

65316

## IN LOVE'S FERNITY,

BY ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

My body was part of the sun and the dew,  
 Not a trace of my death to me gave;  
 There was scarce a man left on the earth whom I knew,  
 And another was laid in my grave;—

I was changed and in heaven; the great sea of blue  
 Had long washed my soul pure in its wave.

My sorrow was turned to a beautiful dress;  
 Very fair for my weeping was I,  
 And my heart was renewed, but it bore, none the less,  
 The great wound that had brought me to die—  
 The deep wound that *She* gave who wrought all my distress  
 Ah, my heart loved her still in the sky!

I wandered alone where the stars' tracks were bright;  
 I was beautiful and holy and sad;  
 I was thinking of her who of old had the might  
 To have blest me and made my death glad;  
 I remembered how faithless she was, and how light,  
 Yea, and how little pity she had.

The love that I bore her was now more sublime,  
 It could never be shared now or known;  
 And her wound in my heart was a pledge in love's clime,  
 For her sake I was ever alone,  
 Till the spirit of God in the fulness of time  
 Should make perfect all love in his own.

My soul had forgiven each separate tear  
 She had bitterly wrung from my eyes;  
 But I thought of her lightness—ah, sore was my fear  
 She would fall somewhere never to rise,  
 And that no one would love her to bring her soul near  
 To the heaven where love never dies.

She had drawn me with feigning, and held me a day ;  
 She had taken the passionate price  
 That my heart gave for love—with no doubt or delay—  
 For I thought that her smile would suffice ;  
 She had played with, and wasted, and then cast away  
 The true heart that could never love twice.

And false must she be ; she had followed the cheat  
 That ends loveless and hopeless below ;  
 I remembered her words' cruel worldly deceit  
 When she bade me forget her and go.  
 She could ne'er have believed after death we might meet,  
 Or she would not have let me die so !

I thought and was sad ; the blue fathomless seas  
 Bore the white clouds in luminous throng,  
 And the souls that had love were in each one of these ;  
 They passed by with a great upward song :  
 They were going to wander beneath the fair trees  
 In high Eden—their joy would be long.

An age it is since : the great passionate bloom  
 Of eternity burns more intense ;  
 The whole heaven draws near to its beautiful doom  
 With a deeper, a holier sense ;  
 It feels ready to fall on His bosom in whom  
 Is each love and each love's recompense.

How sweet to look back to that desolate space  
 When the heaven scarce my heaven seemed !  
 She came suddenly, swiftly, a great healing grace  
 Filled her features and forth from her streamed !  
 With a cry our lips met, and a long close embrace  
 Made the past like a thing I had dreamed.

'Ah, love,' she began, 'when I found you were dead  
 I was changed and the world was changed too ;  
 On a sudden I felt that the sunshine had fled,  
 And the flowers and summer gone too ;  
 Life but mocked me ; I found there was nothing instead  
 But to turn back and weep all in you.

When you were not there to fall down at my feet,  
 And pour out the whole passionate store  
 Of the heart that was made to make my heart complete,  
 In true words that my memory bore,  
 Then I found that those words were the only words sweet,  
 And I knew I should hear them no more.

- 'I found that my life was grown empty again ;  
Day and year now I had but to learn  
How my heaven had come to me—sought me in vain,  
And was gone from me ne'er to return :  
Too earthly and winterly now seemed the plain  
Of dull life where the heart ceased to burn !
- 'And soon with a gathering halo was seen,  
O'er a dim waste that fell into night,  
Your coming, your going—as though it had been  
The fair track of an angel of light ;  
And my dream showed you changed in a spirit's full sheen  
Fleeing from me in far lonely flight.
- 'My Angel ! 'twas then with a soul's perfect stake !  
You came wooing me, day after day,  
With soft eyes that shed tears for my sake and the sake  
Of intense thoughts your lips would not say ;  
'Twas a love, then, like this my heart cared not to take !  
'Twas a heart like this I cast away !
- 'Ah yes !—but your love was a fair magic toy  
That you gave to a child who scarce deigned  
To receive it—forsook it for some passing joy,  
Never guessing the charm it contained :  
But you gave it and left it, and none could destroy  
The fair talisman where it remained.
- 'And, surely, no child—but a woman at last  
Found your gift where the child let it lie,  
Understood the whole secret it held, sweet and vast,  
The fair treasure a world could not buy ;  
And believed not the meaning could ever have past,  
Any more than the giver could die.
- 'And then did that woman's whole life, with a start,  
Own its lover, its saviour, its lord ;  
He had come, he had wooed her,—and lo, her dull heart  
Had not hailed him with one stricken chord  
Of whole passion—had suffered him e'en to depart  
Without hope of a lover's reward !
- 'But, surely, there failed not at length his least look,  
His least pleading, his most secret tear  
Quite to win her and save her ; her heart truly took  
A fond record of all : very dear,  
Very gracious he seemed ; and for him she forsook  
The drear ruin her soul had come near.

'For him she made perfect her life, till she laved  
 Her soul pure in the infinite blue:  
 O thou Lover, who once, for a love deathless craved  
 A brief heaven of years frail and few,  
 Take the child whom you loved and the woman you saved  
 In the Angel who now blesses you !'

She ceased. To my soul's deepest sources the sense  
 Of her words with a full healing crept,  
 And my heart was delivered with rapture intense  
 From the wound and the void it had kept;  
 Then I saw that her heart was a heaven—immense  
 As my love! And together we wept.