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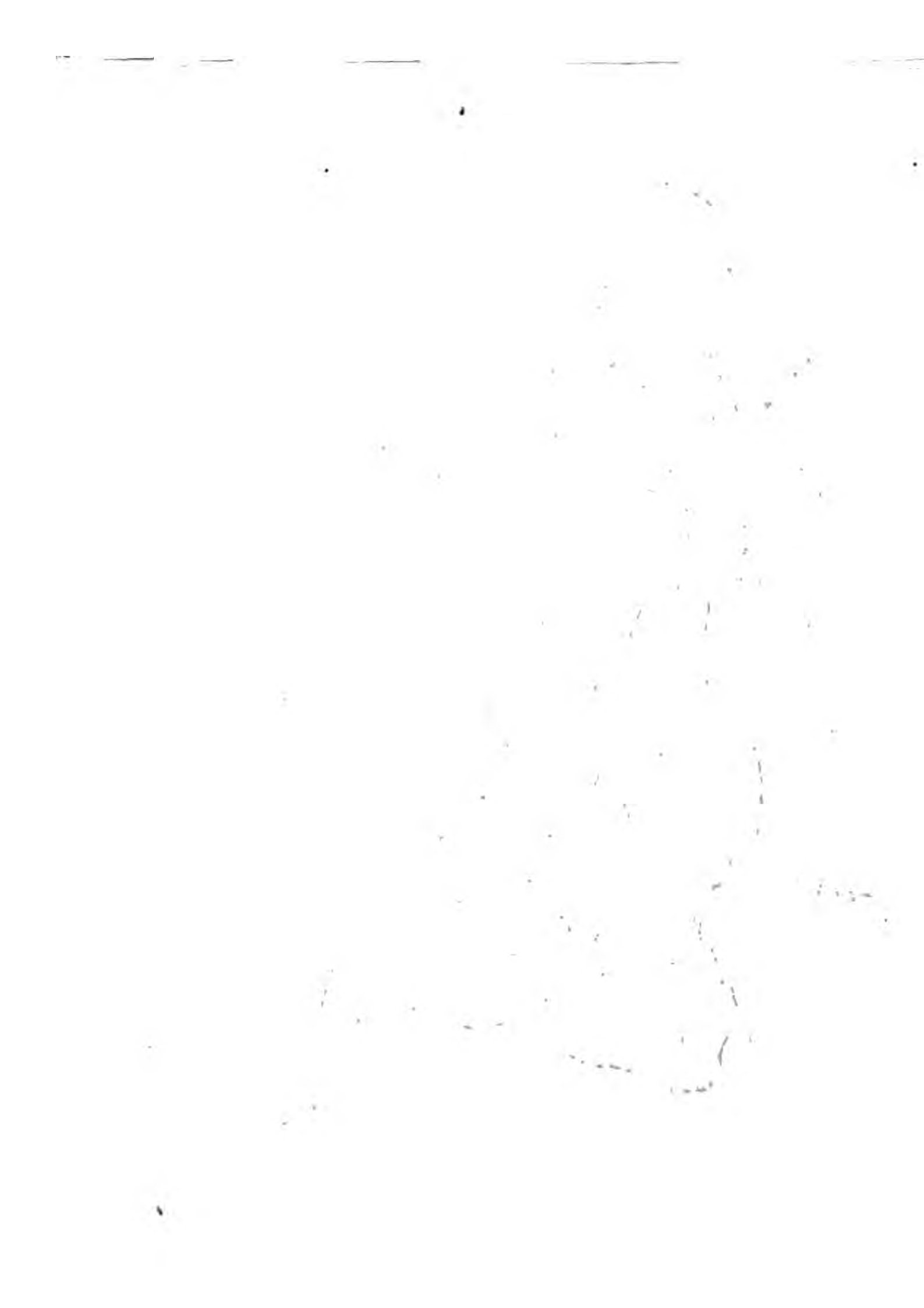


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Songs and  
Sonnets  
from  
Longfellow.







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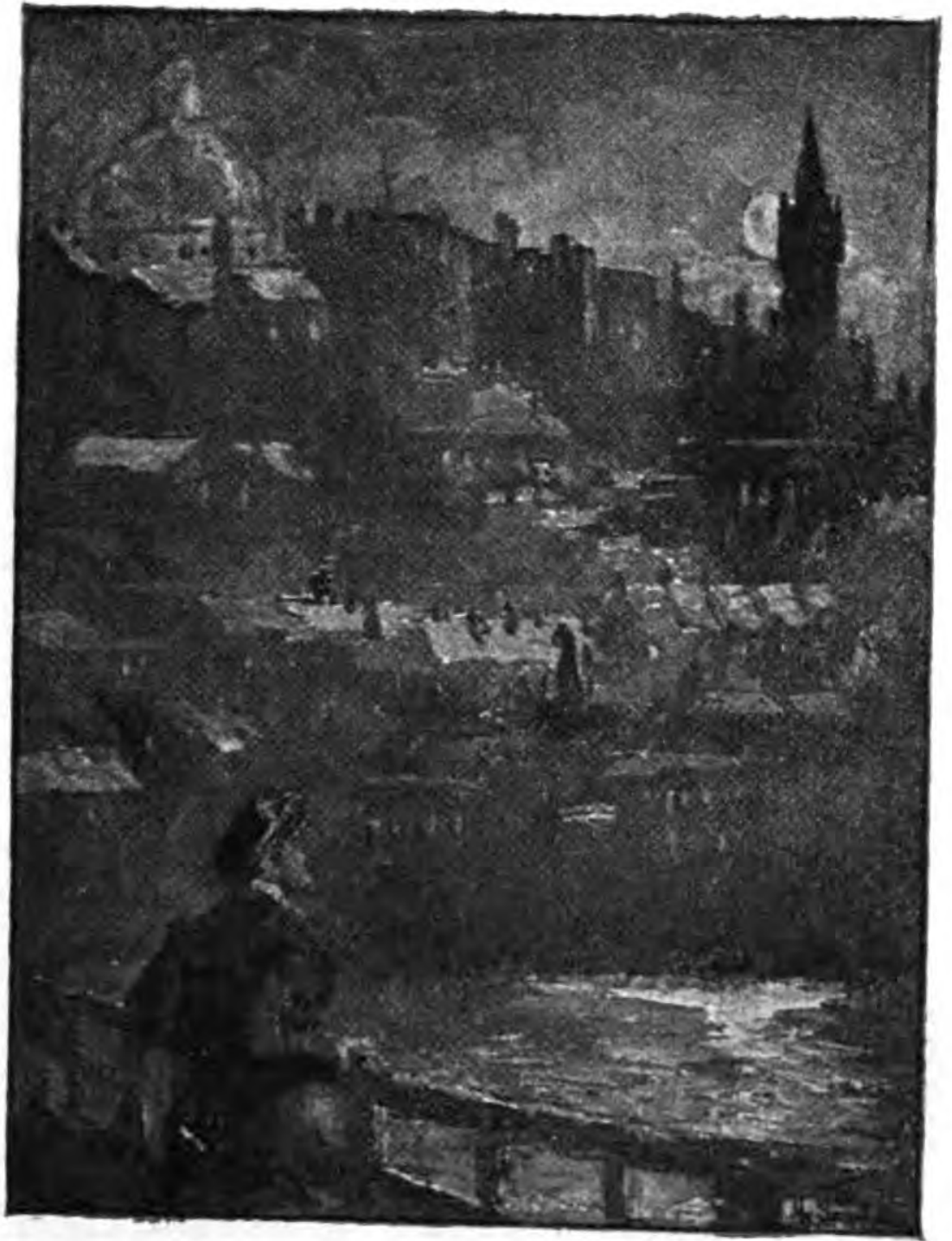
*SONGS AND SONNETS  
FROM LONGFELLOW.*

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SONGS AND  
SONNETS  
FROM  
LONGFELLOW

ILLUSTRATED  
BY  
HENRY SANDHAM.

LONDON: ERNEST NISTER.  
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

1581.



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*SONGS AND SONNETS*  
*FROM*  
*LONGFELLOW.*

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**THE ARROW AND THE SONG.**

I SHOT an arrow into the air,  
It fell to earth, I knew not where;  
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight  
Could not follow it in its flight.



I breathed a song into the air,  
It fell to earth, I knew not where;



For who has sight so keen and strong,  
That it can follow the flight of song?

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Long, long afterward, in an oak  
I found the arrow, still unbroke;  
And the song, from beginning to end,  
I found again in the heart of a friend.

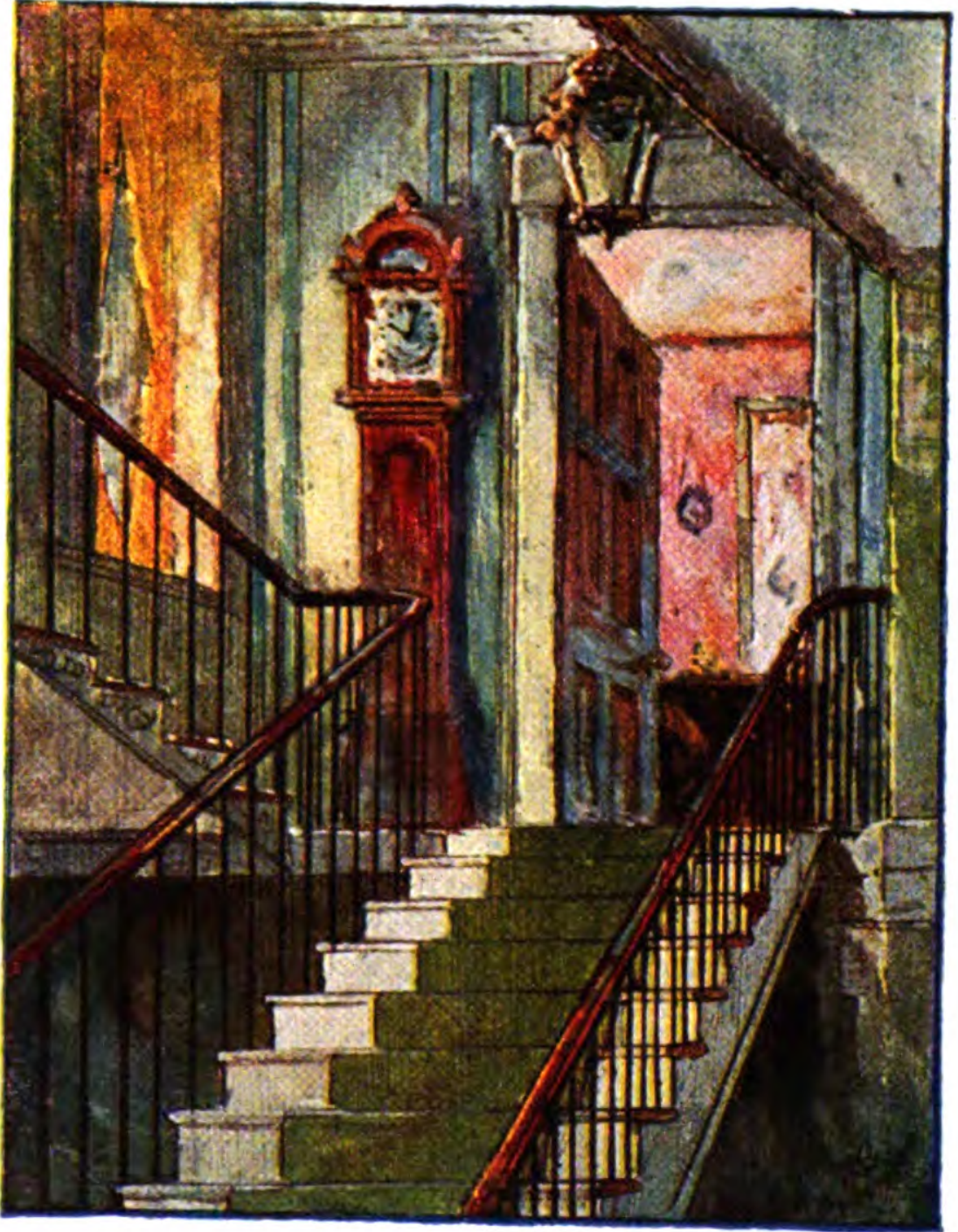




THE OLD CLOCK ON  
THE STAIRS.

SOMEWHAT back from  
the village street  
Stands the old-fashioned country-seat.  
Across its antique portico  
Tall poplar-trees their shadows throw;  
And from its station in the hall  
An ancient timepiece says to all,—  
“Forever—never!  
Never—forever!”

---





Half-way up the stairs it stands,  
And points and beckons with its hands  
From its case of massive oak,  
Like a monk, who, under his cloak,  
Crosses himself, and sighs, alas!  
With sorrowful voice to all who pass,—  
    “Forever—never!  
    Never—forever!”

By day its voice is low and light;  
But in the silent dead of night,  
Distinct as a passing footstep's fall,  
It echoes along the vacant hall,  
Along the ceiling, along the floor,  
And seems to say, at each chamber-door,—  
    “Forever—never!  
    Never—forever!”

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,  
Through days of death and days of birth,  
Through every swift vicissitude  
Of changeful time, unchanged it has stood,  
And as if, like God, it all things saw,  
It calmly repeats those words of awe,—

“Forever—never!  
Never—forever!”

In that mansion used to be  
Free-hearted Hospitality;  
His great fires up the chimney roared;  
The stranger feasted at his board;  
But, like the skeleton at the feast,  
That warning timepiece never ceased,—

“Forever—never!  
Never—forever!”

There groups of merry children played,  
There youths and maidens dreaming strayed;  
O precious hours! O golden prime,  
And affluence of love and time!



Even as a miser counts his gold,  
Those hours the ancient timepiece told,—  
“Forever—never!  
Never—forever!”



From that chamber, clothed in white,  
The bride came forth on her wedding night;  
There, in that silent room below,  
The dead lay in his shroud of snow;  
And in the hush that followed the prayer,  
Was heard the old clock on the stair—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

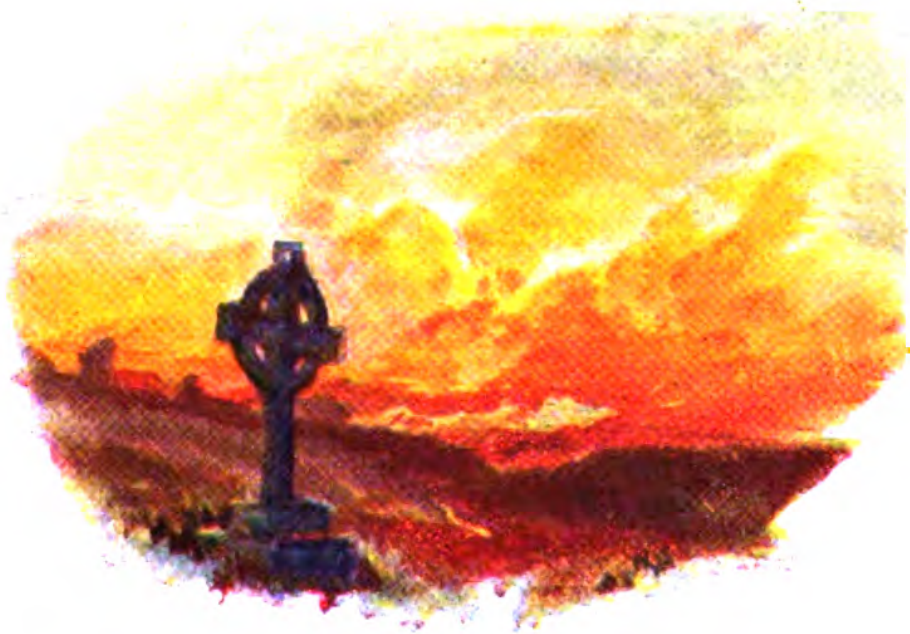
All are scattered now and fled,  
Some are married, some are dead;  
And when I ask, with throbs of pain,  
“Ah! when shall they all meet again?”  
As in the days long since gone by,  
The ancient timepiece makes reply,—

“Forever—never!

Never—forever!”

---

Never here, forever there,  
Where all parting, pain, and care,  
And death, and time shall disappear,—  
Forever there, but never here!



The horologe of Eternity  
Sayeth this incessantly,—  
“Forever—never!  
Never—forever!”





Their solitary watch on tower and steep;  
Far off I hear the crowing  
of the cocks,



And through the opening  
door that time unlocks  
Feel the fresh breathing  
of To-morrow creep.







## THE BRIDGE.

I STOOD on the bridge at midnight,  
As the clocks were striking the hour,  
And the moon rose o'er the city,  
Behind the dark church-tower.

I saw her bright reflection  
In the waters under me,  
Like a golden goblet falling  
And sinking into the sea.

---



And like those waters rushing  
Among the wooden piers,  
A flood of thoughts came o'er me  
That filled my eyes with tears.



How often, oh how often,  
In the days that had gone by,  
I had stood on that bridge at midnight  
And gazed on that wave and sky!









How often, oh how often,  
I had wished that the ebbing tide  
Would bear me away on its bosom  
O'er the ocean wild and wide!

For my heart was hot and restless,  
And my life was full of care,  
And the burden laid upon me  
Seemed greater than I could bear.

But now it has fallen from me,  
It is buried in the sea;  
And only the sorrow of others  
Throws its shadow over me.

Yet whenever I cross the river  
On its bridge with wooden piers,  
Like the odour of brine from the ocean  
Comes the thought of other years.

And I think how many thousands  
Of care-encumbered men,  
Each bearing his burden of sorrow,  
Have crossed the bridge since then.

I see the long procession  
Still passing to and fro,  
The young heart hot and restless,  
And the old subdued and slow!

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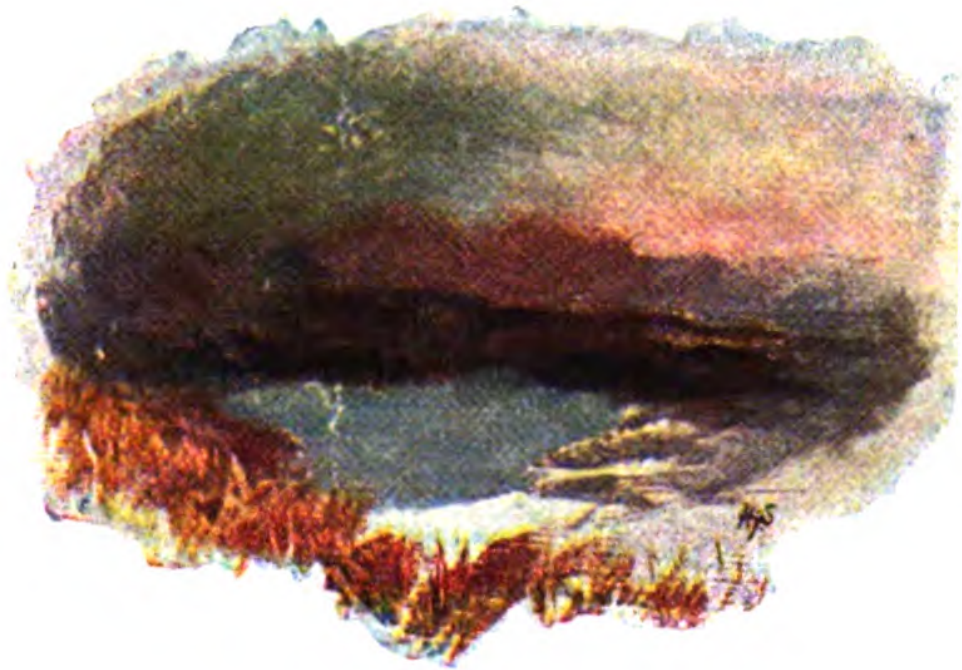
And forever and forever,  
As long as the river flows,  
As long as the heart has passions,  
As long as life has woes;

The moon and its broken reflection  
And its shadows shall appear,  
As the symbol of love in heaven,  
And its wavering image here.





O my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!  
My morning and my evening star of love!  
My best and gentlest lady! even thus,  
As that fair planet in the sky above,  
Dost thou retire unto thy rest at night,  
And from thy darkened  
window fades the light.



**CHILDREN.**

COME to me, O ye children!  
For I hear you at your play,  
And the questions that perplexed me  
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,  
That look towards the sun,  
Where thoughts are singing swallows  
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds  
and the sunshine,  
In your thoughts the brooklet's flow,  
But in mine is the wind of Autumn  
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah! what would the world be to us  
If the children were no more?  
We should dread the desert behind us  
Worse than the dark before.



What the leaves are to the forest,  
With light and air for food,  
Ere their sweet and tender juices  
Have been hardened into wood,—



That to the world are children;  
Through them it feels the glow  
Of a brighter and sunnier climate  
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children!  
And whisper in my ear  
What the birds and the winds are singing  
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,  
And the wisdom of our books,  
When compared with your caresses,  
And the gladness of your looks?





FROM LONGFELLOW.

31

Ye are better than all the ballads,  
That ever were sung or said;  
For ye are living poems,  
And all the rest are dead.











### THE SINGERS.

GOD sent his Singers upon earth  
With songs of sadness and of mirth,  
That they might touch the hearts of men,  
And bring them back to heaven again.

The first, a youth with soul of fire,  
Held in his hand a golden lyre;



Through groves he wandered, and by streams,  
Playing the music of our dreams.

The second, with a bearded face,  
Stood singing in the market-place,  
And stirred with accents deep and loud  
The hearts of all the listening crowd.

A gray old man, the third and last,  
Sang in cathedrals dim and vast,  
While the majestic organ rolled  
Contrition from its mouths of gold.

And those who heard the Singers three  
Disputed which the best might be;  
For still their music seemed to start  
Discordant echoes in each heart.

But the great Master said, "I see  
No best in kind, but in degree;  
I gave a various gift to each,  
To charm, to strengthen, and to teach.

"These are the three great chords of might,  
And he whose ear is tuned aright  
Will hear no discord in the three,  
But the most perfect harmony."



**THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH.**

UNDER a spreading chestnut-tree  
The village smithy stands;  
The smith, a mighty man is he,  
With large and sinewy hands;  
And the muscles of his brawny arms  
Are strong as iron bands.

His hair is crisp, and black, and long,  
His face is like the tan;  
His brow is wet with honest sweat,  
He earns whate'er he can,  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man.

Week in, week out, from morn till night,  
You can hear his bellows blow;  
You can hear him swing his heavy sledge,  
With measured beat and slow,  
Like a sexton ringing the village bell,  
When the evening sun is low.

And children coming home from school  
Look in at the open door;  
They love to see the flaming forge,  
And hear the bellows roar,  
And catch the burning sparks that fly  
Like chaff from a threshing-floor.

He goes on Sunday to the church,  
And sits among his boys;  
He hears the parson pray and preach,







He hears his daughter's voice,  
Singing in the village choir,  
And it makes his heart rejoice.



It sounds to him like her mother's voice,  
Singing in Paradise!  
He needs must think of her once more,



How in the grave she lies;  
And with his hard, rough hand he wipes  
A tear out of his eyes.

Toiling,—rejoicing,—sorrowing,  
Onward through life he goes;  
Each morning sees some task begin,  
Each evening sees its close;  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's repose.

Thanks, thanks to thee, my worthy friend,  
For the lesson thou hast taught!  
Thus at the flaming forge of life  
Our fortunes must be wrought;  
Thus on its sounding anvil shaped  
Each burning deed and thought.



## A PSALM OF LIFE.

TELL me not, in mournful numbers,  
Life is but an empty dream!—  
For the soul is dead that slumbers,  
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!  
And the grave is not its goal;

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,  
Is our destined end or way;  
But to act, that each to-morrow  
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,  
And our hearts, though stout and brave,  
Still, like muffled drums, are beating  
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,  
In the bivouac of Life,  
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!  
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!  
Let the dead Past bury its dead!  
Act,—act in the living Present!  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,  
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,  
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,  
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate;  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.



THE SOUND OF THE SEA.

THE sea awoke  
                                at midnight from its sleep,  
And round the pebbly  
                                beaches far and wide  
I heard the first wave  
                                of the rising tide

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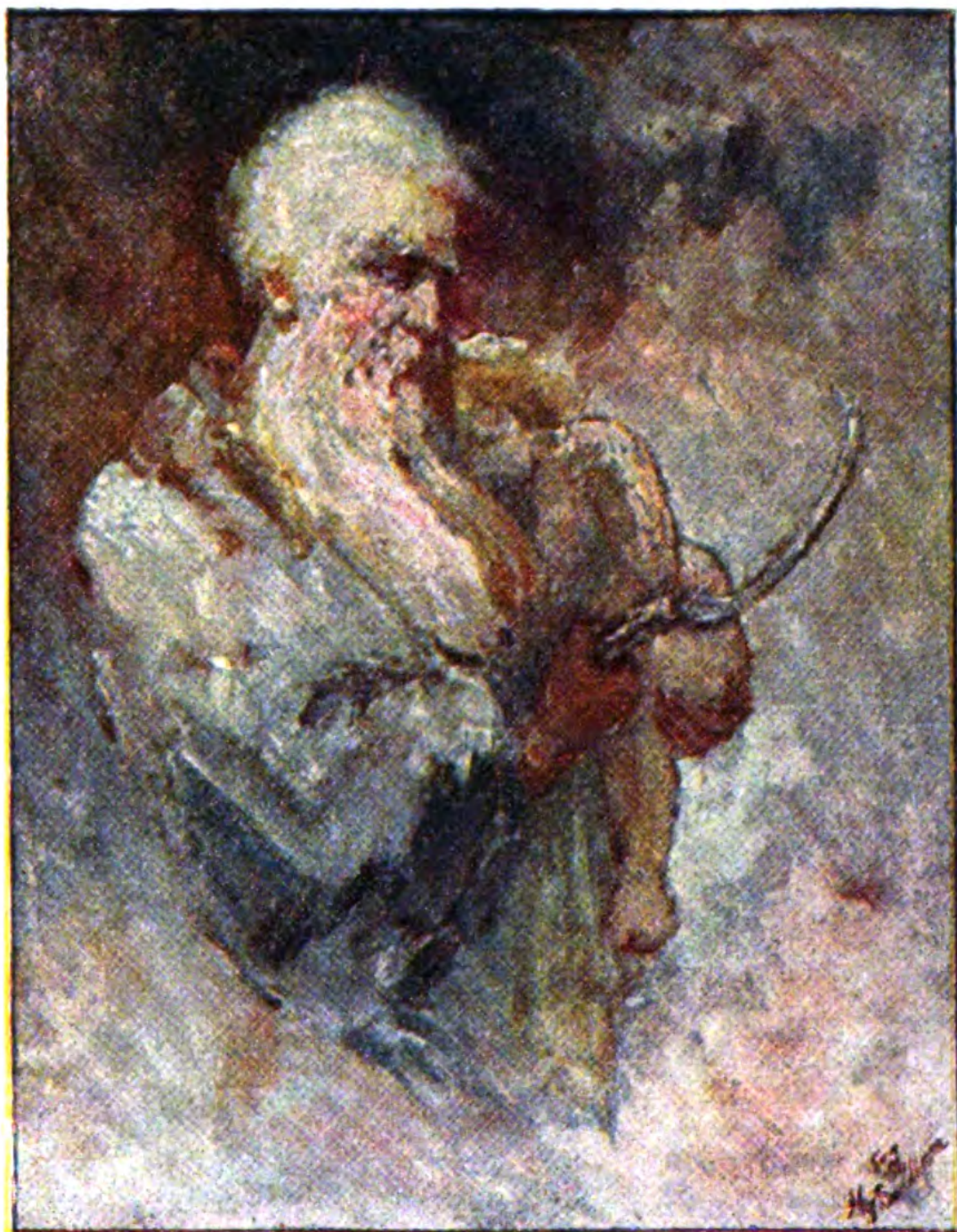






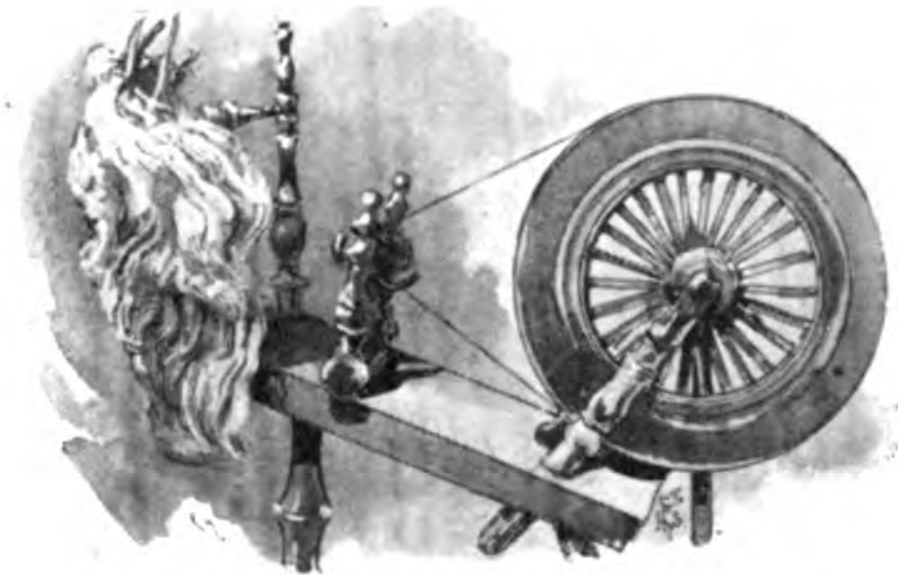








“My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”  
The Reaper said, and smiled;  
“Dear tokens of the earth are they,  
Where He was once a child.



“They shall all bloom in fields of light,  
Transplanted by my care,  
And saints, upon their garments white,  
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,  
The flowers she most did love;  
She knew she should find them all again  
In the fields of light above.

Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,  
The Reaper came that day;  
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,  
And took the flowers away.







**EXCELSIOR.**

**T**HE shades of night were falling fast,  
As through an Alpine village passed  
A youth, who bore, 'mid snow and ice,  
A banner with the strange device,  
Excelsior!





“Oh stay,” the maiden said, “and rest  
Thy weary head upon this breast!”  
A tear stood in his bright blue eye,  
But still he answered, with a sigh,  
Excelsior!



“Beware the pine-tree’s withered branch!  
Beware the awful avalanche!”  
This was the peasant’s last Good-night,  
A voice replied, far up the height,  
Excelsior!

At break of day, as heavenward  
The pious monks of Saint Bernard  
Uttered the oft-repeated prayer,  
A voice cried through the startled air,  
Excelsior!

A traveller, by the faithful hound,  
Half-buried in the snow was found,  
Still grasping in his hand of ice  
That banner with the strange device,  
Excelsior!

There in the twilight cold and gray,  
Lifeless, but beautiful, he lay,  
And from the sky, serene and far,  
A voice fell, like a falling star,  
Excelsior!



THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,  
When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,  
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me  
The patter of little feet,  
The sound of a door that is opened,  
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,  
Descending the broad hall stair,  
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,  
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:  
Yet I know by their merry eyes  
They are plotting and planning together  
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,  
A sudden raid from the hall!  
By three doors left unguarded  
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret  
O'er the arms and back of my chair;

If I try to escape, they surround me;  
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,  
Their arms about me entwine,  
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen  
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,  
Because you have scaled the wall,  
Such an old mustache as I am  
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,  
And will not let you depart,  
But put you down into the dungeon  
In the round-tower of my heart.



And there will I keep you forever,  
Yes, forever and a day,  
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,  
And moulder in dust away!





### CHRISTMAS BELLS.

I HEARD the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,  
The belfries of all Christendom  
Had rolled along  
The unbroken song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men

Till, ringing, singing on its way,  
The world revolved from night to day,  
A voice, a chime,  
A chant sublime  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!



MAIDENHOOD.

MAIDEN! with the meek, brown eyes,  
In whose orbs a shadow lies  
Like the dusk in evening skies!

Thou whose locks outshine the sun,  
Golden tresses, wreathed in one,  
As the braided streamlets run!

Standing, with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet,  
Womanhood and childhood fleet!

Gazing, with a timid glance,  
On the brooklet's swift advance,  
On the river's broad expanse!

Deep and still, the gliding stream,  
Beautiful to thee must seem,  
As the river of a dream.

Then why pause with indecision,  
When bright angels in thy vision  
Beckon thee to fields Elysian?

Seest thou shadows sailing by,  
As the dove, with startled eye,  
See the falcon's shadow fly?

---

Hearst thou voices on the shore,  
That our ears perceive no more,  
Deafened by the cataract's roar?



Oh, thou child of many prayers!  
Life hath quicksands,—Life hath snares!  
Care and age come unawares!



Like the swell of some sweet tune,  
Morning rises into noon,  
May glides onward into June.

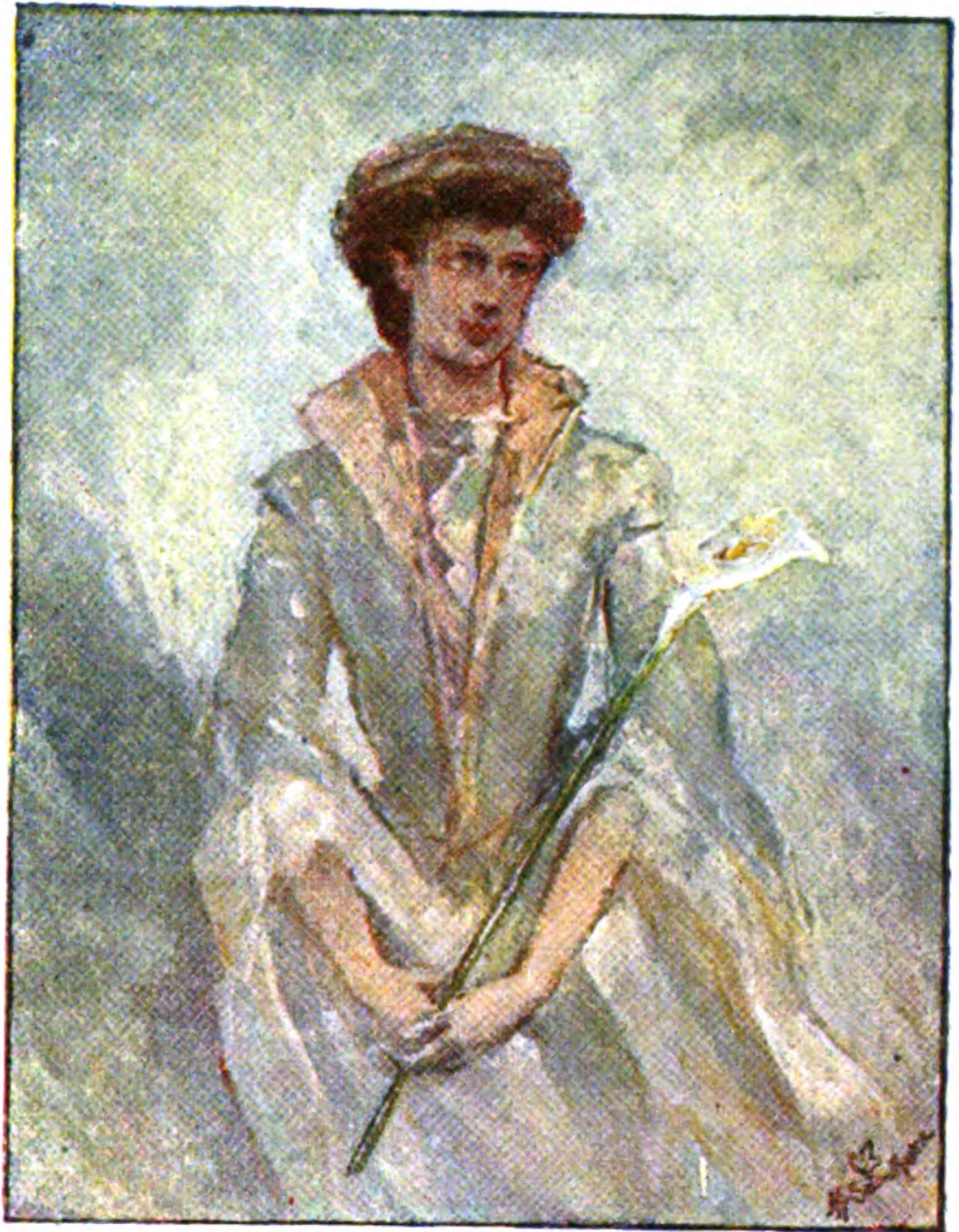
Childhood is the bough, where slumbered  
Birds and blossoms many-numbered;—  
Age, that bough with snows encumbered.

Gather, then, each flower that grows,  
When the young heart overflows,  
To embalm that tent of snows.

Bear a lily in thy hand;  
Gates of brass cannot withstand  
One touch of that magic wand.

Bear through sorrow, wrong, and ruth,  
In thy heart the dew of youth,  
On thy lips the smile of truth.

---





Oh, that dew, like balm, shall steal  
Into wounds that cannot heal,  
Even as sleep our eyes doth seal;

And that smile, like sunshine, dart  
Into many a sunless heart,  
For a smile of God thou art.





Like swallows singing down  
                                  each wind that blows!  
White as the gleam  
                                  of a receding sail,  
White as a cloud that  
                                  floats and fades in air,  
White as the whitest  
                                  lily on a stream,  
These tender memories are;—  
                                  a fairy tale  
Of some enchanted land  
                                  we know not where,  
But lovely as a landscape  
                                  in a dream.



## SERENADE.

STARS of the summer night!  
Far in yon azure deeps,  
Hide, hide your golden light!  
She sleeps!  
My lady sleeps!  
Sleeps!

Moon of the summer night!  
Far down yon western steeps,  
Sink, sink in silverlight!  
She sleeps!  
My lady sleeps!  
Sleeps!

---

Wind of the summer night!  
Where yonder woodbine creeps,  
Fold, fold thy pinions light!  
She sleeps!  
My lady sleeps!  
Sleeps!

Dreams of the summer night!  
Tell her, her lover keeps  
Watch! while in slumbers light  
She sleeps!  
My lady sleeps!  
Sleeps!



### CHIMES.

SWEET chimes! that in  
the loneliness of night  
Salute the passing hour, and in the dark  
And silent chambers  
of the household mark

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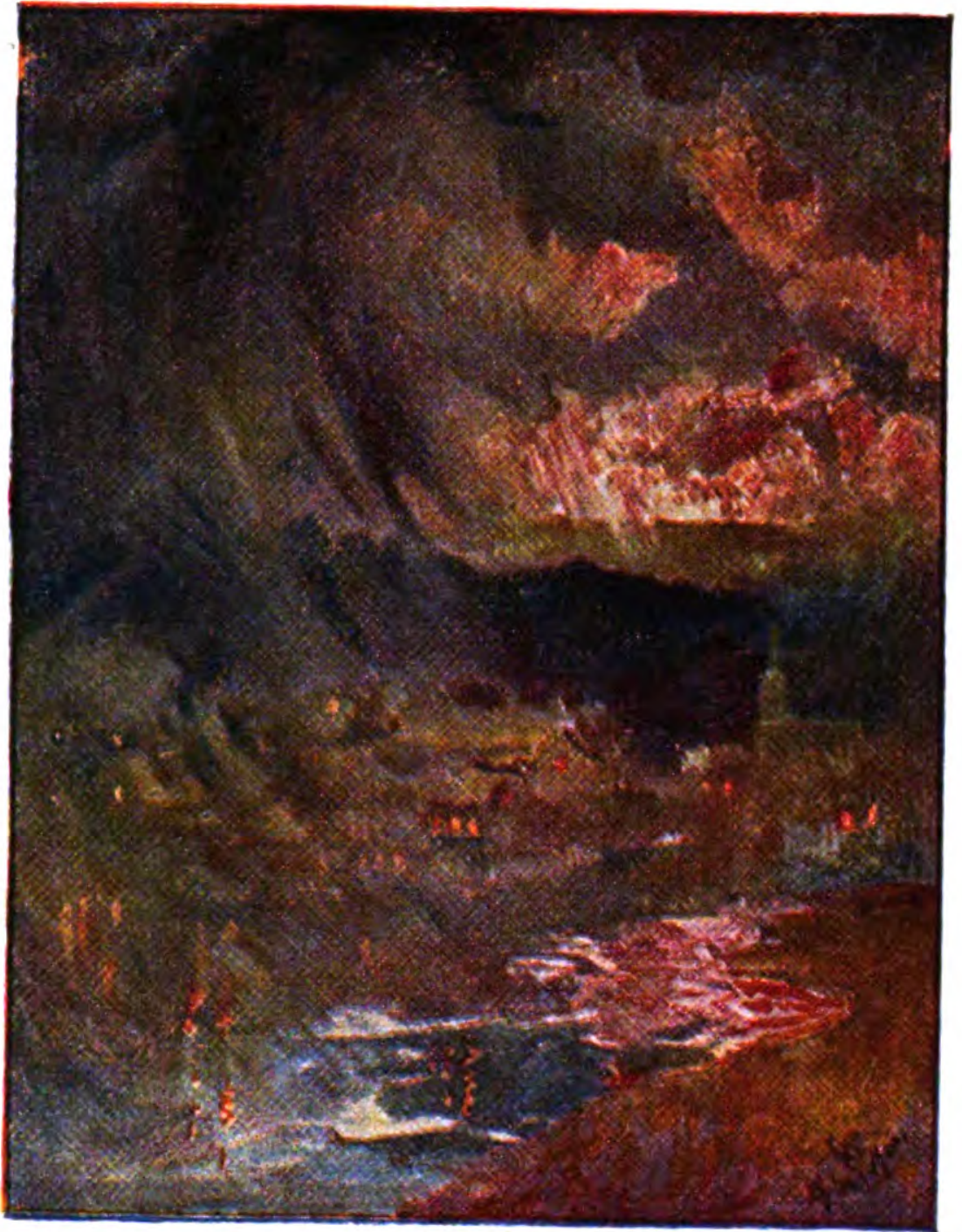
## THE TWO RIVERS.

## FOUR SONNETS.

## I.

SLOWLY the hour-hand  
of the clock moves round;  
So slowly that no human  
eye hath power  
To see it move! Slowly  
in shine or shower  
The painted ship above it,  
homeward bound,  
Sails, but seems motionless,  
as if aground;  
Yet both arrive at last;  
and in his tower











## II.

O River of Yesterday, with current swift  
Through chasms descending,

and soon lost to sight,

I do not care to follow in their flight  
The faded leaves,

that on thy bosom drift!

O River of To-morrow, I uplift  
Mine eyes, and thee

I follow, as the night

Wanes into morning,

and the dawning light

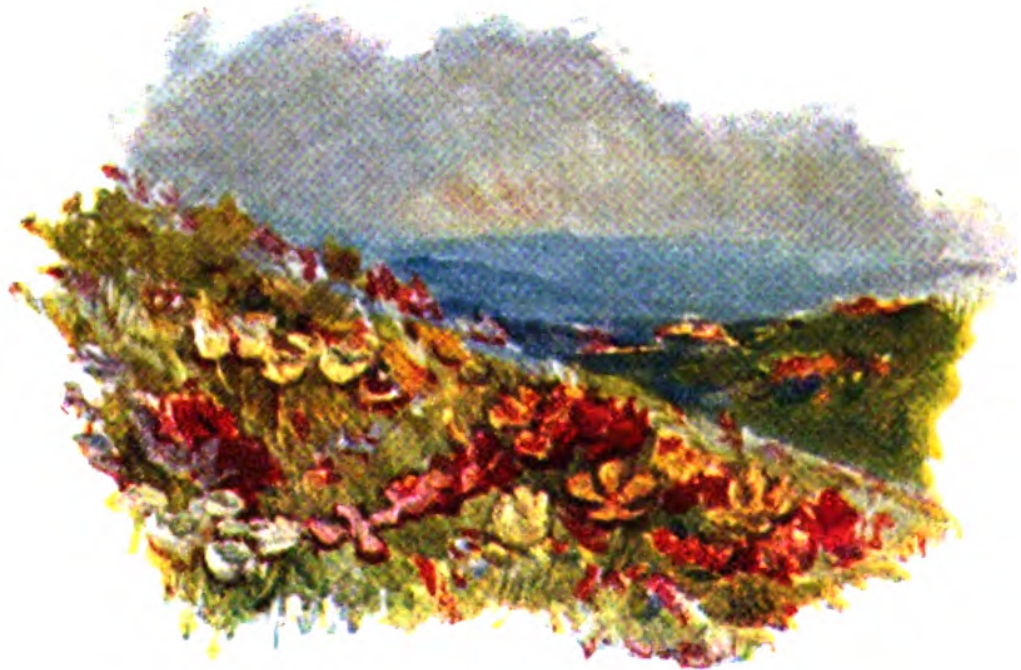
Broadens, and all the shadows

fade and shift!

I follow, follow, where thy waters run  
Through unfrequented,

unfamiliar fields,

Fragrant with flowers  
                                and musical with song;  
Still follow, follow,  
                                sure to meet the sun,



And confident, that what  
                                the future yields  
Will be the right, unless  
                                myself be wrong.



Regrets and recollections of things past,  
With hints and prophecies of things  
to be,



And inspirations, which,  
could they be things,  
And stay with us, and  
we could hold them fast,  
Were our good angels—  
these I owe to thee.









### THE DAY IS DONE.

THE day is done, and the darkness  
Falls from the wings of Night,  
As a feather is wafted downward  
From an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village  
Gleam through the rain and the mist,  
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me  
That my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing,  
That is not akin to pain,  
And resembles sorrow only  
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,  
Some simple and heartfelt lay,  
That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,  
Not from the bards sublime,  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,  
Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life's endless toil and endeavor;  
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
As showers from the clouds of summer,  
Or tears from the eyelids start;



Who, through long days of labor,  
And nights devoid of ease,  
Still heard in his soul the music  
Of wonderful melodies.

---



Such songs have power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume  
The poem of thy choice,  
And lend to the rhyme of the poet  
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,  
And the cares, that infest the day,  
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,  
And as silently steal away.



## SONG.

GOOD-NIGHT! Good-night, beloved!  
I come to watch o'er thee!  
To be near thee,—to be near thee,  
Alone is peace for me.

Thine eyes are stars of morning,  
Thy lips are crimson flowers!  
Good-night! Good-night, beloved,  
While I count the weary hours.



*Printed in Bavaria.*

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