

**PAN AND
AEOLUS: POEMS**

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Pan and Aeolus: Poems by Charles Hamilton Musgrove

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CHARLES HAMILTON MUSGROVE

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AEOLUS: POEMS**

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PAN AND ÆOLUS

POEMS

BY

CHARLES HAMILTON MUSGROVE



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PAN AND ÆOLUS



A FUGUE OF HELL.

I.

I dreamed a mighty dream. It seemed mine eyes
Sealed for the moment were to things terrene,
And then there came a strange, great wind that blew
From undiscovered lands, and took my soul
And set it on an uttermost peak of Hell
Amid the gloom and fearful silences.
Slowly the darkness paled, and a weird dawn
Broke on my wondering vision, and there grew
Uncanny phosphorescence in the air
Which seemed to throb with some great vital spell
Of mystery and doom. With aching eyes
I gazed, and lo! the dreadful scene evolved,
Black and chaotic, like an awful birth
To Desolation, of a lifeless world!
My soul in agony cried out to God,
When of a sudden all the place grew calm,
Save for the trembling of the mountain peaks
And the low moaning of the billowy winds
Among the abysses. Dull lights here and there
Kindled, like wreckage of a city razed

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By vandals, and the inky sky cupped up
Into a black, impenetrable roof. . . .
But now from out the chaos there arose
Another sound more fearful than the wail
Of tempest, or the quake of mighty hills—
A mortal cry, a human voice in Hell!

II.

The infernal glare grew brighter, and there came
Unto mine ears the sound of many tongues,
Mingling discordant curse with bitter cry
Of lamentation. On the outer marge
Of Hell's domains, set one at each of four
Far sundered corners, four volcanoes grim
Spewed up their flaming bowels into a sea
Of blackness whence no light could issue forth.
Beyond this fierce horizon, farther yet
Than vision's wing could bear my gaze, I knew
Hell's desolate kingdoms stretched their iron wastes,
Hell's burning mountains waved their brands of flame,
Hell's lava rivers plunged in fury down
Their adamantine beds.

The human cry
Deepened,—the stunning babel shrieked and roared
As though some mighty revolution swept
The flying hosts along—some pang too keen
For the immortal and transcendent pains
Of Hell to quench, was burning in their souls.

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III.

Slowly mine eyes pierced through the pallid light
That crowned the awful place, and then I saw
That which shall not be seen of mortal eye
Until the final day. I saw the vast
Black concourse of Inferno pouring in
From Hell's four sides, and gathering at the base
Of a stupendous mountain whose great crest
Towered high above the glare, and lost itself
In blackness. Never met such throng before
In Hell or Heaven. Flowing round the mount
Like a huge deluge, from afar they came,
And near. A dreadful sound was on mine ears,
As when the first great call of deep to deep
Broke on the natal silence, or as when
The wailing cry of universal death
Shall shake the pillars of eternity!

Still came the multitudes, and still the sea
Of human souls surged round the iron base
Of that mysterious mountain, while afar
The dim circumference was added to
With newer legions. Conquerors of old,
Armored and visored in resplendent steel,
Galloped on Hell-steeds, that with one great bound
Cleared bottomless cañons; then the kings and queens
Of Babylon, shorn of their lofty state,
Came abject, and with terror in those eyes

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That once outshone the world; and after them,
Myriads who reveled at the feast of life,
And when the reeling stupor of their wine
Had loosened, woke and found their souls in Hell.

IV.

What horrid crisis, then, I thought, can bring
The infernal minions to assemble here
Within the shadow of this gloomy peak
That seems to thrust aloft its fearful head
Even to God's footstool? Then as if there came
Answer direct to my soul's questioning,
A great voice lifted from the throng, which seemed
To bear up heaven-high its might of words,
Crying: "Thou wan inheritors of pain,
Angels and princes, ministers of Hell,
Hearken! The day of all great days is come,
Commemorative of that legend old
Whose prophecy is that when the time has run
A million æons out, if God relent,
A symbol shall be set upon the top
Of yonder mount—a blazing star—to tell
That hope is not yet dead. O powers of night,
Children of woe and darkness! not again
Shall Hell know such a gathering as this
Until, if hope be not forever fled,
The day of our redemption shall arrive!"
The voice ceased and a murmur ran through Hell,
A fearful whisper, scarcely breathing, "Hope!"