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2699

[by A. G. B. B. B.]

Mrs Stuckhouse
with the very kind
of the Editor
Condoover Oct 13. 10

Condoover Jan 1882

To my nephew
Thomas Cholmon
with my love
Reginald Cholmon



P O E M S.

P O E M S.

By A. C.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION BY
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 15, WATERLOO PLACE.
1871.



TO

ROBERT BROWNING

THESE POEMS WOULD HAVE BEEN INSCRIBED

BY

THE AFFECTIONATE AUTHOR.

OB^T NOV. 27, 1868.





" I BURN TO GIVE LIGHT."



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THE WONDER LAND.

INTO the wonder land,
Which lies ye know not where,
Come : take me by the hand,
And join my joyous band,
For I can lead you there.

There silken-eared the swine,
The oxen all have wings,
And golden-hornèd kine
With milk give sweetest wine ;
Each peacock softly sings ;

There children never weep,
The lilies weave and spin,
The sparrows sow and reap,
And schools the monkeys keep
Where men to learn begin.

Without the gate ye stand,
And, though I know not whether
Ye yet can understand
This unknown wonder land,
Let us go there together.

MY GARDEN.

I HAVE a garden of my own,
Where pansies bloom by birds chance-sown,
Sweet thoughts by some as hearts'-ease known.

Bright stars, that as they fall take root ;
Towards their last firmament they shoot,
And ripen to immortal fruit.

There suns long set, long buried, rise,
For not a day e'er seedless dies,
But there some Future folden lies.

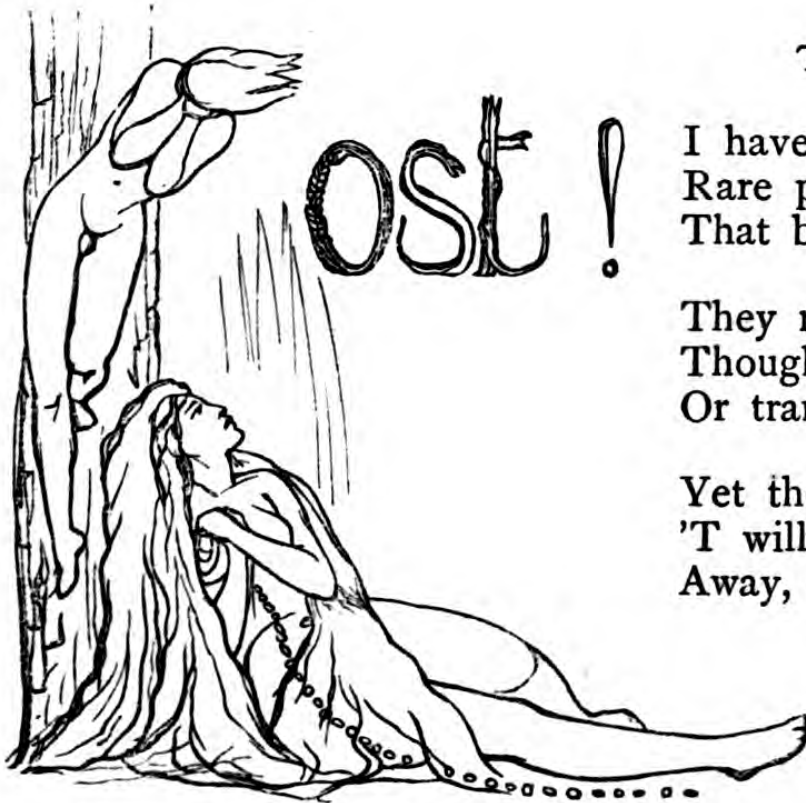
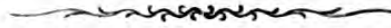
Strange winged plants most exquisite,
Flowered forth, where butterflies alit,
That hovering in the sunshine flit.

Buds pallid as unmelted snow,
Or rosy as the Auroral glow,
Dawned sudden from the depths below.

Wan poppies drowsed with weight of dreams,
And slumbrous lotus growth, that seems
Afloat upon Lethæan streams.

The garden was with weeds o'ergrown,
And blighted buds, that fell unblown,
As faded memories tempest-strown.

'Tis now a Paradise new found,
Whose rainbows spring up from the ground,
With a perpetual summer crowned.



lost !

THE PEARL NECKLACE

I have lost that necklace of mine,
Rare pearls strung on a silken twine
That broke while I careless fed the

They may be found again, no doubt,
Though jewels now in some swine's
Or trampled by filthy feet about.

Yet though they may once more be
'T will not be the same thread I
Away, which round my neck he had

THE BOY KING.

WITH king-cups for a diadem,
Crowned sovereign over all,
His sceptre was a lily stem,
His orb a cowslip ball.

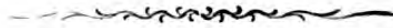
O'er him they held an arum leaf,
To screen the sunshine's glare ;
And feathery grasses in a sheaf,
Were waved to cool the air.

Kneeling, they did him homage true,
High on his mossy throne,
Anointed him with honeydew,
Distilled from flowers new blown.

Around him in a ring, were set
His princes, knights and lords,
Each with a daisy coronet,
Sharp iris blades for swords.

His guards with willow bows were armed,
Sunflowers as helmets wore—
With birken trumps the foe alarmed,
And spears of bulrush bore.

Boy-king! the playground was his rule,
His reign an afternoon
Of summer holiday from school,
And ended all too soon.



THE CUCKOO'S SONG.

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
Welcomer than doves cooing.
Spring comes, and summer too,
Ere thou hast ceased cuckooing.
Cuckoo! cuckooing!

Cuckoo! Cuckoo!
Art thou thy true love wooing?
Hast thou nought else to do—
All the day long cuckooing?
Cuckoo! cuckooing!

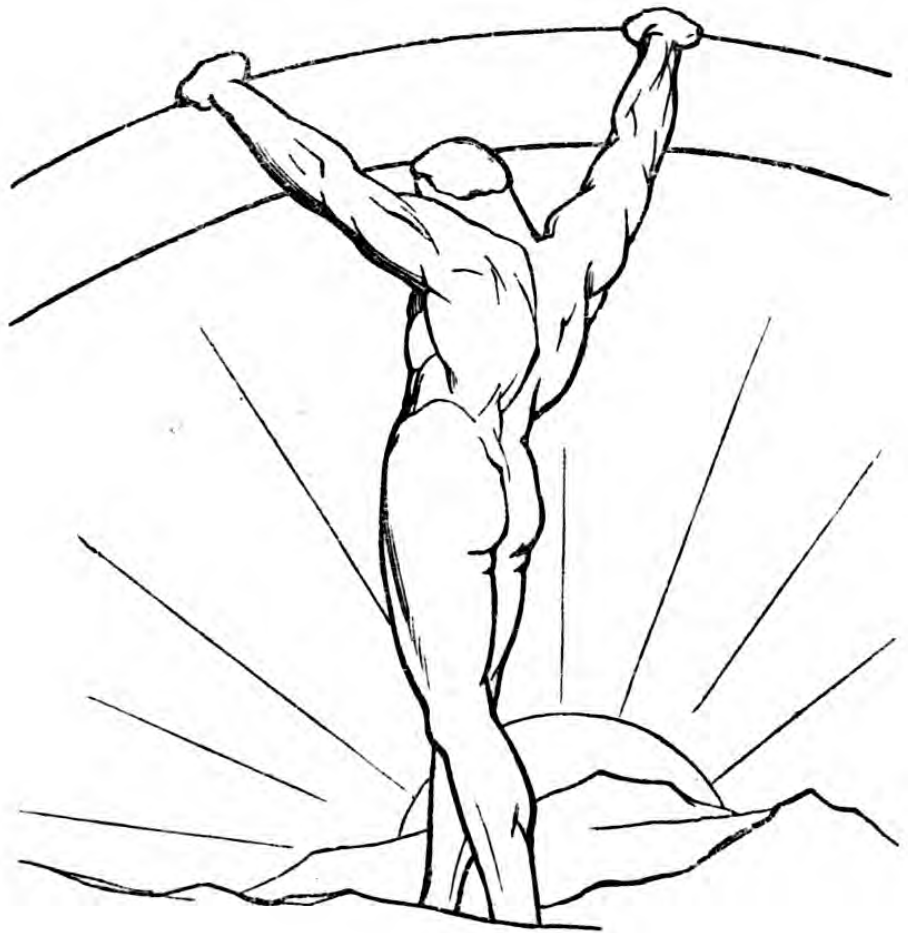
THE TWO BIRDS.

IN gilded lattice the parrot hung,
Loud mocking the whole day long :
Deep hid in the bushes a linnet sung,
But no one heeded her song.

Shrieked angry Polly,—Be still for a minute,
You stun my mistress, who brings
My sugar, but nought for the poor dull linnet ;
I talk, but he only sings.

I care not, sang the little brown bird,
For your crest and feathers gay ;
Could I speak, like you, but a single word,
Then fly from her far away !

I long to tell her I love her dearly,
But she cannot understand :
She thinks, I am singing my heart out, merely
To beg for crumbs from her hand.



THE WINDMILL.

UPON the heights a giant stood,
And ruled o'er all the country round ;
No harm he did to men, but good,
Like Samson, daily bread he ground.

Becalmed on idle days he stands,
But when the wind begins to rise
He works with busy arms, not hands,
And spreads his wings, yet never flies.

WINTER PLEASURES.

INSTEAD of wreath or posy
Are hearts and cheeks aglow,
Faces and fingers rosy ;
These are the flowers that blow
Unfading in the snow.

When fall its soft white feathers,
Like wild birds plucked on high,
Swansdown the schoolboy gathers
For his artillery—
Balls hard as ivory.

Like carven alabaster,
Children snow giants rear,
Piled up of stature vaster
Than pigmy workmen here,
Yet soon to disappear.

The earth is robed in ermine ;
The baffled traveller,
Can scarce his path determine,
Save for black tufted fir,
Like marks on miniver.

Hangs beaded with clear amber,
Pale berried mistletoe,
Which boys to pluck upclamber ;
For blushing kisses grow
Blooming its boughs below.

The woods are diamond-dusted ;
Each yet unbudded leaf
With stalactites encrusted,
Gleams a white coral reef,
Or frozen fountain's sheaf.

Far every footfall tinkles,
As folk were silvern shod ;
Each grass-blade ice-sheathed twinkles,
As if instead of sod
Some starry world we trod.

Musical sounding glasses,
The pools and streams vibrate
With crystal tones, when passes
O'er them, as animate
With life, the steel-tipt skate.

As ripe fruit late unfolden,
All its cloud-petals shed,
By the world tree upholden,
The sun bows low his head,
An apple round and red.

THE SAILOR BOY.

OH, shipmates bind me close and fast
With sevenfold cords to our mid-mast,
Until this sea be overpast !

I see white arms stretched from the sea,
I hear sweet voices sing to me,
Come down, dear child, we wait for thee !

To the ship's mast they bind him tight ;
He sees the gleam of brows foam-white ;
He strives to shut them out from sight.

Round them the winds loud wailing sweep,
Low sobbing murmurs stir the deep,
Midst them he hears a woman weep.

The harbour safe is gained at last,
But the boy leans against the mast
A cold stiff corpse bound close and fast.

CHANGES.

THE woods late, but for twitter
Of robins, wintry mute,
Ring with bird-music fitter
For notes of pipe and flute.

See broad-leaved lilies paving
What once were floors of glass !
Now flags and rushes waving
In green procession pass.

For crystal spikes resplendent,
That fringed with ice the wall,
Are sunny nectarines pendent,
Seen as their blossoms fall.

With heaped-up guelder-roses,
Snowballs no sun can melt,
And cowslips tied in posies,
Children their playmates pelt.

THE PALACE BY THE SEA.

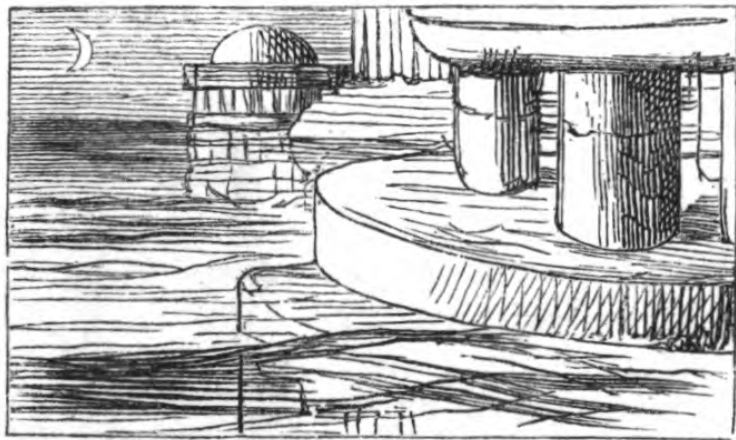
I SAW beside the sea-waves
A stately palace rise :
But at its foot a fairer
Deep 'neath the ocean lies.

Amidst the earthly turrets
Doves brood and swallows skim :
But through the ocean chambers
Strange glistening creatures swim.

Though from the airy casements
Bright maidens laughing lean,
Below the limpid water
Are fairer faces seen.

Above from gilded galleries
Is the gay music heard :
Under the tide's low ripple
Are sweeter murmurs stirred.

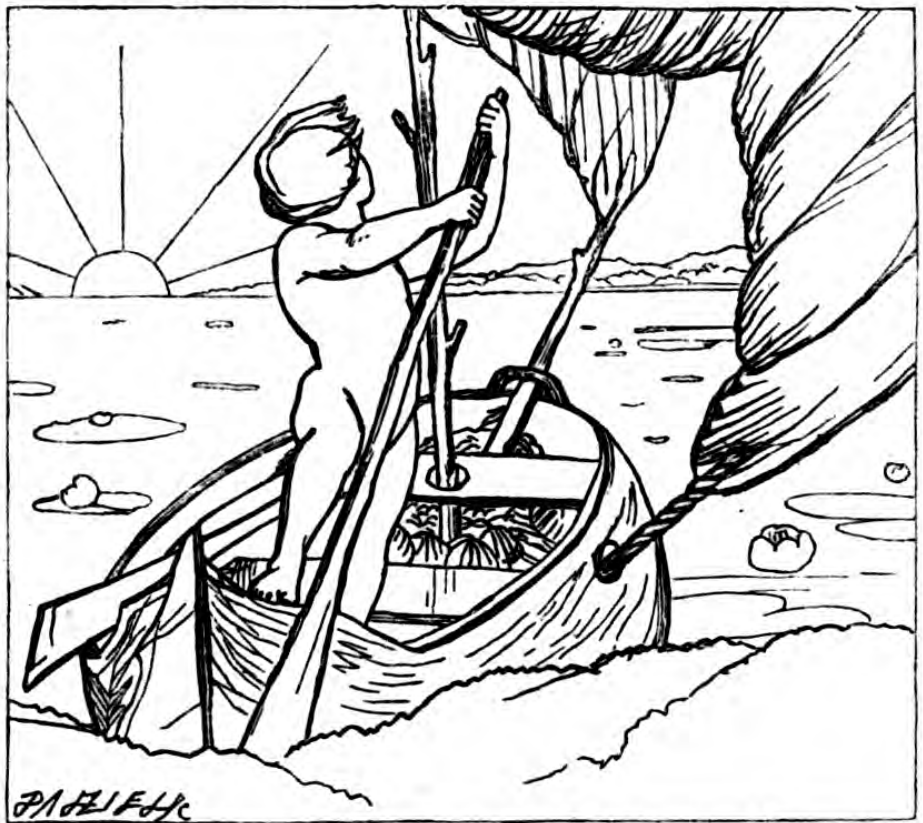
And gazing on each palace,
Beside and 'neath the sea,
I scarce know which is shadow
Or which reality.



THE VOYAGE.

BRING me a fairy boat
Of lotus leaves afloat,
Or Indian nut scooped out within ;
For masts, red coral stems ;
As ballast, piled-up gems ;
Steered with a gold-fish glittering fin.

A halcyon's wing as sail,
Pearlshells wherewith to bale,
For cordage mermaids' golden hair;
Over the lily pond,
To garden shores beyond—
To happy isles, I know not where.



THE MOTHER OF THE WINDS.

THE North Wind wrapt in bearskins warm,
Icicles fringed his lips :
“ I lashed the ocean into storm,
And wrecked a hundred ships.”

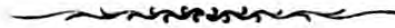
The South Wind waved an ostrich fan
Of feathers in his hand :
“ I have entombed a caravan,
'Neath heaped-up desert sand.”

The East Wind twitcht his sallow robe :
“ My pestilential breath
Has chased the sun round half the globe,
Scattering disease and death.”

The West Wind came on rainbow wing
With blossoms in his hair :
“ I opened all the buds of spring,
Their odours heavenward bare.”

Straightway the mother of the winds—
A weird and ancient crone—
The three first with her girdle binds,
Her grey locks backward blown :

“ Since three of ye have evil done,
Mine anger ye shall fear ;
The West Wind, my beloved son,
Alone is welcome here.”



THE VOICE OF THE SEA-SHELL.

AT my feet the mournful ebb and flow
Of the ocean, a shell upcast :
I sought the secret of life to know,
But in my ear its voice murmured low,
From echoing depths of the past.

It gave a warning of what might be ;
Wrathful, I crushed it underfoot.
Oh, why did I take it from the sea ?
I will not say what it sang to me,
But it lies there shattered and mute.

WHERE ?

WHERE do faded rainbows go?
They rise again from earth below,
In blossoms of all hues,
Born of the sun and dews.

Where is now last winter's snow?
Seen in the foaming river's flow,
Heard in the melody
Of fountain, stream, and sea.

PEARLS AND CORAL.

WHAT are pearls? The drops of woe,
That to cleanse the earth below,
In the tear-brimmed sea-depths flow;
And in shells of nacre caught,
Unto precious gems are wrought.

What is coral? Deepest red
Are its stems, as if they bled;
All the blood on earth e'er shed,
Poured into the ocean main,
Doth those crimson forests stain.

THE STRANDED MERMAN.

FIERCE is your sun, whose scorching glare
Stifles to death the sultry air ;
I yearn for the cool depths serene,
With glimmering vault of tender green.

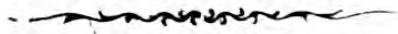
Your hard earth wounds each tender limb
In liquid crystal wont to swim,
Or 'neath those floating gardens dive,
Whose buds are creatures sensitive.

Your chambers are dull empty cells,
Compared to our vast sounding shells,
Or labyrinthine pearl-lined cave,
Ceiled by bright ripples of the wave.

Your flowers oppress me with perfume,
And dazzle with their gaudy bloom ;
For poignant odours of the brine
That freshens far from land, I pine.

Your beasts growl, bellow, yelp, and bray ;
Birds shriek and chatter night and day :
I long to plunge where, fathom deep,
The dreamy stillness soothes like sleep.

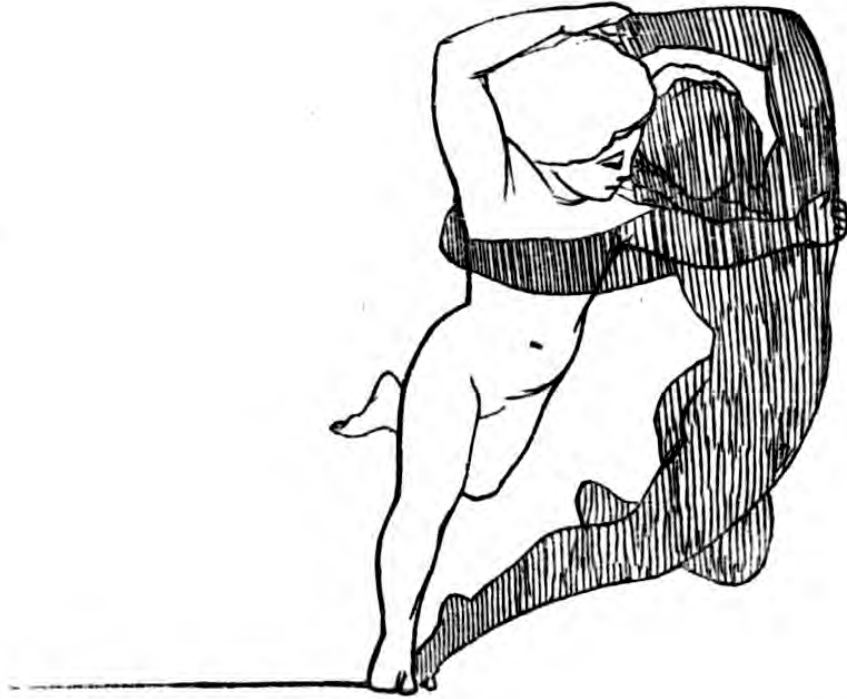
Your women's voices ring less sweet,
Like cloven rootlets are their feet.
Low murmurs 'neath the ebbing tide
Draw me.—I may not here abide.



DANCING ALONE.

THE floating gossamers aëry,
Heavy with dewdrops shone ;
Only alone,
Danced in the moonlight, a child, or fairy,
All in the moonlight dancing alone,
Dancing alone.

Still lay the grass in the meadow,
Even the moths were flown;
While she alone
Danced in the moonlight with her own shadow,
All in the moonlight dancing alone,
Dancing alone.



THE FLOWER MAIDEN.

THE blossoms of the Spring gave birth
To a fair maiden not of earth.

Bright crocus locks, a golden crown,
Curled like vine tendrils clustering down ;

Snow-white her brow and bosom gleam,
Queen lilies 'neath the moon they seem ;

Yet traced their pallor azure veins,
Anemones with purple stains.

Her cheeks were roses delicate,
Her lips still deeper roseate ;

And on her mouth was fragrance showered,
That into sweetest kisses flowered.

Eyes of soft blue forget-me-not,
Whose glances ne'er might be forgot.

Kneaded with dews, by sunshine warmed,
Therewith a maiden fair they formed.

To inbreathe life, an unborn soul,
Out of its chrysalis they stole.

But ah! a heart they could not give;
And lo! of that, 'twere vain to live.



BUBBLES.

HE took a hollow wheaten straw,
As if a tune he played;
Arising from his breath he saw
Round worlds of rainbow made:

And, from a vase of water, shaped
Birds without wings that flew—
Yet, close-caged, from his hands escaped:
'Twas bubbles that he blew.

DISAPPOINTED.

A BIRD sings in the orchard,
That will not come at my call.
The fruit-trees stretch their boughs
Over the garden wall :
I would that one of those apples
Into my lap would fall !

A face looks from a lattice,
A voice sounds strangely sweet ;
But not for me its music,
No flower drops at my feet :
Who cares for the lone wayfarer
Passing along the street ?

THE SNOW IMAGE.

'NEATH the boy's hands an image rose,
Shaped of fresh fallen virgin snows,
As in white veil and vesture clothed ;
In sport he hailed her his betrothed :
His golden chain around her flung,
And there forgetful left it hung.

That night a form stood by his side,
White-robed as she had been his bride ;
His chain upon her bosom gleamed,
That bright as some cold snow-wreath seemed :
She cast aside her shrouding veil,
Showed the fair face beneath death-pale.

Like melting snow-flakes fell each word,
Into his heart —no sound was heard—
“From thee this chilly life received,—
Of its undying soul bereaved,—
Unless that soul I also gain,
Must melt to nothingness again.”

She drew him forth in the dusk night.
They found him there at morning light
Stiff frozen in the long death sleep:
His arms still clasped a glistening heap,
Where his snow maiden by him lay,
As she had wept herself away.



WHAT THE SEA SAID TO THE BROOK,
AND THE
BROOK ANSWERED TO THE SEA.

The Sea. COME down, little brook, to me,
With your tired foam-white feet,
Come singing down with murmurs sweet !
I am the mighty sounding sea,
Waiting my child to meet.

The Brook. I stir the water-lily's leaves,
Where the swan dreamy swims,
The thirsty swallow dripping skims,
And village maids on summer eves,
Bathe laughing their white limbs—

And much I fear your mighty wrath,
That, in a stormy mood,
(They say) by none can be withstood ;
Great ships that dare to cross your path,
Are swallowed by your flood.

The Sea. My arms, embracing them, are strong ;
Safe in my breast they sleep :
Unfathomed is my heart and deep.
Come to me ! I have waited long,
For you its love I keep.

The Brook. Of old, in silence oft I heard
A voice—'twas not my own,
Nor winds that mid the pine-trees moan ;
My soul was in me strongly stirred,
By that far-murmured tone.

But then I knew not where to seek—
Nor dare I now return:
Fearful my waters you may spurn,—
I am so shallow and so weak,
Vainly towards you I yearn.

The Sea. Unnumbered isles in my embrace
I clasp, round every shore ;
Into me all the rivers pour ;
Yet in my heart there still is space,
For you, and many more.

The Brook. But I have muddied my pure wave,
With earthly wanderings :
Since it left those clear mountain springs,
Autumn has made it a deep grave,
For many unclean things.

The Sea. Although by works of man defiled,
Turbid with storms of rain,
Yet cleansing is my ocean main.
Come to your father, erring child,
To be made pure again !

The Brook. Weary at last, I long for rest ;
Lured by your loving call,
Now meekly at your feet I fall :
Oh, take me to your sheltering breast,
Great father of us all !

LAND AND WATER.

- “ LITTLE fishes, come up to me !
The sun shines here so pleasantly ;
The bees suck honey all the day,
The flowers are sweet, the lambkins play,
The butterflies have painted wings,
And every bird rejoicing sings.”
- “ No,” said the fish, “ for we should die,
Gasping our lives out painfully.”
- “ Little girl, come down to us here !
For underneath 'tis crystal clear ;
The water stirs the floating weeds,
Makes rippling music midst the reeds :
Round the lilies we shoot about,
And in our sport flash in and out.”
- “ No,” said the child, “ for I should drown ;
The cruel mermaid would drag me down.”

HUNTED.

“SISTER, why are you pale and worn,
Weeping, and in such woeful plight?”

“I am all day a maid forlorn—
But hunted down with hounds and horn,
A flying milk-white fawn by night,
Of my own shadow in affright.

“Ah, see! the hounds are on my track;
Close on me now, I hear them bay;
Trembling I fly: as I look back,
One cruel horseman leads the pack.
That hunter’s face haunts me all day,
From him I cannot flee away.

“At my white throat the foremost hangs;
They drag me down—the hunter’s steel
Lets out my life with piercing pangs;
The wounds from those bloodthirsty fangs,
Bleed smarting still, but those will heal;
Deeper that weapon’s hurt I feel.

“While others dream in happy sleep,
I fly from human help withdrawn;
Then home to my cold bed I creep,
To dread the coming night, and weep.
I rise a maiden pale at dawn,
Each night a hunted milk-white fawn.”

THE LITTLE CHILD TO ITS STAR.

THE roses bend down as I pass,
With pouting crimson lips ;
The daisies stretch up from the grass
Their rosy finger tips.

From my window I watch a star ;
Each night I see it shine,
Though I cannot reach so far,
Yet I would that it were mine.

The daisies die out in the grass,
The roses fade on their stem :
My star shines above me, alas !
And what do I care for them ?

HEAVEN.

WE watched afar the sunset's glory,
My friend and his child with me—
But it told to each a different story :
Whoso has eyes let him see !

The sky was a crystal globe transparent,
Where (whispered to me the boy)
Bright clouds for goldfish swam apparent ;
And he clapt his hands for joy.

But I saw there reaper-angels gather,
And store up the garnered grain :
My friend he prophesied the weather ;
'Twas stormy and threatened rain.
We three might gaze on heaven together,
But two might see it in vain.



THE SEA - KINE.

IN the twilight she sought the strand,
To milk the herds that live not on land ;
Maddening like moonlight, but bitter as brine,
Is the milk of those weird sea-kine.

You hear afar their plaintive low,
You see the white milk foaming flow,
Far more potent than earthly wine :
“ But where do you pasture your wild sea-kine ? ”

“ My herds amidst the krakens feed,
On unploughed leagues of floating weed ;
Who drinks their milk, will life-long pine
For the pasturage of those unknown kine.”

He drank,—the blood surged in his veins,
The salt taste on his lips remains.
“ I would give freely this life of mine,
Were I but lord of those stately kine ! ”

On they came bellowing,—white, flame-crested,
Rearing, lion-maned, swan-breasted,—
The moonbeams on a pale corpse shine,
Trampled and gored by those wrathful sea-kine.

THE SINGER SLAIN.

IN the fir-boughs that overhang
His chamber, sat a bird:
All night till dawn it sang,—
Smote him a sudden pang,
Such music ne'er he heard :

For strangely beautiful,
Mixt with his dreams in sleep,
Those notes so pitiful,
That he began to weep—

“ My heart aches in my breast,
You sing so loud and long ;
I pray you cease your song,
Let me aweary rest.”

But it sang of another land,
Wherein he might not go,
Of joys he ne'er should know ;
He seemed to understand
What was eternal woe.

'Twas plaintive as a dove
Whose young must leave her soon—
Sweeter than larks to the sky above,
Or nightingales to the moon :
'Twas sweet as if it sang of love,
But his heart was out of tune.

“ Cannot you leave me alone ? ”

He cried out in his wrath—
Took up a great sharp stone,
Found one day in his path,
Flung it and scarce took aim,
To scare the singer away,
Or perchance a wing to maim ;
But dead at his feet it lay.

In his soul a secret pain,—
No sound of gold-stringed lute,
Nor silvery voice of flute,
Can soothe ; for never again
Will he hear that exquisite strain ;
All his heart's music is mute
Since the sweet singer was slain.

DANCING.

THE roses in the garden walks,
The lilies down in the meadows,
Danced in time on their waving stalks,
And with them danced their shadows.

Proud peacocks on the terrace wall
Trode in time a stately measure,
Like dancing girls the foxgloves tall
Shook tinkling bells with pleasure.

All things rejoiced upon the earth,
Time flew as the hours were dancing ;
The sunshine on the stream, in mirth,
Played o'er its ripples glancing.

The clouds sped on the south wind's wings,
As birds when their love-mates follow ;
Where danced the gnats in aëry rings,
Swift circling skimmed the swallow.

The sportive fish wound in and out,
And frolicked amid the rushes ;
O'erhead the branches danced about
To rock the nestling thrushes.

In the green fields the lambkins skipt,
Blithe-footed the thyme and heather,
And midst them all the children tript,
Dancing in pairs together.

THE SWALLOWS.



AUTUMNAL blasts low sighing,
Summon the souls of blossoms dying,—
Warn swallows, homeward flying,
'Tis time to speed away.

Hushed are the sweetest singers,
Like some flute-player's frozen fingers ;
Only the robin lingers,
And pipes serenely gay.



whither flies the swallow?
Do their swift flocks the south wind follow
To some far sun-girt hollow,
Sheltered awhile to stay?

'Neath lowly roofs first nested,
They consort now with iris-crested
Peacocks, all purple-breasted,
Royal in their array.

By cottage eaves housed lately,—
Midst pyramids they perch sedately,
'Twixt paws of sphinxes stately,
Or temples in decay.

THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH.

CHRIST JESUS, so the Gospel saith,
As Joseph's duteous son,
Was carpenter at Nazareth,
Till his day's work was done.

Cradles for babes, biers for the dead,
All implements he made ;
The lame man's crutch, the household bed—
'Twas a right honest trade.

What was the last work he began ?
A cross of shittim wood,
Whereon He after died for man—
God bless the holy rood !



LOST WINGS.

ONCE a child-angel lighted down,
To sport midst babes on earth,
And share their careless mirth ;
She laid aside awhile her golden crown.

“ Lend me thy wings,” said one bright boy,
“ That I may heavenward rise,
Like birds or butterflies.”
She plucked them off to give her playmate joy.

Vainly into the air he springs,
To ether all unused ;
He falls—his limbs are bruised—
Alas ! all torn and soiled those fragile wings.

She sighed, “ My seraph comrades flown,
With thee I needs must stay :
Yet can I soar away,
And leave thee when my wings are newly grown.”



ON THE SEA SHORE.

LATE in the evening twilight,
Flew a white-winged bird o'er the sea :
It came and sang at her window,
“ Sweet love, art thou coming to me ? ”

And ere the morning twilight,
Flew a white-winged bark o'er the sea :
In it a maiden sat singing,
“ Sweet love, I am coming to thee.”

But, in the stormy midnight,
Beat the white-winged foam of the sea
Ashore, where one was awaiting
For that which never could be.

LILIES AND ROSES.

WHY do the lilies turn rose-red,
The rays of sunrise on them shed?
The roses,—each one hangs his head,—
What has the south wind to them said?

The lilies blush ;—when crimson grows
The East, and dawning daylight shows,
Each flower rejoicing rosy glows,
For soon the sun will rise, it knows.

The roses droop because the blast
Sighs, “Summer now will soon be past ;
Your bloom in winter will not last,
To other lands I hurry fast.”

THE BIRTH OF A STAR.

FROM wandering rays of light,
Steeped in the tears of night,
 Meteors outworn,
Fires fall'n from lightnings fled,
Dews by moon-rainbows shed,
 Thus stars are born.

As a fount springs afar,
Leaps into life the star,
 Shining through heaven
Into the golden dawn ;
But for a while withdrawn,
 Till back at even.



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