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THE MESSAGE TO THE DEAD.

"Messages from the Living to the Dead are not uncommon in the Highlands. The Gael have such a ceaseless consciousness of Immortality, that their departed friends are considered as merely absent for a time; and permitted to relieve the hours of separation by occasional intercourse with the objects of their earliest affection."

See the Notes to Mrs Brunton's "Discipline."

THOU'RT passing hence, my brother!
Oh! my earliest friend, farewell!
Thou'rt leaving me without thy voice,
In a lonely home to dwell;
And from the hills, and from the hearth,
And from the household tree,
With thee departs the lingering mirth,
The brightness goes with thee.

But thou, my friend, my brother!
Thou'rt speeding to the shore
Where the dirge-like tone of parting words,
Shall smite the soul no more!
And thou wilt see our holy dead,
The lost on earth and main;
Into the sheaf of kindred hearts
Thou wilt be bound again!

Tell thou our friend of boyhood,
That yet his name is heard
On the blue mountains, whence his youth
Pass'd like a swift bright bird.
The light of his exulting brow,
The vision of his glee,
Are on me still—oh! still I trust
That smile again to see.

And tell our fair young sister,
The rose cut down in spring,
That yet my gushing soul is fill'd
With lays she loved to sing.
Her soft deep eyes look through my dreams,
Tender and sadly sweet;
Tell her my heart within me burns
Once more that gaze to meet!

And tell our white-hair'd father,
That in the paths he trode,
The child he loved, the last on earth,
Yet walks, and worships God.
Say, that his last fond blessing yet
Rests on my soul like dew,
And by its hallowing might I trust
Once more his face to view.

And tell our gentle mother,
That o'er her grave I pour
The sorrows of my spirit forth,
As on her breast of yore!
Happy thou art, that soon, how soon!
Our good and bright will see;
Oh! brother, brother! may I dwell
Ere long with them and thee!

F. H.

THE TWO VOICES.

Death and its twofold aspect:—Wintery, one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from Hope and Joy shut out:
The other, which the ray divine hath touch'd,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring.
WORDSWORTH.

Two solemn voices, in a funeral strain,
Met, as rich sunbeams and dark bursts of rain
Meet in the sky:
"Thou art gone hence!" one sang:—"Our light is flown,
Our Beautiful, that seem'd too much our own,
Ever to die!

"Thou art gone hence! Our joyous hills among
Never again to pour thy soul in song,
When spring-flowers rise!
Never the friend's familiar step to meet,
With loving laughter, and the welcome sweet
Of thy glad eyes."

"Thou art gone home, gone home!" Then high and clear
Warbled that other voice, "Thou hast no tears
Again to shed!
Never to fold the robe o'er secret pain,—
Never, weigh'd down by memory's clouds again,
To bow thy head.

"Thou art gone home!—Oh! early crown'd and blest!
Where could the love of that deep heart find rest
With aught below?
Thou must have seen rich dream by dream decay,
All the bright rose-leaves drop from life away—
Thrice blest to go!"

Yet sigh'd again that breeze-like voice of grief—
"Thou art gone hence! Alas! that aught so brief,
So loved should be!
Thou tak'st our summer hence!—the flower, the tone,
The music of our being, all in one
Depart with thee!

"Fair form, young spirit, morning-vision fled!
Can'st *thou* be of the dead, the awful dead?
The dark unknown?
Yes! to the dwelling where no footsteps fall,
Never again to light up hearth or hall,
Thy smile is gone!"

"Home, home!" once more th' exulting voice arose:
"Thou art gone home! from that divine repose
Never to roam!
Never to say farewell,—to weep in vain,—
To read of change in eyes beloved again;
Thou art gone home!

"By the bright waters now thy lot is cast;
Joy for thee, happy Friend!—thy bark hath past
The rough sea's foam.
Now the long yearnings of thy soul are still'd;
Home, home! thy peace is won, thy heart is fill'd,
Thou art gone home!"

TASSO'S CORONATION.*

A crown of victory! a triumphal song!
Oh! call some friend, upon whose pitying heart
The weary one may calmly sink to rest;
Let some kind voice, beside his lowly couch,
Pour the last prayer for mortal agony.

A trumpet's note is in the sky, in the glorious Roman sky,
Whose dome hath rung, so many an age, to the voice of Victory;
There is crowding to the Capitol, th' imperial streets along,
For again a conqueror must be crown'd,—a kingly child of song.

Yet his chariot lingers,
Yet around his home
Broods a shadow silently,
'Midst the joy of Rome.

A thousand thousand laurel-boughs are waving wide and far,
To shed out their triumphal gleams around his rolling car;
A thousand haunts of olden gods have given their wealth of flowers,
To scatter o'er his path of fame bright hues in gem-like showers.

Peace! within his chamber,
Low the mighty lies,
With a cloud of dreams on his noble brow,
And a wandering in his eyes.

Sing, sing for Him, the Lord of song, for him whose rushing strain
In mastery o'er the spirit sweeps, like a strong wind o'er the main!
Whose voice lives deep in burning hearts, for ever there to dwell,
As a full-toned Oracle's enshrined in a temple's holiest cell.

Yes, for him, the victor,
Sing—but low, sing low!
A soft, sad miserere chaunt,
For a soul about to go!

The sun, the sun of Italy is pouring o'er his way,
Where the old three hundred triumphs moved, a flood of golden day;
Streaming through every haughty arch of the Cæsars' past renown—
Bring forth, in that exulting light, the conqueror for his crown!

Shut the proud bright sunshine
From the fading sight!
There needs no ray by the bed of death,
Save the holy taper's light.

The wreath is twined—the way is strewn—the lordly train are met—
The streets are hung with coronals—why stays the minstrel yet?
Shout! as an army shouts in joy around a royal chief—
Bring forth the bard of chivalry, the bard of love and grief!

Silence!—forth we bring him,
In his last array;
From love and grief the freed, the flown—
Way for the bier—make way!

F. H.

* Tasso died at Rome on the day before that appointed for his coronation in the Capitol.

THE VOICE OF THE WIND.

"There is nothing in the wide world so like the voice of a spirit!"—GRAY'S LETTERS.

I.

Oh! many a voice is thine, thou Wind! full many a voice is thine,
From every scene thy wing o'ersweeps, thou bear'st a sound and sign.
A minstrel wild, and strong thou art, with a mastery all thine own;
And the Spirit is thy harp, O Wind! that gives the answering tone.

II.

Thou hast been across red fields of war, where shiver'd helmets lie,
And thou bringest thence the thrilling note of a Clarion in the sky;
A rustling of proud banner-folds, a peal of stormy drums—
All these are in thy music met, as when a leader comes.

III.

Thou hast been o'er solitary seas, and from their wastes brought back
Each noise of waters that awoke in the mystery of thy track;
The chime of low soft southern waves on some green palmy shore,
The hollow roll of distant surge, the gather'd billows' roar.

IV.

Thou art come from forests dark and deep, thou mighty rushing Wind!
And thou bearest all their unisons in one full swell combined;
The restless pines, the moaning stream, all hidden things and free,
Of the dim old sounding wilderness, have lent their soul to thee.

V.

Thou art come from cities lighted up for the conqueror passing by,
Thou art wafting from their streets a sound of haughty revelry;
The rolling of triumphant wheels, the harpings in the hall,
The far-off shout of multitudes, are in thy rise and fall.

VI.

Thou art come from kingly tombs and shrines, from ancient minsters vast,
Through the dark aisles of a thousand years thy lonely wing hath pass'd;
Thou hast caught the Anthem's billowy swell, the stately Dirge's tone,
For a Chief with sword, and shield, and helm, to his place of slumber gone.

VII.

Thou art come from long-forsaken homes, wherein our young days flew,
Thou hast found sweet voices lingering there, the loved, the kind, the true;
Thou callest back those melodies, though now all changed and fled—
Be still, be still, and haunt us not with music from the dead!

VIII.

Are all these notes in *thee*, wild Wind? these many notes in *thee*?
Far in our own unfathom'd souls their fount must surely be;
Yes! buried but unsleeping *there*, Thought watches, Memory lies,
From whose deep Urn the tones are pour'd through all earth's harmonies!

F. H.

THE VAUDOIS WIFE.*

"Clasp me a little longer, on the brink
Of fate! while I can feel thy dear caress;
And when this heart hath ceased to beat—Oh! think,
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess,
That Thou hast been to me all tenderness,
And friend to more than human Friendship just.
Oh! by that retrospect of Happiness,
And by the Hopes of an immortal trust,
God shall assuage thy pangs—when I am laid in dust."
Gertrude of Wymking.

Thy voice is in mine ear, Belov'd!
Thy look is in my heart,
Thy bosom is my resting-place,
And yet I must depart.
Earth on my soul is strong—too strong—
Too precious is its chain,
All woven of thy love, dear Friend!
Yet vain—though mighty—vain!

Thou seest mine eye grow dim, Belov'd!
Thou seest my life-blood flow,—
Bow to the Chastener silently,
And calmly let me go!
A little while between our hearts
The shadowy gulf must lie,
Yet have we for their communing
Still, still Eternity!

Alas! thy tears are on my cheek,
My Spirit they detain,
I know that from thine agony
Is wrung that burning rain.
Best—kindest—weep not! make the pang,
The bitter conflict less—
Oh! sad it is, and yet a joy
To feel thy love's excess!

But calm thee! let the thought of death
A solemn calm restore!
The Voice that must be silent soon,
Would speak to thee once more;
That thou mayst bear its blessing on
Through years of after-life,
A token of consoling love,
Even from this hour of strife.

I bless thee for the noble heart,
The tender and the true,
Where mine hath found the happiest rest
That e'er fond woman's knew;
I bless thee, faithful Friend and Guide,
For my own, my treasured share,
In the mournful secrets of thy soul,
In thy sorrow, in thy prayer.

I bless thee for kind looks and words,
Shower'd on my path like dew;
For all the love in those deep eyes,
A gladness ever new!

* The wife of a Vaudois leader, in one of the attacks made on the Protestant hamlets, received a mortal wound, and died in her husband's arms, exhorting him to courage and endurance.

For the voice which ne'er to mine replied
But in kindly tones of cheer,
For every spring of happiness
My soul hath tasted here !

I bless thee for the last rich boon
Won from affection tried,
The right to gaze on Death with thee,
To perish by thy side !
And yet more for the glorious Hope
Even to *these* moments given—
Did not *thy* Spirit ever lift
The trust of *mine* to Heaven ?

Now be *thou* strong !—Oh ! know we not
Our path *must* lead to this ?
A shadow and a trembling still
Were mingled with our bliss !
We plighted our young hearts, when storms
Were dark upon the sky,
In full, deep knowledge of their task—
To suffer and to die !

Be strong ! I leave the living voice
Of this, my martyr blood,
With the thousand echoes of the hills,
With the torrent's foaming flood,—
A Spirit midst the leaves to dwell,
A token on the air,
To rouse the valiant from repose,
The fainting from despair.

Hear it, and bear thou on, my Love !
Aye, joyously endure !
Our mountains must be altars yet,
Inviolable and pure.
There must our God be worshipp'd still
With the worship of the Free—
Farewell !—there's but *one* pang in Death,
One only—leaving thee !

F. H.

THE LAND OF DREAMS.

"And dreams, in their development, have breath,
And tears, and tortures, and the touch of joy ;
They leave a weight upon our waking thoughts,
They make us what we were not—what they will,
And shake us with the vision that's gone by."

BYRON.

O SPIRIT-LAND ! thou land of dreams !
A world thou art of mysterious gleams,
Of startling voices, and sounds at strife—
A world of the dead in the hues of life.

Like a wizard's magic glass thou art,
When the wary shadows float by and part ;
Visions of aspects now lov'd, now strange,
Glimmering and mingling in ceaseless change.

Thou art like a City of the Past,
With its gorgeous halls into fragments cast,
Amidst whose ruins there glide and play,
Familiar forms of the world's to-day.

Thou art like the depths where the seas have birth,
Rich with the wealth that is lost from earth—
All the blighted flowers of our days gone by,
And the buried gems in thy bosom lie.

Yes! thou art like those dim sea-caves,
A realm of treasures, a realm of graves!
And the shapes, through thy mysteries that come and go,
Are of Beauty and Terror, of Power and Woe.

But for *me*, O thou picture-land of sleep!
Thou art all one world of affections deep—
And wrung from my heart is each flushing dye,
That sweeps o'er thy chambers of imagery.

And thy bowers are fair—even as Eden fair!
All the beloved of my soul are there!
The forms, my spirit most pines to see,
The eyes, whose love hath been life to me.

They are there—and each blessed voice I hear,
Kindly, and joyous, and silvery clear;
But under-tones are in each, that say—
“It is but a dream, it will melt away!”

I walk with sweet friends in the sunset's glow,
I listen to music of long ago;
But one thought, like an omen, breathes faint through the lay—
“It is but a dream, it will melt away!”

I sit by the hearth of my early days,
All the home-faces are met by the blaze—
And the eyes of the mother shine soft, yet say—
“It is but a dream, it will melt away!”

And away, like a flower's passing breath, 'tis gone,
And I wake more sadly, more deeply lone!
Oh! a haunted heart is a weight to bear—
Bright faces, kind voices!—where are ye, where?

Shadow not forth, O thou land of dreams!
The past as it fled by my own blue streams—
Make not my spirit within me burn,
For the scenes and the hours that may ne'er return.

Call out from the *future* thy visions bright,
From the world o'er the grave take thy solemn light,
And oh! with the Lov'd, when no more I see,
Show me my home, as it yet may be.

As it yet may be in some purer sphere,
No cloud, no parting, no sleepless fear;
So my soul may bear on through the long, long day,
Till I go where the beautiful melts not away.

F. H.