waters gleaming,
In foul contemplation of their blackness ;
I shuddered as I looked into the water,
The black and gloomy water with its pond life,
It seemed as though the spirits of the dead came up
And beckoned me to follow.
I hurried on and left the pond behind me,
I trembled from the horror of the waters,
The dark and gloomy waters, that dimly beckoned
The spirits of the dead that dimly beckoned.....

Meanwhile the cheerful thrush continued singing,
Answered by the robins from the tree tops :
The mighty trees still swayed in rythmic dance,
The little squirrels hopped from bough to bough ;
A pleasant sight it was, this woodland quiet,
In the distance was a rippling stream
Round which the robins hopped,
And drank its limpid waters, clear as crystal.
The cunning fox ; his head showed from the ground,
And looked about, then disappeared,
Calling to his mate and young ones underground,
Calling in shrill yaps that made me start.
Then my steps retraced I homeward,
Homeward to my cottage by the meadow,
To the lonely homestead of my children.

* * * *

Perchance you wonder at the meaning of this poem,
Which ryhmes not, neither does it clearly show
The meaning which I have upon my brain.
It means—that if a mortal loves the flowers,
And birds, and beasts, and fishes,
And never raises hand against true nature,
Then, will that mortal see the visions,
That nature's enemies will not :
Then will he quickly learn the skill of woodcraft,
And will be happy ever after.