C 167

[redacted] "Biographical Sketch of Caspar Morris, M.D." MS 1994

Didst wish to know the cause of the commotion
That passed with thundering noise above thy head,
Ploughing deep furrows in the breast of ocean,
Scaring her monsters from their dark-blue bed,
Whilst wide around the foam in whitening sheets is spread?

Didst think some monster from the cheerless North,
Tired of his frozen sea and lengthy nights,
In search of gentler climes had wandered forth
From the dull region of electric lights,
Where winter holds his court, 'mid towering icy heights?

Or didst thou think—his fame has travelled wide—
It was the famous serpent of Nahant
With eyes of flame and death-defying hide,
Come to the South upon a pleasure jaunt,
Or looking out for game when herring shall grow scant?

But soft! perchance deep-seated in thy breast
Some secret longing after hidden good,
Some rankling discontent too deep imprest,
Has fired the scanty current of thy blood,
And in pursuit of bliss thou 'st left thy native flood.

Knowest thou the urgings of intense desire?
Can Hope diffuse her magic o'er thy soul?
Can Fancy warm thee with her genial fire?
Or gay Delusion o'er thy senses roll
Visions of future bliss with unrestrained control?

Ah no! poor trembler—these so boasted joys,
These poisoned sweets, 't is man's alone to know:
Sirens, they charm him only to destroy;
In magic folds conceal the fatal blow
Which, while they promise bliss, bring but a darker woe!

But since, what'er the motive brought thee here,
Thou thus art brought in company with man—
Still thy wild fluttering, calm each anxious fear,
And ere in death shall close thy shortening span,
Teach him the secrets of the close-mouthed main to scan.

Say, hast thou roamed amidst its caverns wide—
Explored the wonders of its hidden deeps—
Hast seen Behemoth in his scaly pride—
Or where her court the Ocean Empress keeps?

Hast thou, o'erwhelmed in the engulphing deeps,
Forever hidden from man's searching eyes,
Seen where, in righteous judgment ruined, sleeps
A former world with all its pomps and lies,
The glory of its great, and wisdom of its wise?

Perhaps thou hast seen, a thousand fathoms down,
A warning monument of human pride,
Some stately palace in its grandeur frown,
Resisting still the fury of the tide
Which whelms its turrets high, and fills its chambers wide.

Say, hast thou rested in those marble halls
Which sheltered once the monarch of the throng?
But now the echoes of its sculptured walls
Resound no more with laughter, cheer, and song—
There endless silence reigns!

Or hast thou seen where, midst their mirth and wine,
Cheered by the viol and the thoughtless joke,
Or while in wanton maze the dance they twine,
First to the giddy throng in thunder spoke
Th' o'erwhelming flood, outpoured when Ocean's fountains broke?