The Haunted Palace

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In the greenest of our valleys

   By good angels tenanted,

Once a fair and stately palace—

   Radiant palace—reared its head.

In the monarch Thought’s dominion, 5

   It stood there!

Never seraph spread a pinion

   Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,

   On its roof did float and flow 10

(This—all this—was in the olden

   Time long ago)

And every gentle air that dallied,

   In that sweet day,

Along the ramparts plumed and pallid, 15

   A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,

   Through two luminous windows, saw

Spirits moving musically

   To a lute’s well-tunèd law, 20

Round about a throne where, sitting,

   Porphyrogene!

In state his glory well befitting,

   The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing 25

   Was the fair palace door,

Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing

   And sparkling evermore,

A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty

   Was but to sing, 30

In voices of surpassing beauty,

   The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,

   Assailed the monarch’s high estate;

(Ah, let us mourn!—for never morrow 35

   Shall dawn upon him, desolate!)

And round about his home the glory

   That blushed and bloomed

Is but a dim-remembered story

   Of the old time entombed. 40

And travellers, now, within that valley,

   Through the red-litten windows see

Vast forms that move fantastically

   To a discordant melody;

While, like a ghastly rapid river, 45

   Through the pale door

A hideous throng rush out forever,

   And laugh—but smile no more.