

*The New York Ledger*  
XV:42:3 Dec 24, 1859

THE AVENGER'S WARNING.  
BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

"For thinking of her, or the music's strain,  
Or something which never will be expressed,  
Had brought her back from the grave again,  
With the jasmin in her breast."— OWEN MEREDITH.+

He was a poet, and therefore he knew  
The awful language of the Elements,  
Whose master-word, like that of man, is *God*.  
And sometimes he did talk to them in tones  
Wild as their own; and the unrestful winds,  
And haughty thunders, and the passionate seas  
Made solemn answers; and the pale, calm moon  
And high, unsympathizing stars would sit  
In regal grandeur in the courts of Night,  
And listen silently to all his grief.  
But now the youthful maniac turned in scorn  
From their companionship, and wept alone.  
And his dusk, shadowy eye, and sighing lip,  
And heart of closed flowers lent him the look  
Of an embodied Twilight—which, ere long,  
Would change into a storm. Too soon, alas,  
The fires of his tempestuous nature flashed  
With threat'ning light across his clouded brow,  
And he stood muttering his madness thus:

Ha! I see the lights in yon glittering hall,  
And I know a woman awaits me there,  
With her glad heart bowed in an idle thrall  
And the orange flowers in her midnight hair.

Now I hear the languid music arise,  
And it calls the bride-groom; but, will he go?  
By the vanished fire of *thy* sun-like eyes—  
By thy buried lip that has kissed him, no!

They may wait till they weary—and wait in vain,  
For I swear by the angels I will not wed—  
And the oath is burning its truth thro' my brain—  
Unless they will go and awake the dead.

To think—oh! to think I must walk alone  
Thro' the desolate wilderness of years—  
With no light of love o'er my pathway thrown,  
And my youth's swift blood turned to fire and tears.

Yet why, *why*, my beautiful darling, why  
Didst thou hide in the dust thy bright, young head,  
When the lightning glance of thy Southern eye  
Might have struck the reptile that stung thee dead?

Ah, I've dreamed that a youth, who was pale and slight,  
With wandering gleams in his violet eyes,  
Has held in the lonesome hush of the night  
A bloody steel to the *smiling* skies!

And those dreams shall be truth, by thy broken heart  
Come, sanction the vow that I make for thee,  
And then if thou wilt, sweet shadow, depart  
Forever and evermore from me.

Oh, say. was it fancy? or was the air  
With *amaranth* blooms for a moment sweet?  
And did a young angel stand smiling there,  
While a mortal lover knelt at her feet?

And—and—did she whisper these words to him  
With the breath of the sky, and kiss his brow  
With the lips of the sky, in the star-light dim—  
*Did* she say these words I am saying now?

Leave wrongs to thy God—He will not forget—  
And forgive as thou hopest to be forgiven;  
For, I am blest, and I love thee yet,  
And will meet thee first at the gates of Heaven!

+“Owen Meredith” was the pseudonym of poet and statesman Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton (1831-1891), the son of Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873). The epigraph, with minor changes, is from “Aux Italiens” in Owen Meredith, *The Wanderer* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1859), 145.