

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

This is the ship which, poets feign
Sails the unshadowed main...
The venturous barque that flings
On the sweet summer winds, its purple wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the siren sings
And coral reefs lie bare.
Where the cold sea maidens rise to sun
Their streaming hair.
Its web of living gauze no more unfurl
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell
Where its dim, dreaming life was wont to dwell
As the frail tenant shaped its glowing shell.
Before thee lies revealed...
Its irised ceiling rent
Its sunless crypt unsealed!
Year after year behold the silent toil
That spread its lustrous coil;
She left the past year's dwelling for the new
Stole with soft steps its shining archway through
Built up its idle door
Stretched in its last found home
And knew the old, the old no more.
Build thee more stately mansions, Oh, my soul!
As the swift seasons roll
Leave thy low vaulted past. Leave thy low vaulted past
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast
Build thee more stately mansions, Oh, my soul!
Till thou at length art free.
Leaving thy outworn shell, leaving thy outworn shell
By life's unresting sea, By life's unresting, unresting sea.