

SELENE, ETHAIS and PHYLLON enter.

- Lutin. Attend. Obedient to our King's command,
I met him in mid-earth. He bade me send
Both Ethais and Phyllon down below.
- Ethais. Down to mid-earth?
- Lutin. Down to mid-earth at once.
He hath some gift, some priceless privilege,
With which he would endow our fairy world,
And he hath chosen Phyllon and thyself
To bear his bounty to this home of ours.
- Zayda. Another boon? Why, brother Ethais,
What can our monarch give that we have not?
- Phyllon. In truth I cannot say! 'Twould seem that we
Had reached the sum of fairy happiness!
- Selene. But then we thought the same before our King
Endowed us with the gift of melody;
And now how tame our fairy life would seem
Were melody to perish from our land!
- Ethais. Well said, Selene. Come, then, let's away,
And on our journey through the outer air
We will take note of it's inhabitants
And bring you full account of all we see.
Farewell, dear sisters -
- Selene. Brothers, fare ye well!

ETHAIS and PHYLLON take leave of the Fairies and descend through the gap in the cloud. Exit LUTIN.

Zayda. Now here's a riddle that I cannot solve:-
Why do these mortals bear their weight of woe
When they can end it at their will? They need
Not live unless they like. Nevertheless,
With swords and daggers hanging at their sides,
With drowning seas and rivers at their feet,
With deadly poisons in their very grasp,
Men live, and live - and seem to like to live!

Darine. How strangely inconsistent!

Selene. Not at all.
With all their misery - with all the sin -
With all the elements of wretchedness
That team on that unholy world of theirs,
They have one great and ever glorious gift
That compensates for all they have to bear!