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THE ALHAMBRA
AND OTHER POEMS

The Alhambra
and other
Poems

352

J. B. Money-Coutts

John Lane, The Bodley Head,
London and New York

1898

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I tender my thanks to the Editors of *Literature*, *The Saturday Review*, *The Yellow Book*, *The Speaker*, and *The Westminster Gazette* respectively, for kind permission to reprint the poems that appeared in those journals.

TO OSCAR BROWNING

*To feed the soul through gilded bars
Fain are the fond, and fain the kind;
But where it listeth blows the wind
And storms on undiscovered stars.*

Oh! chanced it in some alien world,
Befell it in some far-off age,
Our shallop took her pilgrimage
Where Thames' pale current coiled and curled?

When floating on,—the man, the boy,—
By Eton's elms and Windsor's towers,
We sowed the sweet unconscious hours
Whose blossom is remembered joy!

Though drifted, since that evening fled,
A lifetime from those isles and weirs,
Through dim amazement of the years
I hold a bright, unbroken thread!

Your sympathy alone was clue
To labour's faintly-glimmering end,
And though your faith outran me, Friend,
I dedicate my work to you.

Far distant now are Windsor's pile
And Eton's elms ; yet on we float ;
And hark ! I hear the waves that moat
The silence of Avilion's Isle!

March, 1897.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Dedication.—To Oscar Browning	v
The Alhambra	1
To William Watson at Windermere	7
To I. Albeniz	11
England and America	12
America's Declaration of War, 1898	15
Revelation	16
“ O Sing unto the Lord a New Song ”	18
Psalm xc.	22
Mors, Morituri Te Salutamus !	23
The Inquest	25
Col. Gerard Noel Money, C.B.	26
Thomas Ashe	27
Beside a Grave	28
“ The Days that are no more ”	29
Rest	30
“ He that is without Sin ”	31
Any Father to Any Son	32
Children	33
Stodham Woods	34
The Rother	36
Ingens Aequor	37
At Cimiez	39
Queen Guenevere's Maying	40
An Impression	41

	PAGE
Perfume	42
A Ballad of Cornwall	43
The Riddle	45
The Eternal Conflict	48
The Homily	50
Love at First Sight	51
Pure Imagination	52
The Singer's Search	53
At Last	54
Nellie	55
Moieties	56
Predestination	58
Soul to Soul	59
For Ever	60
Aliquid Amari	61
Twilight in London	63
Fervaal	64
Epitaphs	65
The Nut-Brown Maid	68
"Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan"	76
Notes	77

The Alhambra

I

GRANADA

O LAND of flowers and sapphire skies,
Where seraphs walk in sweet disguise
Of earthly maidens' vesture!
Meseems you keep within your eyes
The first, vast, virginal surprise
Of God's creative gesture!

The Angel of Art has sealed on thee
His signet and his sign,—
The Alhambra! Like a phantasie,
Half human, half divine!

A marble fountain! Ocean shell!
Or flame, that coils and spires!
A perfect thought! As who should tell,
In one, the World's desires!

Most gorgeous Word of blazoned Art,
In whose eternal scroll
The student who can read a part
Is Master of the whole!

viii

	PAGE
Perfume	42
A Ballad of Cornwall	43
The Riddle	45
The Eternal Conflict	48
The Homily	50
Love at First Sight	51
Pure Imagination	52
The Singer's Search	53
At Last	54
Nellie	55
Moieties	56
Predestination	58
Soul to Soul	59
For Ever	60
Aliquid Amari	61
Twilight in London	63
Fervaal	64
Epitaphs	65
The Nut-Brown Maid	68
"Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan"	76
Notes	77

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II

LINDARAJA

WITHIN this casket was empearled,
As Heaven's own Designate,
A Queen ; whose empire o'er the World
No rival dare debate !

But yet her fee of sovereignty
Was not by armies ruled !
Her beauty's sheen, her sovran mien,—
By these men's hearts were schooled !

Ah, Lindaraja ! Men are blind,
Or else beneath thy grace,
'Twere theirs to find the Eternal Mind,
And guess the Eternal Face !

III

GENERALIFE

HERE, as if cast by pilfering fays,
Are scattered Nature's gems :
Her olivine, her chrysoprase,
Her crowns and diadems !

Scarce held the Garden God first made
And gave the Man to till,
More flowery lawns, more fragrant shade,
Or birds of sweeter bill !

Here couches Love 'mid fronded fern ;
Here maidens, venturing in,
Achieve their liberty to learn
The sacredness of sin !

IV

ZAMBRA

WARRIORS, from the war returning,
Cast aside the sword and lance !
Zambra's myriad lamps are burning !
Zambra woos with song and dance !

Don the saffron robes of pleasure !
Brood no more on bloody fights !
Houris' arms await the pressure,
Lip to lip, of amorous knights !

Lo ! along the enchanted alley
Shines the vagueness of the moon !
There the Almées dance and dally,
There the lispings lovers croon !

V

EL CERCO

THEY come, the Christians abhorred,
Drunk with the blood of their Lord !
Who shall deliver Islâm
From the Cross of the red oriflamme ?
They pass ; and destruction and dearth
Follow, and crushed to the earth
Lies Art ! Thou wert chosen to scourge
The pride of a People, to purge
Their splendour, Castille, and o'erthrow
The genius of Joy with the genius of Woe !

VI

LA SILLA DEL MORO

“FAREWELL, farewell! Thy doom endears
Thy beauty! God is just;
Yet must I weep with woman's tears
Thy glory in the dust!

“To lose thee is to die! And yet
I cling to life, for fear
In death's confusion I forget
How fair thou art, how dear!”

So mourned Granada's latest King,
Deeming that Art was dead;
But still the flowers our footsteps ring
And still the stars our head!

To William Watson at Windermere

I COUNT thee, Watson, happier far
 Than we who live in foolish noise,
 With inharmonious minds that mar
 The measure of our scanty joys !

From thee the inarticulate hills
 Expect the voice to them denied,
 For thee the whisper of the rills
 A thousand-fold is multiplied ;

And every tarn reflects for thee
 Procession of the bygone years,
 When clouds in hooded pageantry,
 Like memories, flit across the meres ;

The flowers reach up to kiss thine hand,
 The trees lean down to touch thine head,
 The birds acclaim thee ; all the land
 Is conscious of a poet's tread !

All seems aloof from mortal pain ;
 Thou communest with all in song,
 Clear-welling with a purer strain
 Than ever flowed from human wrong.

O happy in the woodland maze !
 O happy on the mountain steep !
 But we are locked in wilder ways,
 And alien from the hills of sleep !

No "rivulets dance," no torrents flow,
 No "forests muse" of pine or oak ;
 We marvel if a floweret blow
 Beneath a heaven so smeared with smoke.

And here no joyous impulse moves
 The minds of men with random waves,
 But up and down these stony grooves
 We hurry, like a gang of slaves.

Ah, vainly would'st thou bend to hear,
 Or vainly would'st thou strain to see
 The mystic Spirit bards revere
 Of Nature's prodigality !

A giant, clanking golden chains ;
 A monster, bound in torments fierce ;
 Whose strong integument of pains
 No shaft of joy is keen to pierce ;

What more than this can poet spy
 Beneath our brave pretence and show ?
 'Tis light to lift, that bravery,
 That broidered coverlid of woe !

And yet perchance I do thee wrong ;
 Perchance, beneath immediate ill,
 Thy clearer insight, trained and strong,
 May catch a deeper vision still :

Maybe, though greeting Nature's face
 In cloud and crag, in lake and glen,
 At least her footsteps thou canst trace
 Among the meaner ways of men !

Maybe, her paths by thee discerned,
 Are less obscure than sages deem ;
 The poet's prescience having learned
 What Science only dares to dream :

That Nature is not twain or trine ;
 Though none know whither, none know whence
 Her journey, yet no less divine
 Is sense, than things perceived by sense.

But take thou the unfinished thought,
 To mould it, in some later lay,
 By finer inspiration wrought,
 And sing me all I fail to say ;

Let not the cloistral peaks bar out
 Profaner creatures from thy ken,
 Or fold thee from the faith and doubt
 Of common minds and fellow men !

Though Windermere thy heart allure,
Or Rydal, with her sacred hills,
Forget not whom the towns immure
To turn the cranks and tread the mills!

London. July, 1897.

To I. Albeniz

I CANNOT say what I would say ;
My eyes are filled with tears, dear friend ;
Because our life must pass away
And all our sweetest moments end.

But yet this privilege is ours,
That hand in hand we twain have trod
The maze of Art's authentic bowers,
And walked with Love and talked with God.

England and America

I

PRESIDENT CLEVELAND'S MESSAGE,
DECEMBER, 1895

YES ! it was well, and passing well, that we—
 To do their pleasure—for so small a thing,
 Refused to set wild war upon the wing,
 Or to defile that unensanguined sea,
 That flows between our Countries of the Free,
 With freight of fratricide ! We let them ring
 Alarum ; kept us crimeless ; and shall bring
 White record to the days that are to be !

The time will come, when they will look with shame
 On that time-serving message of their Chief ;
 His use ignoble of their noble name
 For paltry purpose, must be charged with grief
 For the harvest of their Age, when every sheaf
 Is garnered of their folly and their fame.

II

THE ARBITRATION TREATY,
JANUARY, 1897

“How beautiful the feet of them that bring
 Good tidings o'er the mountains, news of peace!”
 So cried the Hebrew prophet, long release
 From long captivity previsioning.
 And Cyrus came, with healing on his wing
 For Israel; but not by Persia, Greece,
 Nor Rome, God made the world from war to cease;
 No, nor by Christ, nor any Christian King!

But England, watching by her moated main,
 Yet tasting in convergent winds the taint
 Of slaughter and the tears of those that weep
 The tyranny of battle, hears again,
 With spiritual ear, the far and faint
 Footfall divine, that treads the “untrampled
 deep.”

III

THE AMERICAN SENATE'S AMENDMENT

MORE right divine, perchance, ye arrogate
 Than Kings anointed ; yet ye little prove
 Your title to investiture of Love,
 Which is Divinity ; but consecrate
 To enmity ye seem ! For when, as late,
 Peace left awhile her heavenly Ark, that hove
 A little nearer Earth, the gentle dove
 Could find no harbour in your flood of hate.

Hither and thither dark confusions smite,
 In maddened chivalry of pride and pelf ;
 The nations of the world, like factions fight,
 As reasonless as Ghibelline and Guelph :
 Yet Earth has never seen a viler sight
 Than this vile war ye wage on Peace herself !

March, 1897.

America's Declaration of War, 1898

THE sly Freebooters of the Earth
Open their ranks, to welcome in
The youngest Race God brought to birth,
By serpent reasons lured to sin.

“Peace and goodwill”—the promise failed
As soon as made, erased with gore;
And once again the Christ is haled
Behind the reeking wheels of War!

Revelation

MAN is a pilgrim ; in ambiguous ways
 And twilight days,
 By endless revelation led along,
 An endless song
 Of aspiration and of hope he sings ;
 To which our strings,
 O minstrels, let us tune, and time our staves
 To match those waves
 And tides of choiring voices, that profound
 As many waters sound.

What though some discord of suspended pain
 Distress the strain ?
 Some dissonance of unresolved desires
 Torment the wires ?
 These are the unripe buds upon the tree
 Of harmony ;
 The sunbeams of the summer solstice lack
 Not bars of black,
 And life would be no more than senseless breath
 Without the sense of death.

Moreover there is one persistent voice
 That cries, " Rejoice !"
 'Tis Love's ; and, as he sings, all other sound
 Comes circling round,

And all the trembling notes, like lonely elves,
Submit themselves
To his supreme persuadence. Incomplete
Although so sweet,
Even his melody. Because it flows
For ever, without close.

“ O Sing unto the Lord a New Song ”

OFT to the men of battle poets raise
 An ode of praise,
 And oft the choric epitaph they rear
 Above the bier
 Of valour,—resolute, without disdain,
 Though godly Spain,
 Invincible, in cannon-freighted keel,
 From Cadiz steal,
 Or godless France her flaming fingers lave
 In Egypt's wave,
 And yellowing harvest-fields of Belgium beat
 With blood-bedabbled feet.

And oft to Love the Muses will return
 From themes more stern,
 To build a stately altar to his name,
 And feed his flame
 With thrice-distilléd oils of simple joy,
 Unwont to cloy ;
 That there with hushed and hesitating feet
 May lovers meet,
 And learn the secret of his mystic power,—
 That the only flower
 Of perfect chastity proceeds
 From mutual passion's wingéd seeds.

Alas ! why strike we no sublimer string,
 Nor dare to sing
 Jehovah, and his mercies manifold,
 Renowned of old
 In Judah's temple ? where, like seraphim's
 Majestic hymns,
 Antiphonies 'neath cedarn arches rolled,
 To harps of gold
 And dulcimers ; while damsels, dancing round,
 Shook forth the timbrel's sound.

When erst, O God, the Hebrew minstrel tried
 From thee to hide,
 In vain 'neath muffling canopies of night
 He shunned thy sight,
 In vain o'er ocean-solitudes was borne
 On wings of morn ;
 Beyond the universe's utmost bound
 Thy face he found,
 Beyond the stars and light's extremest belt
 Thy presence felt ;
 For when he turned from thee and fled,
 Thy spirit followed not, but led.

But now the shelvéd record of the rocks
 The psalmist mocks ;
 Before thy motion at primeval dawn
 A veil is drawn
 Of countless ages ; down a myriad links
 Creation sinks
 Through teeming generations, swarm on swarm,
 From form to form !

The abyss is void of thee, and back we reel
 And vainly feel
 The stars,—if in the heavens may linger
 One impress of their maker's finger!

Yet, though thou dwell'st not in the empyrean,
 We raise our pæan
 To thee, who ridest not the wind nor storm,
 Whom neither form
 Nor hue reveals, nor substance can contain,
 Nor symbol vain!
 To thee, who art not God of sect or race,
 Of land or place,
 Of century or era, age or æon,
 We raise our solemn pæan!

Sing, every voice, that never chanted spell
 To cozen hell,
 Nor sought by adulation, born of fear,
 To charm God's ear!
 Blow, trumpets, blow, that shatter to the ground,
 With sevenfold sound,
 The walls of superstition and offence
 Against God's sense;
 And ye, that live by love's harmonious law,
 Soft music draw,
 With fingers fleet, from lyre and lute,
 Like forest rain, when winds are mute!

Eternally revealed, yet never known,
 Thee, thee we own!
 From man's false images of thee are cast
 The shadows vast

Of doubt and dread, that lie upon his mind
So black inclined !
Yet shadows are but measures of the light ;
The darkest night
Is but the token of the sun withdrawn,
The promise of a dawn.

Psalm xc

FROM æon to æon

Ere the mountains were born Thou art God!
Thou turnest the sons of the earthborn,
Thou turnest back mortals to dust.
For in thine eyes a thousand years lapsing
Are past as a watch in the night!
We blossom as herbs in the morning,
That are mown down and withered at eve!
Our days die away as a murmur,
And thy fury has finished our years!
How foolish our boasting and travail!
In vanity born to take flight!
O learn us our life-days to number,
That wisdom may home to our hearts.

Mors, Morituri Te Salutamus!

I HATE thee, Death!

Not that I fear thee,—more than mortal sprite
 Fears the dark entrance, whence no man returns ;
 For who would not resign his scanty breath,
 Unreal joy, and troublesome delight,
 To marble coffer or sepulchral urn's
 Inviolatè keeping ?
 To quench the smouldering lamp, that feebly burns
 Within his chamber, to procure sweet sleeping,
 Is not a madman's act. And yet I hate thee,
 Swift breaker of life's poor illusion,
 Stern ender of love's fond confusion,
 And with rebellion in my heart await thee.

Like mariners we sail, of fate unwist,
 With orders sealed and only to be read
 When home has faded in the morning mist
 And simple faith and innocence are fled!

Oft we neglect them, being much dismayed
 By phantoms and weird wonders
 That haunt the deep,
 By voices, winds, and thunders,

Old mariners that cannot pray nor weep,
 And faces of drowned souls that cannot sleep!
 Or else our crew is mutinous, arrayed
 Against us, and the mandate is delayed.

But when the forces that rebelled
 Are satisfied or quelled;
 When sails are trimmed to catch the merry wind,
 And billows dance before and foam behind;
 Free, free at last from tumult and distraction
 Of pleasure beckoned and of pain repelled,—
 Free from ourselves and disciplined for action,—
 We break the seal of destiny, to find
 The bourne or venture for our cruise designed,
 Then, at that very moment, hark! a cry
 On deck; and then a silence, as of breath
 Held. In the offing, low against the sky,
 Hoves thy black flag! . . . Therefore I hate
 thee, Death!*

* See Note A.

The Inquest

NOT labour kills us ; no, nor joy :
 The incredulity and frown,
 The interference and annoy,
 The small attritions wear us down.

The little gnat-like buzzings shrill,
 The hurdy-gurdies of the street,
 The common curses of the will—
 These wrap the cerements round our feet.

And more than all, the look askance
 Of loving souls that cannot gauge
 The numbing touch of circumstance,
 The heavy toll of heritage.

It is not Death, but Life that slays:
 The night less mountainously lies
 Upon our lids, than foolish day's
 Importunate futilities !

Col. Gerard Noel Money, C.B.

HADST thou not died
I would not ask to ride
By Death's pale side ;
 But since thou art a corse,
 I ride by his white horse
And wish Life's black battalions woe betide !

Thou in no case
Wert servant of disgrace,
But ever sett'st thy face
 With that much merrier part
 Of honour and good heart :
Therefore with thee and Death I choose to pace.

Thomas Ashe

IN disappointed loneliness
 A gentle bard has passed away,
 Who for no guerdon would betray
 The mission of a bard,—to bless;
 Too late, too late shall we confess
 We need the rills of song that stray
 With fringe of flowerets faintly gay,
 Not only streams of strain and stress.

But now our jaded taste disdains
 Forget-me-not and water-cress,
 The rose of cultivated pains
 And passions to our lips we press,
 We scarcely notice when there wanes
 A soul of simple tenderness.

Jan., 1890

Beside a Grave

THOU hast passed away into darkness,
 No more may I see thy face,
 And the dead world in its starkness
 Is my appointed place.

What art thou, dear? An essence,
 A vapour, a nothing? Or one
 Absorbed in a mightier Presence,
 A sun swallowed up by a sun?

What wert thou, dear, when beside me
 Thy feet kept an equal pace
 With mine? A dream to deride me
 With false, ephemeral grace?

Had love then his final fruition?
 Is blossoming-time outwrought?
 Was the worth of our intuition
 Of immortality nought?

“The Days that are no more”

THE torpid night has filled the languid air
 With breath of roses lulled with dew to sleep,
 The murmurous bees are housed in honeyed lair,
 And nothing wakes except the hearts that weep.

O days that are no more, seen down long aisles
 And avenues of time, where trembling light
 Dimples the world with universal smiles,
 In home, in childhood, when all care was slight ;

O days that are no more, come yet again !
 Come with your snowy drapery and your dream !
 Waft me the fragrance of your summer rain,
 Bring me your flowers, unveil your morning beam !

Come yet again ! . . . But there shall never be
 Such days again ; for these no sweetness store,
 These do not come with happiness to me,
 These are not like the days that are no more !

Rest

SOMETIMES it seems true happiness can dwell
 Only where thought and contemplation weave
 Uninterrupted webs; to take our leave
 For ever of the world in cloistered cell,
 With no distraction save the solemn bell
 That summons dead and living; not to grieve
 For slaughtered summer-times beyond reprieve,
 And all the ill that never can be well;

Each day to worship at the heavenly throne,
 Which for our weakling sense we symbolise
 By the proportioned stateliness of stone,—
 Long glades of column and of arch, that rise
 All-resonant with untumultuous tone;—
 Sometimes this seems the only worthy prize.

“ He that is without Sin ”

WHAT is her value if Affection stint
 Her confidence, for every dubious deed?
 What is a cord if it should snap at need?
 Or shield, if it should shatter at a dint?
 Go, pious! tithe your cummin and your mint,—
 The cheap rebuke, love sacrificed to creed,—
 And gather up your skirts with careful heed,—
 Lest precious self should catch an evil hint!

Fair saints, that are more Christ-like than the Christ,
 More virgin than the Maid Immaculate,
 Whose kisses and embraces are unpriced,
 Save by an offer of the marriage state,
 The eye that watches is the eye enticed!
 The sins men hunt they never truly hate.

Any Father to Any Son

FOR thee a crown of thorns I wear,
 And thought imperative constrains
 My labouring heart for thee to bear
 The travail of a woman's pains ;

For with intolerable preságe
 Of all the amazements of thy life,
 The pits of ancient woe I guage,
 The vast impediments of strife ;

Or else in dreadful dreaming cast,
 I see thy form before me fly,
 By prescience never overpast
 Nor fleetest foot that love can ply.

Still as thy shadow must I run,
 When all the shadows fall behind,
 And in the rich seductive sun
 Thou to the darker bars art blind.

Children

WATCH with me and listen
 By the sweet enchanted bowers,
 Where the children dance with children, hand in
 hand!
 Bright their blue eyes glisten
 Like the dew-besprinkled flowers,
 When the morning stoops to kiss the sleeping land!

Hear the laughter flowing,
 Like a brook's melodious bubble,
 From the happy heart of boy and girl at play!
 Clouds o'erhead are blowing
 That are charged with tears of trouble;
 But the winds of God shall drive them on, to-day.

Dancing to the measure
 Of benignant music's rapture,
 How the melody their eagerness controls!
 Lo! the sprite of pleasure
 We so vainly strive to capture
 Is the playmate and companion of their souls!

Stodham Woods

I CANNOT tell where I have been,
 This sweet fore-noon, with tempered tune,
 Or worthy of the scene.

This is the time when fresh primroses
 Are in the forefront of Spring posies,
 And nestling down between their groups
 The violet stoops,
 While still along the byway shine
 Spring's natal stars, the celandine.

Though the blackthorn's bloom is set,
 Braving the chill breeze's bite
 With blossom white,
 Bracken-curles are stubborn yet!
 Save those splashes of pale flowers,
 Born in March, of April-showers,
 The woods are brown, and dead leaves choke the
 bowers.

So Nature seems to hesitate
 Ere she assume her summer state;
 Such buds are there that long to bloom,
 Such glows impatient of the gloom;
 So much there seems in act to sing,
 Such wistfulness, such preluding!

I wandered where these pleasures meet ;
The mossy path beneath my feet
As in a girdle clasped the hill,
Along whose base a tinkling rill
 With gentle flood
Was whispering to the whispering wood.

Perchance it fears the open field,
 That stretches to the seaward Downs,
And seeks in forest arms to shield
 Its shyness from the proffered crowns,
The sun-enamelled green and gold,
Of meadows amorously bold.

Perchance—But ah ! my spirit faints
In presence of these woodland saints !
Divinity of flower and tree,
And musing water's minstrelsy,
 The building bird's hilarity,
The thrill, the frolic, and the glee,—
 With these we hold no parity !
They foil the bards that master me !

The Rother

O RIVER, flowing by the house
 Where dwells my patient mother,
 I bend to thee, I whisper close,—
 Oh hear me, whispering Rother !

Faster than thou the time has slid
 Since first I strolled beside thee,
 But thou hast journeyed as God bid
 And therefore joys betide thee !

While I have run a wayward course ;
 My moods have kept no season ;
 Breaking the channel of my source
 To follow Rhyme and Reason !

But thou, where cattle love to browse
 And doves call one another,
 Flow on, dear river, by the house
 Where dwells my patient mother !

Ingens Aequor

“The huge various monotonies, the fervent and fluent colours, the vast limits, the fresh sonorous strength, the certain confusion and tumultuous law, the sense of windy and weltering space, the intense refraction of shadow and light, the crowded life and inanimate intricacy, the patience and the passion of the sea.—A. C. SWINBURNE. *“Essay on William Blake.”*”

COME hither, O exquisite thought !
 Come hither, O splendour of words !
 Let a texture be woven and wrought,
 Not to picture the flocks and the herds,
 Not to celebrate forest or mead,
 The loitering lapse of the rill,
 The lisp of the breeze in the reed,
 Or the gush of the wind on the hill,
 The crypt of the midnight empearled
 With the stars and the planets above,
 The boisterous fame of the world,
 Or the passionate silence of love,—
 But in praise of the Sea ; that immense
 And vague glory of waters amassed ;
 That beauty transcending the sense,
 Like a mirage, elusive and vast ;
 With shadow and image of cloud,
 That palpitate, purple or pale,

With furrows of emerald, ploughed
 By the murmuring, odorous gale;
 With marvel of sunlight and mist,
 With magic of mutable form,
 With music of "wild waves whist,"
 And slow subsidence of storm.

O chiming monotonous change!
 O changeless melodious beat!
 O reflux rhythmic range
 Of fairy invisible feet!
 The nations may traverse and trace
 A populous path o'er the wave,
 And with militant messages lace
 The floor of the mariner's grave;
 The peaks of the virginal snows
 May be pierced for the clambering car;
 The cleavage of ocean will close,
 And his wounds have a transient scar!
 The groves of the forest may fall,
 The rivers grow black with the shame
 Of their burden, the skies with their pall
 Of the sulphurous refuse of flame;
 War may trample o'er hill and o'er dale,
 Trade may bruise all the fields with her tread,
 The billow records not the trail
 Of humanity, living or dead!
 Unpolluted are channel and main,
 Their breezes are fragrant and free;
 Man cannot impress with his pain
 The fugitive foam of the sea!

At Cimiez

THESE olive-woods and orange-groves,
 These tulips, harlequins of glee,
 Yon flecks of cloud, like woolly droves,
 Across the blue immensity,—

This ancient ilex, sombre green,
 The hill where stood Diana's shrine,
 The shimmering waters' distant sheen,—
 Touch they your heart? They cannot mine!

Man takes not Nature for his Saint,
 Her beauty is no more his creed;
 The very breezes bear a taint
 Of his insatiable greed.

As gladly, gluttonous for gain,
 He digs the flowers and fells the trees,
 So would he foul the sapphired main
 Or tear the heavenly tapestries!

Queen Guenevere's Maying

IN Maytime, merry Maytime,
 When freshest flowers are springing,
 And blithest birds are singing
By night-time and by daytime,
 Old love renews beginning,
In Maytime, in Maytime,
The lusty lovers' playtime.

The North, from black embrasure
 Of tempest, vainly hurled
The winter's white erasure
 Across the summer world.

For Maytime, merry Maytime,
 Is pranked with greens and yellows,
 And bird with bird enfellows
By night-time and by daytime ;
 New love to marriage mellows,
In Maytime, in Maytime,
The lusty lovers' playtime.

An Impression

A SOUND of the sea is in my ears,
Of the sea that knows no rest ;
His muttering boughs the willow rears,
For a wind is in the west.

A wind was born in the western sky
When the day was wed to night,
For bridals and birth the torch flared high
In the day-god's halls of light.

I stand on the river-shore alone,
And I gaze on the lordly scene,
On vanishing sun, and rising moon,
And the sable girth between.

Perfume

IN love's delightful hours
We passed the mignonette
And plucked the blue-eyed flowers
That bade us Not Forget;

But now the blue-eyed flowers
We pass and we forget;
The scent of those dear hours
Comes back with mignonette!

A Ballad of Cornwall*

SIR TRISTRAM lay by a well,
 Making sad moan;
 Fast his tears fell;
 For wild the wood through,
 Stricken with shrewd
 Sorrow he ran,
 When he deemed her untrue—
 La Beale Isoud!
 For he loved her alone.

So as he lay
 Wasted and wan,
 Scarce like a man,
 Pricking that way
 His lady-love came,
 With her damsels around,
 And her face all aflame
 With the breezes of May;
 While a brachet beside her
 Still bayed the fair rider,
 Still leaped up and bayed her;
 A small scenting hound
 That Sir Tristram purveyed her.

* See Note B.

So she rode on ;
 But the brachet behind
 Hung snuffing the wind ;
 Till seeking and crying
 Faster and faster,
 Beside the well lying
 She found her dear master !
 Then licking his ears
 And cheeks wet with tears,
 For joy never resting,
 Kept whining and questing.

Isoud (returned,
 Seeking her hound)
 Soon as she learned
 Tristram was found,
 Straightway alighting,
 Fell in a swoond.

When, by her lover
 Won to recover,
 Isoud was lying
 Pale and complying,
 Who shall the greeting
 Tell of their meeting?
 Joy, by no tongue
 E'er to be sung,
 Passed in that plighting!

Thus while they dallied,
 Forth the wood sallied
 An horrible libbard, and bare
 The brachet away to his lair !

The Riddle

LOVE, o'er-fond of straying,
Met with Kitty maying,—
Straight began this saying :

“ Maiden, tell me truly
What is Love ? ”

 And duly
Kitty made reply :

“ Ask of girls unruly !
Nought of Love know I ! ”

Then said he :

 “ Beseech you
Tarry while I teach you ! ”

On a bank sat Kitty,
While he sang this ditty :

“ Kin to all, yet kinless !
Sin of all, yet sinless !
Passion's purple festal !
Passion's proudest vestal !
Artist that can mould you
Till the selves that hold you
No more form nor fold you !

Both divine and human ;
 Far to seek, yet common ;
 Babbled of the many,
 Hardly known of any !
 Waving wings of feather,
 Yet with strength to tether
 Life and Death together !”

While he sang these snatches,
 Down from russet thatches
 Sparrows fly and buntings ;
 Martins, swifts, and swallows,
 Whom the South wind follows,
 Leave their mazy huntings ;
 Warblers crowd the willows ;
 While along the shallows
 Trouts and graylings glisten ;
 Larks on cloudy billows,
 Softly as on pillows,
 Lay their songs, to listen !

Every stalk of clover
 Turns its head to hear him ;
 Buttercups lean over,
 Striving to be near him ;
 Foxglove, fringing hedges,
 Tilts her fairy flagon,
 While from leafy ledges
 Butterfly and dragon
 Lean, and emmet-peoples
 (Careless now of thrushes),
 Whom the grass o'er-steepled,
 Perch on reeds and rushes !

Paddock, newt, and lizard,
 Mole and vole and rabbit
 Fear no more the wizard
 Snake in emerald habit;
 Charmed he lies; but drowsing
 Owls in eyries waken;
 While the fields of browsing
 Cattle are forsaken!
 Creatures throng delighted,—
 Running, creeping, winging! . . .
 Only Kitty slighted
 Love's old-fashioned singing!

She alone, that ditty
 Hearing, dared to flout it;
 "Love?" she cried: "'tis pity
 Nought you know about it!'

The Eternal Conflict*

Luis

REFINED and penetrated
 By God's refulgent fire,
 In body separated,
 Our spirits shall aspire,
 In holy love embracing,
 The mystic mount to climb,
 Beyond the sin enchasing,
 Beyond the reach of Time ;
 Until those purple petals
 Round Love Divine involved,
 Intense as molten metals,
 Saints, martyrs, and absolved,
 In Paradise expanding,
 All pain with peace allay,
 That passes understanding,
 And none can take away !

Pepita

Alas ! I cannot follow
 Your spirit in its flight !
 Such Love to me seems hollow
 And empty of delight !

* See Note C.

I love your very vesture,
Your shadow and your name;
I love your voice and gesture,—
Your *self!* and feel no shame!
The folly of my senses
Can Death alone efface!
For Love in fond offences
Finds sacramental grace!
My heart, though clayed and clodded,
Has flowered without a stain!
Pepita disembodied
Must be Pepita slain!

The Homily*

Who preaches Love is wrong
No flower must ever see,
Nor hear the song-bird's song
Deride his homily !

Who teaches Love was made
Accurs'd, must never be
Where all the summer glade
Derides his homily !

How foolish Man's arraignment
Of Love, whose strength of mirth
Enforces an enchainment
On the sorrow of the Earth !

* See Note C.

Love at First Sight

Love at first sight, be true
Once, in the world's despite!
Once, in a season due,
Souls that are kin unite!
Once let our hearts pursue
Trace of a lost delight!
Love at first sight, be true!
Love at the first sweet sight!

Love as of old appear!
Now, though the world be cold!
Now, though the cynic sneer,
Soul into soul enfold!
Now to the world endear
Passion instead of gold!
Love as of old appear!
Love, as they loved of old!

Pure Imagination

SHE lies in her little room
And all around her creep
The quietness and gloom
And the sacredness of sleep.

My spirit breaks the seals
Of jealous night's duress,
And close beside her steals
To watch her loveliness.

There droops her flower-like head,
Petalled and rayed with curls!
An aster of golden-red
The leafage of night enfurls!

Ah me! She lies in her couch
Like a babe on its mother's breast;
And my spirit is fain to crouch
Back to its lone unrest.

The Singer's Search

IN vain o'er all the land I wander
 Still far from me my darling hies,
 In vain I sing my ditties tender,
 I hear but echo's mocking cries!
 Ah! lonely, lonely through the world I wander;
 Red o'er the hills I see the morning rise,
 And happy creatures wake, Love's hours to squander,
 Till charmed to sleep, by night's enchanting eyes;
 Still lonely, lonely through the world I wander,
 And like a shadow, Love before me flies!

In vain I search through every city,
 Still far from me my darling hies;
 In vain I sing my tender ditty,
 She never to my voice replies!
 Ah! lonely, lonely through the sleepless city,
 Amid the jostling crowd a minstrel sighs;
 The seekers after pleasure gaze with pity,
 The seekers after wealth with scornful eyes;
 Still lonely, lonely through the sleepless city
 I follow Love, and Love before me flies.

At Last

At last, my love, thou comest, though so late ;
Upon thy bosom I retrieve some hours ;
There is a scent again of summer flowers,
Surviving the first breath of winter's hate :
Thy voice that never chides me, though ingrate,
Is like the song of joy-birds in their bowers
Not yet deserted, though the blossom showers,
And all the gadding breezes whisper Fate.

Yet, O my love, where wert thou in the days
When I was searching all the summer long
On sultry plains and barren mountain ways ?
Why did I never hear thy trysting song ?
Ah ! long, lost hours, worn out in sad amaze !
Scarce for Time's gift can I forgive his wrong !

Nellie

WHEN shadows are breaking
And dawn is at hand,
When morning is making
New mirth in the land,
No fairer it brightens
Than, pure of all blame,
The soul that enlightens
Your face with its flame!

The world, vainly asking,
May peer in your eyes
For modesty masking
Or truth in disguise;
There innocence dwelling
Returns, like a dove
The serpent repelling,
A look full of love!

Moieties

It seems most strange that thou and I
Should not have met in years gone by;
It seems most strange that souls so mated
To long disunion should be fated.

Few, few indeed, dare trust their bark
Upon life's waters deep and dark
With hope to find a land of rest,
An isle by Cytherea blest.

Perhaps few need or seek for more
Than coasting by their native shore,
Where they may gain in many a cove
Safe anchor, unpretentious love !

The few that great ideals cherish
On mountains and in deserts perish,
Fringed by delusive herbs and trees,
That beckon to the homeless seas.

Upon the sand they thrust their prow,
They stake life's treasure on the throw;
The hungry sea comes up behind,
Before them shrieks the desert wind !

How happy, if on waste or mountain
An unsuspected vale or fountain
The wanderer find ! More happy he,
If there he meet a nymph like thee ;

Who never learnt 'neath Christian spires
The virtue of concealed desires,
Nor tainted with a careful coldness
The purity of true love's boldness ;

Nor yet destroyed love's heavenly fruit
By plucking up his earthly root,
Nor set up Principle above
The larger principle of Love !

Predestination*

Ah yes! Ah yes! I had my dream!
 Fantastical creations!
 Down roaring street, by rustic stream,
 In fairy habitations!

Some bore a mild and modest mien,
 And some behaved more lightly,
 And others hovered just between
 The saintly and the sprightly.

But God, to guard the senses, set
 A form of finer essence
 Within my heart; before we met
 I learnt to love your presence!

Deep calls to deep and flame to flame!
 Afar, my spirit owned you;
 I saw you long before you came,
 And welcomed and enthroned you!

* See Note C.

Soul to Soul

THESE eyes where laughing Loves recline,
 These lips that just divided pout
 To let the fluttering kisses out,
 Like birds from Love's own shrine,—
 To pain or please
 You gave me these ;
 But still I ask, will You be mine ?
 In weal or woe, in Love's eternal bond,
 In life and death, and all that lies beyond,
 Will You be mine ?

These glances that so ardent shine,
 These words that come with reckless rout
 And rush of passion thronging out,
 Sweet vows at Love's own shrine,—
 To pain or please
 You give me these ;
 But still I ask, will You be mine ?
 In weal or woe, in Love's eternal bond,
 In life and death, and all that lies beyond,
 Will You be mine ?

For Ever

I joy or grieve
 Alone for thee!
Like birds in mating feather,
 When nests they weave
 In wonted tree,
Our spirits cleave
 Together!

Though death removes
 And grants no grace
To all love's dear endeavour,
 It still behooves
 My soul to chase
My only love's
 For ever!

Aliquid Amari

I HEARD a sailor singing, as he leaned against the
 shrouds;
 The ocean fled beneath him and above him flew
 the clouds;
 And the breezes moaned in answer, and the voices
 of the main:
 "However happy Love may be, the core of Love
 is pain."

The breezes learnt the burden, and murmured to
 the land;
 The sailor's wife was sitting in her cottage by the
 strand;
 And when she heard them whisper, her heart replied
 again:
 "However happy Love may be, the core of Love
 is pain."

They left the woman weeping and hurried to the
 town,
 Where gallant lads and ladies were walking up and
 down;
 To each they told their message, and all confessed
 it plain:
 "However happy Love may be, the core of Love
 is pain."

Then hearken, all ye lovers! Be mindful, when
ye meet,
To promise nought or little ere this proverb ye
repeat;
Ye surely shall have proof thereof; ye shall not
speak in vain:
“However happy Love may be, the core of Love
is pain.”

Twilight in London

I HAVE heard the ocean's cadence
 Along the Eastern shore,
 I have heard the winds contending
 In the forest of Glen More;
 I have heard the throstle fluting
 Over his hawthorn nest,
 And the nightingale disputing
 With the sorrow in her breast:
 But oft have I found more sweet
 The thunder and beat
 Of a London street;
 The thunder and beat
 Where the cross-ways meet,
 When the lamps are lit, in a London street.

I have heard a Spirit, hidden
 Within that hollow roar,
 Softer than warbler wooing,
 Louder than winds at war;
 I have heard the sound assurgent
 Over the city's moan,
 And the World's confusion merging
 In Love's diviner tone;
 Ah! then have I found them sweet,
 The thunder and beat
 Of a London street;
 The thunder and beat
 Where the cross-ways meet,
 When the lamps are lit, in a London street.

Fervaal*

HIGHER and higher, O Human Race,
 The Law of Sex shall lead thee on;
 The glory of the Eternal Face,—
 The Father, Mother, and the Son.

Thou shalt not leave the joy behind,
 But wilful pleasure shall grow less,
 When thou hast learnt the impassioned mind
 Of Love in all his loveliness;

When thou from dread of lust art free,
 The secret of Religion's rule,
 When thou hast lawful liberty
 And all thy teachers are at school.

The Woman-Spirit leads the Man;
 Higher and higher I see them climb,
 The pilgrims of a trackless plan,
 Among the folded hills of Time.

* See Note D.

Epitaphs

Dante

CROONING Earth has cradled well
 Me that plunged to crypts of Hell,
 Me that climbed the heavenly dome,
 Wearing out and welcomed home.

Keats

Not "in water,"—but the flood
 That with passionate impulse beats!
 Every youthful poet's blood
 Spells the sacred name of Keats.

A Fool

Stranger, stay! yet shed no tear;
 For a fool lies buried here;
 Yet, since he unfinished lies,
 God in time may make him wise.

A Wise Man

Stranger, weep! Beneath this stone
Lies a man for knowledge known :
Yet, since he was wholly wise,
God forbade him Paradise.

A Fair Woman

In this green chest is laid away
The fairest frock she ever wore ;
It clothed her both by night and day,
And none shall wear it evermore.

An Infant

This sweet infant never knew
What a woman's lips can do!
Yet a woman's lips no less
Brought him to this loneliness.

A Wife

Once I learnt in wilful hour
How to vex him ; still I keep,
Now unwilfully, my power :
Every day he comes to weep.

A Soul

Underneath this turvéd mould
Lies a creature late unsouled :
Birds of paradise contrive
Ill in crystal cage to thrive.

A Waif

Hither was she brought unknown ;
Now to love and knowledge grown,
She has journeyed back alone.

Beaten

In the arms of Death I curled,
Unadjusted to the World :
All too fierce the World has proved,
Because I loved, because I loved.

The Nut-Brown Maid*

Now every day, 'tis fashion's way,
 It is both writ and said,
 That love is scathe, and woman's faith
 Is utterly decay'd;
 Yet have there been good women seen
 Who never falsely play'd,
 And first and best before the rest
 Record the Nut-brown Maid;
 Who, when her love had come to prove
 Her truth, and make his moan,
 Would not depart, for in her heart
 She loved but him alone.

Said he, " Dear heart, now must we part,
 Or else great harm shall grow;
 My foes are nigh and I must die
 A shameful death, I trow,
 Or else must flee—the one must be,
 None other way I know,
 But to withdraw as an outlaw,
 And take me to my bow;
 Wherefore adieu, my own heart true;
 None other rede I can,
 But I must to the greenwood go
 Alone, a banished man."

* See Note E.

She

"O God, what is this worldè's bliss
 That changeth as the moon !
 My summer's day in lusty May
 Is darked before the noon !
 Farewell, ye say? Ah, nay! ah, nay!
 Why will ye be unkind?
 If it is so that ye will go,
 I will not stay behind;
 But woe and bliss as reason is
 Will share with you anone;
 For in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"Nay, I you rede to take good heed
 What men will think and say,
 If it be told of young and old
 That ye have gone away;
 They'll blame your ill and wanton will,
 Your lack of maiden pride,
 If ye run out without a doubt
 With outlawed men to bide.
 Rather than ye should thus for me
 Receive the neighbours' ban,
 Forth will I to the greenwood go
 Alone, a banished man."

She

"Though it be sung of old and young
 That I have lost my fame,

Theirs be the charge that speaks so large
 In hurting of my name ;
 For I will prove that faithful love
 It is devoid of shame ;
 From your distress and heaviness
 To shrink would be the blame ;
 Who would deny to do as I,
 True lovers they are none,
 But in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"The thorny ways, the deep vallèys,
 I dread ye'll not sustain,
 None other house but leaves and boughs
 In snow and frost and rain.
 No homely care, no wholesome fare,
 No comfortable wine ;
 No sheets so clean to lie between,
 Of finest linen twine ;
 The cold and heat and evil meat
 Will make you weak and wan,
 So I must to the greenwood go
 Alone, a banished man."

She

"But ye have craft to shoot a shaft
 And slay the forest deer ;
 And who would sup from better cup
 Than river-water clear ?

My health is sure, I shall endure,
 And comfort find in this,
 That where ye be, meseems, pardie,
 I cannot fare amiss!
 Without more speech I you beseech
 That we were soon agone,
 For in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"All men are free without pitie
 An outlawed man to bind,
 Hangèd to be upon a tree,
 And waver in the wind;
 If foes surround (whom God confound!),
 What rescue could ye find?
 Forsooth, I trow, you and your bow
 For fear would draw behind;
 Your heart would fail and not avail
 To counsel any plan;
 Hence will I to the greenwood go
 Alone, a banished man."

She

"Truly ye spoke that women folk
 But feeble are in fight,
 Yet for your sake my love will make
 Me bold as any knight,
 And if your foes should round you close,
 And threaten day or night,

I would withstand with bow in hand
 To grieve them as I might.
 But oh! to part, it makes my heart
 As cold as any stone,
 For in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"Ye must do more, dear heart, before
 I let you go with me,
 Your hair must sheer above your ear,
 Your kirtle by the knee,
 If bow in hand ye would withstand
 Our foeman, if need be.
 And since this night, before the light,
 To woodward must I flee,
 If go ye will, all this fulfil
 As shortly as ye can,
 Else will I to the greenwood go
 Alone, a banished man."

She

"This is to do much more for you
 Than 'longs to womanhede ;
 Scant kirtle wear and short my hair,
 To pull a bow at need !
 O mother dear, I only fear
 Your sorrow for the deed !
 But now, adieu ! I must ensue
 Where love and fortune lead !

Quick, let us flee, for yonder, see,
 The night has nearly flown!
 And in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"A baron's child to be beguil'd
 In forest wild to wend,
 With outlaws roam and leave your home,
 Almighty God forfend!
 I'm but a squire, and poor my sire,
 To forest let me speed,
 Lest ye should say, another day,
 That by my cursèd deed
 Ye were betray'd; wherefore, dear maid,
 The best rede that I can
 Is that I to the greenwood go
 Alone, a banished man."

She

"Whate'er befall, I never shall
 Of this thing you upbraid,
 But if ye go and leave me so,
 Then ye have me betray'd;
 For though that I of ancestry
 A baron's daughter be,
 Yet have ye proved how I you loved,
 A squire of low degree,
 And still shall do—to die for you
 If there be need anone,
 For in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"Mine own dear love, I see you prove
 That ye be kind and true,
 Of maid or wife, in all my life,
 The best I ever knew!
 Be merry and glad, be no more sad!
 The case is changed anew;
 For it were ruth that for your truth
 Ye should have cause to rue;
 Be not dismay'd, whate'er I said
 To you when I began!
 I will not to the greenwood go,
 I am no banished man!"

She

"These tidings be more glad to me,
 Than to be made a queen!
 If I were sure they should endure;
 Yet it is often seen
 That men will break the vows they make
 In times of love or spleen;
 I fear some guile; ye shape some wile
 To steal from me, I ween;
 Then sadder state would be my fate
 And I more woe-begone;
 For in my mind of all mankind
 I love but you alone."

He

"Your dread may end, for God forfend
 That I should do outrage

To your fair fame, or ever shame
 Your noble lineage ;
 Now understand, to Westmoreland,
 Where is mine heritage,
 I will you bring, and with a ring—
 True wedlock's holy gage—
 I will you take and lady make
 As shortly as I can,
 For you have won a baron's son,
 And not a banished man ! ”

Here may we see that women be
 In love meek, staunch, and kind ;
 Let never men accuse them then
 Of variable mind,
 But rather pray to God we may
 To them be true inclin'd,
 Since God oft proves the folk he loves,
 True charity to find ;
 And since men would that women should
 Be meek to them, each one,
 Much more ought they God's will obey,
 And serve but Him alone.

“Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan.”

GOETHE. *The last words in “Faust.”*

FOLLOW the Woman Spirit! Onward and onward
soar,
Far from the chasing Demons! Hark to their
baffled roar!
Follow the Woman Spirit, thorough the noxious
night,
Follow her, like the swallow, seeking for love and
light!

Let not the World entice thee! Push all its hands
aside!
Let this alone suffice thee; follow thy destined
bride!
There is none other guidance, there is none other
goal;
Follow her still-receding, heavenly-leading Soul!

Foulness and Folly pursue thee; fiercer than either,
Fame!
Envy, Hatred, and Malice,—this is his triple name!
Flee, flee away for ever! Thorough the noxious
night
Follow the Woman Spirit, seeking for Love and
Light!

NOTES

A

Mors, morituri te salutamus.

The verb "to hove" is no doubt a little archaic. Perhaps it dropped out of use from the natural confusion with the preterite of "heave" (which I have used on page 16), corresponding with that between "lay" and the preterite of "lie." "Hove" is connected with "hover." It is constantly used by Malory; and Gower, Chaucer, and Spenser employ it. It seems to me too good a word to be lost—by poets, at least.

B

A Ballad of Cornwall.

See Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Bk. IX., ch. xxi. (Globe Edition).

C

The Eternal Conflict, The Homily and Predestination.

Written for the Opera "Pepita Jiménez," composed by Señor Albeniz, performed at Prague in 1897, and founded on Juan Valera's novel of that name, first made known in England by Mr. Coventry Patmore in his *Religio Poetæ*.

D

Fervaal.

The Opera by Vincent d'Indy. My verses are intended for an epitome of the meaning of this great work, which has never appeared in England.

The Nut-Brown Maid.

I have formed my version of this splendid old ballad from Bishop Percy's *Reliques* (Dodsley, 1765). As he gives it, it is very confused, unsuited to modern taste, and obsolete in pronunciation and rhyme. My aim has been to diminish these obstacles to the reader's enjoyment without destroying the quaint beauty of the original. Prof. Courthope says that the germ of the poem is contained in a pastoral dialogue by Robert Henryson, entitled "Robene and Makyne" (*History of English Poetry*, Macmillan, 1897. Vol. I., p. 369). It was first printed in *Arnolde's Chronicle*, a book supposed to have been published about 1521. It was reprinted in the *Muse's Mercury* in 1707, where it was described as "near 300 years old." Prof. Courthope, however, considers that it is "certainly a composition not later than the early part of the sixteenth century" (*Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 57). It was again reprinted in the *Prolusions* in 1760, the editor of which collated the versions of two editions of *Arnolde's Chronicle*; and finally Bishop Percy compared the *Prolusions* with a third edition of the *Chronicle* in Cambridge University Library.

The traditional connection of the Nut-Brown Maid with Henry Clifford, Wordsworth's famous Shepherd Lord (see his *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle*), is very curious, and it would be extremely interesting to trace its origin. Wordsworth makes the lady a fairy, or what authority he does not say (see the First Canto of *The White Doe of Rylstone* and the Notes in Macmillan's Complete Edition, 1893). The whole tale of the vendetta between Clifford's family and the Warwicks, of his father's death at the battle of Towton (see Shakespeare's *Henry VI*) and of his own life down to the days of Bosworth Field, Brougham Castle, and Barden Tower, is one of the most romantic in history. In 1894 an Opera on this subject written by me, and composed by Señor Albeniz, was performed at Barcelona.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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