

THE SONG OF THE INCENDIARY.

When the wind is loud, and the night is dark,
And the village is hush'd in the arms of sleep,
And no one near my steps to mark,
Then away from my home I slyly creep :
 To the barn I glide,
 On the windward side,
Where the roof slopes low with its crispy thatch :
 There's no one near ;
 There's nought to fear,
And now for the coal or the silent match.

'Tis done, 'tis done, and the flames ascend ;
 Wider they spread and higher they rise :
Then stealthily home my course I bend,
 While the red glow lights the surrounding skies :

And I join in the throng
As they sweep along,
And I shout as loud as the loudest there ;
And the sleepers awake,
Who fear and quake,
And can see to dress in the ruddy glare.

Hark, hark, to the mournful low of the cattle ;
And list to the poultry's fearful scream :
I love the noise, the confusion, and rattle
Of crackling rafter and falling beam.
To stack and shed
The flames they spread ;
I joy as the fire flakes upward fly :
And I love to hear
That no water is near,
And I grin with delight when the pumps are dry.

Oh, I love to see on every tree
The bright flames playing far and wide,

Making the darkness of night to flee,
And revealing the things that night would hide.
See, see, how they fall
On the old Church wall,
And gild the vane on the old grey tower;
And dance round the bed
Of the sleeping dead—
You may read their names at the midnight hour.

Some love to read of murmuring rills,
And shady lanes, and flowery vales,
And waving woods, and sunny hills:
To me there's no charm in such flimsy tales.
The volcano's frown,
And the burning town,
These, these are the themes that never tire:
And the auto de fe,
And the wild suttee,
And my very dreams are of smoke and fire.