unknown minstrel. No word had yet been
spoken by the stranger; and, in anticipation of
the next epic, the previous applause soon died
away into such complete silence that the moan-
ing of the wind in the forest was heard in the
thick-walled banquet-room.

Before the listeners were aware, the stranger
had begun to sound his harp. So subtly had he
taken advantage of the surging of the wind, that
what was wind and what was harp it was im-
possible to distinguish. Then, from the minor,
wailing key of the wind, the player passed on
into resounding major chords that had a magic
power of rousing the souls of his hearers; and
soon, as subtly as he had used the prelude of the
wind, the stranger wove his voice into inex-
tricable harmony with the harp. With a
strongly-sustained movement, but one exquis-
itely modulated to his theme, he seemed to
take his hearers into the actual presence of the
events he sung; it was not to them as if he sung,
but as if they, themselves, were the actors of
the scenes he painted. He told of a happy
home; a noble father, commanding, and obeyed,
but claiming obedience only from those who
loved him; a beautiful, loving matron, who
gathered to her knees her children, and loved
them most when they most resembled their
father. He told of the happy life the loving
family led; the freedom from poverty and want,
the strength and honor of the men, the purity
and beauty of the women, who surrounded, and
drew their sustenance from, the noble head;
and, in their turn gave him their willing alleg-
iance. Then, in a grim minor chord, he told of
strangers who broke the happiness of that pure
home, and scattered to the winds the hopes and
aspirations of its members; he told how, like a
wave of the sea driven before a great wind, the
strangers had come upon the smiling fields and
swept away the ripening harvests, scattered the
followers of the lord of the domain, and driven the
defenders of the home to ignominious slaughter.
The brave resistance of the victims had rendered
them up to the inevitable destruction. The
men of the household had been extirpated, the
women torn from their children, and forced into
menial services to their new and arrogant mas-
ters. The lord of the castle had been vindict-
ively butchered, his children imprisoned, his
wife forced into a new marriage with the leader
of the conquest while her husband's blood had
scarcely ceased to pour from his stabbed heart.

Then the singer told, in sad and melancholy
strains, of the three boys who had been impris-
oned in the dank donjons of the castle which
was by right their own; how the two elder chil-
dren languished in the murky atmosphere of the
foul, slimy cell in which they were confined, and
how, at last, victims to their conquerors' cruelty,
they died; how, at their burial in the same cell
where they had dragged out their lives for five
weary years, the boy who yet clung to his hor-
rid life, vowed that he would live till he had
wreaked his vengeance upon the murderer of
his father and his brothers, the destroyer of his
home, the dishonorer of his mother. He
sung of the boy's weary waiting for an oppor-
tunity to escape from the loathsome prison,
his soul-extinguishing desire to breathe once
more the air of heaven, his unconquerable
determination to avenge his wrongs. At last
the moment came; the prison-door was unwit-
tingly opened to the determined soul within.
Then came years of search for the friends
of his murdered father,—years of disappoint-
ment and vain endeavor in part, but, also, of
training and accomplishment. The time had
flown in endless action for the realization of
his desires; friends had rallied round his stand-
ard, hearts had been touched by the tale of
the outraged son and brother, abundance had
crowned efforts for which the waiter had scarcely
dared hope for meagre success. At last all was
ready for the blow that had so long been im-
pending.

In a sort of march, solemn, impressive, inevi-
tably approaching, the singer described the
approach of vengeance. Though so impassive,
the minstrel's delivery of his scathing anathemas
upon the wrongers of his hero's family became
intensely subjective. With marvelous calmness,
in the midst of the wildest interest on the part
of his hearers, the stranger subdued all signs of