

To Hon'ble G. K. Gokhale  
with kindest regards  
from "a workman"

Daroda  
Nov. 1909. J

Reminiscences of  
A Workman's Life

283

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# REMINISCENCES OF A WORKMAN'S LIFE



## DEDICATION

1

FONDLY on your loving faces,  
Each tender thought I trace,  
Fondly with a father's pride  
Recall your earlier days !

2

When erst I left my loved home,  
And went beyond the sea,  
I left you, smiling infants still,  
A mother's joy and stay.

3

And after years when I came home,  
You smiled on me the same,  
Oh! can you think how fond, yet shy,  
Sweet prattling things, you came.

4

And years have gone, and I have watched,  
The forming of your mind,  
Each budding thought, each growing hope,  
Each feeling, true and kind.

5

And oh! the sunbeams of your love  
Have gladdened still my day,  
Have bathed my life in hope and joy,  
Cast radiance on my way !

6

Angels below ! as pure in heart  
Your days may happy prove,  
And with a new year's dearest wish  
Accept a father's love !

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## THE EXILE.

## I

It is the sunny April,—  
 My native skies are blue ;  
 My native fields are painted fresh  
 In nature's fairest hue ;  
 It is the season of the year  
 When life the sweetest seems,  
 When brightens Age's cheerless face,  
 And Youth is lost in dreams !

## 2

It is the sunny April,—  
 But what is that to me ?  
 An exile from my father's home,  
 A wanderer o'er the sea !  
 Ten thousand waves around me rage,  
 And roar in wanton glee,  
 The sea wind soundeth in my ear  
 A boisterous melody !

## 3

It is the sunny April,—  
 The April of my life !  
 Ambition sounds her bugle wild,  
 It is the time for strife.  
 Away each timid, pensive thought,  
 Ye treach'rous drops away,  
 I'll follow that soul-maddening tune,  
 O ! lead me where it may !

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, }  
 April, 1868. }

## HOME.

1

I STAND upon the airy deck,  
 And gaze upon the wide wide sea,  
 Yon distant hills a purple speck,  
 Yon sea-fowls swimming merrily.  
 But in whatever realms I roam,  
 My heart still yearns for thee, my Home.

2

I've been among the spicy trees  
 Of Ceylon's most enchanted land,  
 I've been where beat the eternal seas  
 'Gainst Aden's barren rocks and sand!  
 But in whatever realms I roam,  
 My heart still yearns for thee, my Home.

3

I've been where Pompey's lofty spire  
 Since thousand years hath braved the sky,  
 I've trod the floor where,—souls of fire,—  
 The knights of St. John buried lie.  
 But in whatever realms I roam,  
 My heart still yearns for thee, My Home.

4

In foreign climes when wandering lone  
 Still shall I mourn thy countless woes,  
 The Rhine, the Thames, the dark blue Rhone  
 Will call to mind where Ganga flows.  
 For in whatever realms I roam,  
 My heart still yearns for thee, my Home.

THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, }  
 . . . April, 1863. }



TO CHILDREN AT THE FOUNDLING  
HOSPITAL, LONDON.

## 1

SWEET pretty things ! who to your tongue  
    Could give a voice so soft and dear ?  
How sang so sweet your holy song  
    Like cherubs of th' ethereal sphere ?

## 2

Or 'tis the native melody  
    Of childhood's heart of sinlessness !  
Spontaneous music flowing free,—  
    An echo from a soul of bliss !

## 3

In thrilling voice so sings the lark  
    The deep felt feelings of his heart,  
So sings the night-bird, hid in dark,  
    Till woodlands lone in music start !

## 4

Ye children fair ! how on each face,  
    As blooming fresh as flowers of May,  
Still could I gaze for hours ! and trace  
    Of human life the poetry !

## 5

The infant feelings void of guile,  
    On every face reflected clear !—  
The passing shade, the glowing smile,  
    Like new-born sun-beams fresh and fair !

## 6

Though on your birth a stain shall last,  
    Though born in shame and bred in woe,  
Though penury's cold chilling blast  
    Had almost froze life's early flow.

## 7

For Sorrow's child there is a rest,—  
    A wealth beyond the miser's dreams!  
Go reap fair Virtue's treasures blest,  
    'Tis free to all as heaven's own beams!

LONDON,  
*February, 1870.* }

—

## THE FATHER'S GRAVE.

## 1

'Twas evening, on their wearied wings  
The hastening birds they flew,  
And o'er the sheep besprinkled hills  
Fast fell the evening dew.  
A solemn silence reigned all round  
A scene of deep repose,  
And twinkling o'er a lonely grave  
One lonely star arose.

## 2

Behind a weeping willow tree,  
Like gleams of sunbeams fair,  
Stood folded in a sweet embrace  
A pensive, lovely pair!  
Nine summer suns scarce yet had shone  
Upon the sister's face,  
The brother's younger beaming eyes  
Still glowed with infant grace.

## 3

She seemed a weeping Naiad  
That rides the moon-lit wave,  
She seemed a pensive angel  
To guard the lonely grave.  
In her dark eyes dwelt meekness,  
And ruth was on her face,  
That place became the figure,  
That drooping form, the place!

## 4

Hid by the willow-shade she stood  
She turned her eyes above,—  
Each glistened with a half formed tear  
With piety and love !  
The darksome night was closing round,  
The cold wind whistled by,  
She stood unmoved, her eyes were fixed  
Deep on the azure sky.

## 5

And there the little cherub stood,  
Clasped in her sweet embrace,  
And oft he looked up to her eyes,—  
A sister's loving face !  
Oh ! is there aught in this wide world  
With sweeter grace can shine ?  
Oh ! is there for the orphan's love  
A dearer, holier shrine ?

## 6

His face was fresh as morning rose  
Bedimmed with sorrow's dew,  
And still he gazed upon her face  
And still he closer drew.  
The sister wept and he too wept,  
The sister prayed, he prayed,  
Scarce conscious why he wept and prayed  
Scarce knew a father dead.

REMINISCENCES.

7

With careful hand she trewed the tomb  
With rustic flowers all white, —  
A humble token of her love,  
Her offering night by night.  
She wiped the tear-drop from his eye,  
She kissed and kissed him fond,  
They vanished from the lonely scene, —  
The night shades closed around.

LONDON, }  
May, 1870. }

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## LINES ON INDIA.

## 1

'Twas once great Ganga ! on thy shore  
I silent stood one even tide,  
Thy rushing waters ran before,  
Frowning, dashing in their pride,  
And foaming down unchained and free,  
And reckless in their boisterous glee.

## 2

I heard thy sea-like solemn roar,  
I marked thy billows fierce and free,  
I deemed the land thou rollest o'er  
Must be the land of liberty.  
Alas ! the soil thy waters lave  
Has been for aye fair Freedom's grave !

## 3

Is this the land of ancient pride  
Where Freedom lived, where heroes bled ?  
Ask of these regions vast and wide  
From billowy sea to mountains dread !  
Hark every spot in India wide  
Doth tell a tale of ancient pride !

## 4

Hark, every pass and every hill  
Recalls the days of liberty !  
Hark, how from every peak and rill,  
From echoing vales, from woods and lea,  
Awakes one voice of maddening glee,  
The thrilling voice of liberty !

## 5

In vain! in vain! the stirring voice  
 No echo finds in haunts of men,  
 From peopled marts no sounds arise,  
 No hamlets answer back again.  
 What silent all! No sound, no breath!  
 A nation sleeps— the sleep of death!

## 6

The children of a godlike race  
 Sleep senseless of their glorious past,  
 Or void of strength and manly grace  
 They tremble at each passing blast,  
 Unconscious of their ancient name,  
 Unmindful of their father's fame!

## 7

Enough! Enough! What boots it then  
 To sing of days now passed away,  
 In halting verse why call again  
 The glories which have had their day?  
 Because I cannot e'er forget  
 My ancient country once was great.

## 8.

Remembrance sweet!— mine be it then  
 To muse on days when brightest shone  
 Thy light among the haunts of men,  
 Thy glories bright as Eastern Sun!  
 Thy strength of thought, thy Manhood's power!  
 Thy wealth of song, thy Beauty's dower!

LONDON,  
 April, 1870. }

## LINES ON IRELAND.

## 1

SWEET Erin ! on thy Emerald hills  
 And in thy vales I've wandered slow,  
 And on thy lakes and silver rills  
 Have rowed my light and swift canoe.  
 Bewitching vales and woodland streams!  
 As fair, as wild as childhood's dreams !

## 2

I've been Avoca ! where in glee  
 Thy limpid waters roll along,  
 And where vain beats th' eternal sea  
 Against the Giant's pillars strong,  
 And where Dunluce's castled rock  
 For ages stands the ocean's shock.

## 3

I've stood where stands the man of steel  
 Who safe a virgin fortress held,  
 And seems to guard her fortunes still !  
 Sweet Auburn ! seem thy classic fields,  
 And slept where mid romantic hills  
 Sleep fair Killamey's lakes and rills !

## 4

Sweet isle ! oft by thy ruined fanes  
 I've thought of thy inglorious time,  
 Thy poverty, thy woes, thy pains !  
 Oft thought too of another clime,  
 Far far across the billow's roar,  
 Like thee distressed, — alas as poor !



## 5

The Irish heart, that owns no lord,  
 Still beats it not for Freedom's cause ?  
 And gleams not still the Irish sword  
 The soldier for his country draws ?  
 Alas ! the sword rusts on the wall,  
 The heart but weeps on Ireland's fall !

## 6

And glows not bright the patriot's ire  
 In every Irish bosom still ?  
 And wakes not still the note of fire,—  
 From Erin's harp the maddening peal ?  
 Hide patriot ! Hide thy blush of shame,  
 For ever hushed the harp of flame !

## 7

And must this emerald isle for aye  
 Remain in endless penury ?  
 And mourn the night that knows no day  
 This home of patriots bold and free ?  
 Queen of a thousand ocean wave !  
 Land of the Shamroc and the brave !

## 8

Rend Future ! rend thy misty veil,  
 A glorious day is still to shine,  
 And as in the antique days this isle,  
 Shall be once more the dearest shrine  
 Of freedom born in skies above,  
 Of truth and valour and of love !

IRELAND,  
 July, 1870. }

## THE WAR OF 1870.

## I

THE new year comes with sports and wiles,  
A cherub boy with glory crowned,  
With golden hair and golden smiles,  
A fleecy robe flung careless round.  
He comes to bless each living thing  
With wishes kind of mirth and joy,  
And earth and skies with gladness ring  
To welcome home the cherub boy.  
He comes as if to speak again,  
All peace on earth,—good will to men!

## 2

In vain, in vain! e'en now the breath  
Of havoc wild spreads wide and far,  
Of Famine gaunt, Starvation, Death,—  
Attendants grim of blood-eyed War!  
And wasted plains and flaming towns,  
And fields and streams empurpled deep,  
And aye a slaughtered nation's groans  
Attest the whirlwind's cursed sweep!  
Fair heavens! beneath your rays benign  
What deeds are done of blood and sin!

## 3

The ceaseless weeping widowed fair,  
The orphan starving morn and late,  
The maiden shrieking in despair,  
The peaceful home now desolate,

A place of tombs—the harvest field,  
 A desert heath—the flowery mead,  
 And noble youths unnumbered killed  
 To gorge Ambition's hateful greed,—  
 O Spirit of enlightened days!  
 Are these thy trophies, these thy ways?

## 4

O! cease, let cease the work of shame  
 Ye maddened sons of German soil,  
 In Fatherland's and Piety's name  
 What impious deeds, what murd'rous toil!  
 And see ye not a region fair  
 Is blasted by your fiery breath,  
 And hear ye not a nation's prayer  
 And voice of woe and groans of death?  
 Your unborn sons will blush to name  
 Their fathers' deeds of blood and shame!

## 5

What though great France in reckless pride  
 First sounded forth the blast of war,  
 With impious hand she rolled the tide  
 Of proud invasion thund'ring far,  
 Behold! her drear deserted homes,  
 Her noble thousands slaughtered lie,  
 Enough, in pain she writhes and foams,  
 Enough, her best blood bubbles free!  
 In tears and blood she cries to heaven,  
 Then let one folly be forgiven!

## 6

But if the ruthless Prussian bands  
The claims of mercy will deny,  
And wrench from France her homes and lands,  
The Frenchman knows the hour to die!  
For hark the sound! the trumpet's call  
With shriller accents never rose,  
The maddened millions of proud Gaul  
Will smiling die or drive the foes.  
And every drop for freedom shed  
Will call for vengeance for the dead!

LONDON, }  
*December, 1870.* }

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## TO B. L. G.

## 1

REMEMBER friend ! the days when first  
We met and loved, the days gone by,  
What varied scenes of joy and woe  
Like visions burst upon my eye !

## 2

Our early walks still day by day,  
Dim on our path the starlight fell,  
Through noiseless streets we ceaseless strolled,  
And talked on themes, I cannot tell.

## 3

The evening hours we happy passed  
By rolling Gunga's billows strong,  
Or heard her solemn sea-like voice,  
Or chanted loud as wild a song.

## 4

The twilight hours we silent spent  
Romantic in those village scenes,  
Or smiled on Nature's placid face,  
Or wept on human woes and sins.

## 5

Days that we have struggled through  
Ceaseless with our college schemes,  
Slow we paced the college walks,  
Raised a thousand wild'ring dreams

## 6

Nights that we have talked together,  
Talked of youthful feelings wild,  
Talked of aspirations high,  
Wept on woes and hopes beguiled.

## 7

Nights that we have waked together,  
Waked and watched the star-lit hours,  
Till in crimson glowed the east,  
Till with songs rang woodland bowers.

## 8

Fair scenes of friendship, scenes of home !  
How oft those thoughts my bosom greet !  
Like visions of another world,  
Steal recollections passing sweet !

LONDON, }  
June, 1871. }

## ROSAMOND'S REVENGE.

Shortly before his conquest of Italy, Alboin the chief of the Lombards defeated and killed with his own hands Cunimund the king of the Gipedæ, and married his daughter Rosamond by force. The skull of Cunimund, which Alboin according to the barbarous custom of the times used as his drinking cup, was always regarded by him as the noblest trophy of his victory. The death of Alboin of which an account will be found in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chapter XLV. is the subject of the following lines.

## I

LOUD and deep the clarion sounded,  
Warriors' heart in joy rebounded,  
Alboin held is feast at night,  
Blushing maidens, men of might,  
Joined the jovial feast that night.  
"Pass the bowl" great Alboin said,  
"Love and wine are valor's meed!"  
And the armours' noisy clang  
Hoarse applause in thunder rang.  
"Pass the bowl!" the monarch cried,  
Hundred chiefs in joy replied,  
Round went bowl, red wine was poured,  
Chieftains drank and laughed and roared.  
Warriors sung their deeds of fame,  
Lombard's glory, Alboin's name,  
Voices hoarse of savage glee  
In the guest hall sounded free,  
Uncouth sounds of fierce delight  
Broke the silence of the night!

## 2

"Pass the bowl," the monarch cried,  
 "Love and wine are valor's meed."  
 Fierce he grasps his trusty spear,  
 Sounds his buckler loud and clear,—  
 "These have quelled our foeman's pride,  
 "And all dangers dashed aside,  
 "Trusty arms, in blood defiled,  
 "Won for me Cunimund's child!  
 "Pass the wine!" he fiercely cried,  
 "Love and wine are valor's meed,  
 "Blushing beauties wait on you,  
 "Love and wine are valor's due."  
 Hundred armours' noisy clang  
 Hoarse applause in thunder rang,  
 Round went bowl, red wine they poured,  
 Chieftains laughed and drank and roared.

## 3

Round went the wine-cup,  
     Drank the warriors all,  
 Round went the wine-cup,—  
     Cunimund's noble skull.  
 "But let our Queen," said Alboin,  
     "Grace this festive hall,  
 "And let her taste this red wine  
     "From her father's skull.  
 "Alas! without bright damsels  
     "    What were songs and wine!  
 "Our Queen must be partaker  
     "Of this feast of mine.



"Amid the sons of valor  
     "Beauties brightest shine,  
 "Our Queen must be partaker  
     "Of this feast of mine.  
 "Or if she comes not hither,  
     "Let her taste this wine,  
 "Our Queen must be partaker  
     "Of this feast of mine."  
 Thrice is spoke the mandate,  
     Thrice the hall is still,  
 Thrice the clang of armour  
     Lauds the royal will.

## 4

Ah cruel word! But Alboin said!  
 His word was law, it was obeyed.  
 Where pensive Rosamond was sitting,  
 They took the bowl, the cruel bidding.  
 Speechless she heard her lord's command,  
     Speechless she saw the fatal bowl,  
 Speechless she took it in her hand,  
     Her murdered noble father's skull!  
 Pale as a spectre wild she gazed,  
     Yet moved not, trembled not with fear,  
 Her eyes like glowing cinders blazed,  
     Yet closed not, shed no useless tear.  
 But on her brow, still knit with ire,  
 A gloomy shade spoke vengeance dire!  
 Cunimund's daughter, noble dame,  
 The child of beauty and of fame,

Th' unholy cup she would not taste,  
 Yet know her husband's soul of fire !  
 She stood, but for her heaving breast,  
 A marble Fury,—form of Ire !

## 5

A moment passed, was quenched her ire,  
 Though clouds still hovered o'er her brow,  
 Her eyes had lost their look of fire,  
 But kept their strong and darksome glow,  
 And calm and bold she only said,  
 "My husband's will shall be obeyed."  
 With glowing cheeks and burning lip  
 Did she the wine obedient sip !  
 Then down she knelt and fervent prayed,  
 She gazed above and softly said,—  
 "My long lost father's holy shade !  
 "Forgive this heinous, impious deed,  
 "This outrage on thy noble fame,  
 "This deed of thy own daughter's shame !  
 "Thy death, the slaughter of thy band,  
 "The forcing of thy daughter's hand,  
 "This insult,—all revenged shall be,  
 "And blood for blood shall bubble free !"

## 6

Day followed night, night followed day,  
 And weeks and months have passed away,  
 Fair Rosamond, great Alboin's queen,  
 In sadness is no longer seen.  
 No longer in her lonesome bower  
 She passes now the pensive hour,

No longer in her lonesome hall  
 She weeps her noble father's fall.  
 So changed, she looked, so gladsome seemed,  
 Such cheerful gladness on her beamed !  
 But those who marked her well would say  
 That on her brow a shade there lay,  
 'Twas not of woe or pensiveness,  
 A shade of silent thoughtfulness.  
 That in her eye a light there beamed,  
 'Twas not what pleasure loves to wear,  
 Nor sorrow's glow, it rather seemed  
 The light of silent thought and care.

## 7

But weeks and months have passed away,  
 Hid in her breast her purpose lay.  
 For Alboin's chiefs who served his will  
     Revered great Alboin as a god,  
 Nor was there one among them all  
     Would dare to shed great Alboin's blood.  
 Nor rich reward nor promise fair  
 Would tempt a chief the deed to dare.  
 She would not touch the murd'rous steel,  
 No Lombard chief the blow would deal,  
 But woman's guile and woman's will  
 Can pierce through triple plates of steel.

## 8

Of all the noble chieftains  
     Who drew the Lombard sword,  
 So noble as Peredeus  
     Was none in deed and word,

In the brunt of the battle,  
 No spear could point so well,  
 In the ear of the maiden  
 No voice so sweetly fell.  
 Peredeus loves a maiden,—  
 She's fair, and void of art,  
 The maiden loves Peredeus  
 With all her simple heart.  
 And they will meet in silence,  
 As often they have met,  
 And not a word be spoken  
 Within their dark retreat.

9

The lovers silent met at last,  
 Their blissful time in darkness passed,  
 And now 'twas time that they should part,  
 Peredeus! Why that sudden start?  
 Why gazest on that burning face?  
 Dost miss thy maiden's milder grace?  
 Whose are those glowing eyes of fire,  
 That look of wild indignant ire?  
 Who frowns on thee with haughty pride?  
 Cunimund's daughter,—Alboin's bride!  
 "Yes, Alboin's bride, Cunimund's child,  
 "With foul embrace thou hast defiled.  
 "Thou know'st my husband's soul of fire,  
 "Expect his unforgiving ire,  
 "An injured Lombard's vengeance dire!  
 "We die together in a breath,—  
 "We only live by Alboin's death!"

## 3

Peredeus knew her words were true,  
Peredeus soon his master slew !  
And Rosamond, great Alboin's bride,  
Beheld him die and laughed in pride.  
She laughed, she wept, she wildly prayed,—  
“My long-lost father's noble shade !  
“Thy death, the slaughter of thy band,  
“The forcing of thy daughter's hand,  
“That insult,—all revenged see,  
“And blood for blood hath bubbled free !”

LONDON, }  
August, 1871. }

## THE WONDERFUL CURE.

*(From the Persian of Sadi.)*

## I

It was a Persian king of fame,  
 Descended from an ancient race,  
 Of boundless power and noble name,  
 And great in war and great in peace,  
 And virtuous in his sway.  
 And now he's on a sick bed laid,  
 And all his hopes of life are fled.

## 2

Physicians came from distant lands,  
 And men of wisdom and of lore,  
 And ancient seers in friendly bands,—  
 They came, they saw, and spake no more,  
 And silent went away,  
 Foreseeing sure with many a sigh  
 The good king's death approaching nigh.

## 3

Then spake a sage, "Let him appear,  
 "A boy a sin who never knew,  
 "Of forehead fair and golden hair  
 "And smiling lips of rosy hue.  
 "The monarch yet may live,  
 "Go,—such a boy this instant bring,  
 "With his heart's blood anoint the king!"

## 4

Around all silent heard the men  
 The sage's word of cruelty ;  
 Th' imperial Court of Justice then  
 Announced to all the stern decree,—  
 " Our books of law ordain,  
 " A generous monarch's life to spare  
 " A subject's death is just and fair."

## 5

They brought a boy,—his eyes were fair,  
 A boy a sin who never knew,  
 Of forehead fair and golden hair,  
 And smiling lips of rosy hue.  
 The weeping parents poor,  
 For wealth immense, with many a sigh,  
 Consented that their child should die.

## 6

They brought the child thus doomed to die !  
 The king had wished it so to be,  
 The Court had passed its stern decree,  
 His parents had consented free,  
 Though guiltless he must die !  
 He heard,—the fair, the sinless child,  
 He gazed above, and tearful smiled.

## 7

" They, in this world I loved most dear,  
 " My parents, they have wished me die

“ Our Court of Law, e'er just and fair,  
 “ In justice bids this victim die !  
 “ Our king who guards this realm,  
 “ And saves our lives, hath wished me die !  
 “ Allah ! I trust alone in thee !”

## 8

“ Beshrew a life so dearly gained !”  
 Exclaimed the king of noble race,  
 As fast his streaming eyeballs rained  
 Hot gushing tears that washed his face  
 And calmed his throbbing heart.  
 He clasped the boy close to his breast,  
 And sweet paternal kisses pressed.

## 9

“ The boy shall live, and let me die,  
 “ And with my dying breath I pray,  
 “ May he be blessed and live to see  
 “ Many a livelong halcyon day ;—  
 “ Go dear one, thou art free !”  
 They say, before that night had waned,  
 The king his former health regained.

LONDON, }  
 January, 1871. }

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## A VISION OF BEAUTY.

*(From the Persian of Sadi.)*

## 1

OFTEN wakes before my eye  
 Of my youth that day of bliss!  
 When entranced, I cast my eyes  
 On a form of loveliness!

## 2

Autumn winds were parched and hot,  
 I was thirsty, sunk in grief,  
 Autumn sun was fiery, red,  
 Faint I sat and asked relief.

## 3

Issued gently from the hall  
 Beauteous damsel clothed in light!  
 Issues not from poet's heart  
 Vision of such radiance bright!

## 4

Issued, as from shades of night,  
 Blushing morning, fresh and bright!  
 Issued, as from realms of gloom,  
 Stream of life and radiant light!

## 5

Bearing in her snowy arms  
 Cup of ice with welcome meet,  
 Bearing, with a modest grace,  
 Juice of grape, refreshing, sweet.

## 6

From the drink a fragrance came,  
Might be from the rose distilled,  
From the blossom of her cheeks,  
Might be some sweet drops instilled!

## 7

Thirst of lips was soon allayed,  
Toil and languor went away,  
Thirst of heart the damsel waked,  
River streams will not allay.

## 8

Happy youth! whose eye each morn  
Opens on so sweet a face!  
Happy youth! whose night's last glance  
Closes on so sweet a face!

## 9

Intoxication from the red wine  
Ceases when night fades away,  
Intoxication with such beauty  
Ceases not till judgment day!

CALCUTTA, }  
May, 1872. }

---

## THE LAST DREAM OF LIFE.

## I

Ah who shall say  
 Why hopes and passions in me start,  
 And struggling for a transient sway,  
 Oppress my weary fainting heart,  
 If hopes are cherished to be lost,  
 And passions felt but to be crost ?  
                     In tumult perish all,  
 And with a simultaneous fall,  
 Relieve an over-worked soul.

## 2

High hopes were mine when life begun,  
 And pleasure softly flitting past.  
 First friendship's dream before me shone,  
   I fondly hoped the dream would last.  
 But friends were strewn before, behind,  
 Like chaff before the angry wind,  
                     Easy busy in his sphere,  
 Each in his round of hope and fear,  
 Each in his round of joy and care.

## 3

And love, thou cherub from the skies,  
   On thy sweet hopes I fondly trusted,  
 On thee I fixed my wistful eyes,  
   On thy delusions long I rested.  
 Of youth's fond eye the fondest beam,  
 Of youth's wild heart the wildest theme,  
                     The dearest cherished dream !

But troubles, trials fill our lives,  
And love dies young, and man survives.

## 4

Dream after dream by shadows crost,  
Like silence after thunder's roll,  
Like lurid flames in darkness lost,  
And shadows thicken on my soul.  
Life's hopes are almost all o'er cast,  
Ere yet my sunny youth be past,  
Ere cold this cheerless heart.  
Then wherefore still new passions start?  
Then wherefore acheth still my heart?

## 6

There's one hope yet. Still shines afar  
E'en like a steady beacon flame,  
Ambition's bright and lofty star,  
The brightly beaming star of Fame!  
Great, noble deeds, attempted, done,  
Life's battle boldly faced and won,  
For this my bosom burns.  
If this last hope deceitful turns,  
I care not,—Dust to Dust returns.

BONGONG, }  
May, 1873. }

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## AUTUMN-NIGHT IN A BENGAL VILLAGE.

## I

'Tis midnight, and the bright autumnal moon  
 Flings radiance on the golden *Aush* crops  
 That grow in wild profusion, stretching far  
 Around me, bending with their load of corn ;  
 And on the varnished green of *Amon* fields  
 Sheds softer brilliance. Silvers all the scene, —  
 The fields, the distant huts, the tops of trees,  
 And glitters on the swelling Indian stream,  
 And makes it almost day.

## 2

All, all is light,  
 Save where the pekul rears his aged height,  
 O'er acres throws his ancient out-spread arms  
 And flings a sombre darkness on the ground,  
 A sight of noble majesty in woe,  
 A sight of deep-felt, self-collected gloom,  
 In midst of light and joy. Save where in shade  
 The bamboo trees appear in lighter green,  
 And graceful throw their bending branches out,  
 Like rockets bursting in the open sky,  
 Then gently falling on the earth again.  
 Save where the distant line of darksome trees  
 O'ershade and fence some humble village in,  
 And humble huts and tanks and jangle shrubs.  
 Primeval rural scene, where harmless birds  
 Build nests in ancient trees or weed-grown lakes,  
 And simple creatures live with brother man,  
 He simple, even as they.

## 3

## 3

All, all, is still,  
 Save when the passing wind breathes soft and sweet,  
 And shakes forth music from the pepl tree,  
 And wakes the ripples on the spacious stream.  
 Save when the sleepless dog howls at the moon,  
 And breaks the calm of night. Save when perchance  
 Some half sung strain of some lone villager  
 Comes floating o'er the stillness of the air,  
 Its rudeness mellowed by the distance long,  
 And sets my thoughts to music, fills my heart  
 With past recollections.

## 4

All nature sleeps  
 Save those, not few I ween, those kept awake  
 By qualms of conscience or the throes of woe,  
 By carking cares that mock the power of rest,  
 By sleepless thoughts of ill-requited love,  
 By midnight watchings by the bed of the death,  
 By grief for those they miss around their hearth,  
 By grief for those they ne'er shall see again.  
 O! woful, woful heritage of man !

BONGONG,        }  
 September, 1873. }



## AUTUMN-NIGHT IN A BENGAL RICE-FIELD.

## I

FAR and near, the moonbeams fall  
On the rice, luxuriant, tall,  
Bounteous nature's richest scene,—  
Endless sea of waving green !  
Fed with rains still more and more,  
Rivers, flooding bank and shore,  
Spread for miles the corn-field o'er,  
Oft a fathom deep or more.  
But the *Amon* higher grown  
Glances in the autumn moon.  
Far as eye can reach, the scene  
Is one sea of waving green,  
Yon dark line of deeper hue  
Is a village in our view,  
Pass the island village by,  
Stretches still the *Amon* sea.

## 2

'Tis evening now, my boat goes on  
Still rustling through the green *Amon*,  
On either side they bending gently,  
Leave a way as reverently.  
No sound is on the earth or sky,  
Save of my boat that rustles by.  
Save of some boatman's distant cry  
In evening stillness faintly heard.  
Save note of some wild lonesome bird,

That on the plants had built her nest,  
And nestled there in quiet rest.  
She sees the intruding boat and flies,  
And flapping upwards fills the skies  
With clamours 'gainst intruding men,  
Disturbers of her nightly reign.

## 3

'Tis eve, now glides my boat all gently,  
On the waters silently,  
I stretch myself the bark upon  
And gaze upon the bright full moon.  
O! Autumn's moon is clear and bright,  
And sheds a dazzling flood of light,  
I gaze, and think, and gaze again,  
And pensive fancies fill my brain.  
The mellow stillness of the scene,  
The moonbeams sleeping on the green,  
The dark line of the hazy shore,  
The drip from the suspended oar,  
Like music in my ear soft stealing,  
Fill my heart with tender feeling!  
Ah! tender thoughts of days gone by,  
When hopes was high and blood was young,  
When love was new and friendship strong,  
And when there were, who are no more,  
And joys there were that now are o'er!  
They wake a long forgotten sigh,  
With tear unbidden fill my eye!



## 4

But soft! I hear a distant song,  
And sound of boatmen's dashing oar,  
And in an instant see before  
Some boats that swiftly pass along.  
The merry tillers of this place,  
Await a goodly harvest yield,  
And with no work at home or field,  
With gladsome heart they hold a race!  
And loud they sing some stirring song,  
Composed by some unlettered bard,  
And all their oars plied quick and hard  
Keep time to their tempestuous song!  
For their's a life of joy and sorrow,  
Without a care or thought of morrow.  
Their Zemindars are rich and great,  
And paddy-lenders hard as fate!  
The tillers have no thought of saving,  
Borrowing live all twelve-month round,  
And when the Autumn floods come round  
Hold their *back* and merry-making!

## 5

I'd merrily lead a boatman's life,—  
Ah! censure not a poet's dream,—  
Their joys and woes a mingled stream,  
Their artless converse, simple life,  
Are dear to me. Then would I row  
My little fish-boat to and fro,

Then would I toil, and sing the while,  
From morning's glow till evening's smile,  
And when my work and toil was o'er,  
Would hasten to my cottage door.  
For there, my love, my village fair,  
The gentle partner of my care,  
She would my daily meals prepare,  
And wait beside the cottage door,  
With throbbing heart and anxious thought,  
To view the far benighted boat,  
To meet her loving spouse though poor.  
And he would part her locks so gently,  
And kiss her fears away so gently,  
And gaze upon the moon on high,  
And then upon her sparkling eye,  
And eager kiss those lips so dear,  
And gently kiss away her fear.  
For those two meek and bashful eyes,  
For that true heart,—a poor man's prize,—  
The poet gladly would be poor,  
In poverty range the wide world o'er!

## 6

Forsooth, a boatman's life I'd lead,  
A life of sweet content in need,  
And where yon topes of mango tree  
Disclose long vistas to the eye,  
And clumps of arched bamboo green  
Create a cool and fairy scene,

And humble huts beneath yon tree  
Bespeak content in poverty,  
There, there mid scenes of sweet repose,  
With summer breeze its music lending,  
And shade and sunshine sweetly blending,  
Mid scenes of mingled joy and woes,  
Content to toil the live-long day,  
I'd work and sing my life away.  
Where mango branches spread above,  
And *Kokil* sings eternal love,  
I'd lay me on the bright green grass,  
In toil and rest my hours would pass.  
All nature mute ;—the birds on high,  
The beasts upon the grassy lea,—  
All nature mute except the dove,  
Soft cooing from some mango grove,  
That stretching over acres wide,  
Would shed deep gloom in bright noontide.  
What sweetness in thy gentle song  
Resounding through the bush and lea,  
The bamboo grove, the mango tree,  
Its mellow sweetness would prolong !  
Dwells in thy eye what tender love,  
What winning art in every move,  
What grace and beauty in each action,  
What gentle thoughts of sweet affection  
Dwell in thy little fluttering heart,  
Thou bird of love and winsome art !  
And simple-hearted village men,  
With lusty limbs and open mien,

And gentle, bashful village girls,  
 With down-cast eyes and raven curls,  
 And healthy limbs, and rounded arms,  
 And gentle face and sable charms,  
 Would meet their fond familiar friend,  
 And tales of joys and woes would blend,  
 Smile o'er the prospects of the year,  
 And for their sorrows claim a tear.  
 Dearer to me such converse kind  
 Than polished arts and talk refined,  
 Where midst the honied words, I feel  
 The heart, the heart, is wanting still.

## 7

But truce. What sounds my ear assail,  
 At midnight hour what voice of wail ?\*  
 Upon the islet village standing,  
 Upon the waters eager bending†  
 Her locks dishevelled on the air,  
 Her arms extended, bosom bare,  
 Oppressed with woe, oppressed with fears,  
 A very Niobe in tears,  
 Why, with repeated shrieks of pain,  
 Doth she disturb night's silent reign ?  
 She's heard,—her father old and grey  
 Has mid the waters lost his way,  
 Drowned where 'tis ten feet deep or more,  
 Not long ago, not far from shore.

---

\* The story narrated in the succeeding verses is founded on fact.

What pain, what woes more cruel prove  
Than death of those we fondly love ?

## 8

Speed, speed my boatmen swiftly on  
Like lightning through the tall *Amon* !  
The boat flies bounding o'er the wave,  
Perchance the man we still may save.  
But long before we reached the goal,  
A braver heart, a kinder soul,  
Had jumped into the midnight wave,  
And saved the old man from his grave,  
"Old man ! the hair upon thy head  
Is gray" 'twas thus to him I said,  
"Thy eyes have lost their wonted glow,  
Thy frame is feeble, steps all slow,  
Why in this midnight's feeble ray  
Did'st venture lone this watery way ?

## 9

"Sire" ! 'twas thus to me he said,  
"The hair is gray upon my head,  
My eyes have lost their wonted glow,  
My frame is feeble, steps all slow,  
Yet in this midnight's feeble ray,  
Still must I cross this watery way.  
My boy,—great Alla bless his soul !  
My boy,—the darling of my soul,  
For years wide fertile acres held,  
And paid his rent and ploughed his field,

And reaped his harvest, gentle boy,  
 And filled my aged heart with joy.  
 But Alla gives and takes away,  
 And each hath his ordained day,  
 The arrow sped,—I only grieve,  
 It struck not me my boy to save.”  
 The old man slowly bent his head,  
 And fast and thick the tear-drops sped.  
 I silent marked the old man's grief,  
 It gave his swelling heart relief.

## 10

“My daughter, my remaining joy,  
 The wife of my departed boy,  
 Wept day and night, yet toiled in grief,  
 To give my old age some relief.  
 She milked the cow, she spun the thread,  
 For work to distant places sped,  
 From morning's smile till evening's glow  
 She ceaseless toiled and toiled in woe,  
 And still as eve returning came,  
 Her placid, drooping face the same,  
 I saw her toiling still in grief,  
 To give my old age some relief.  
 But this unwonted ceaseless toil,  
 And grief as ceaseless all the while,  
 Did break her heart,—oh ! she is gone,—  
 Great Alla, let thy will be done !

## 11

“My story need I further say ?  
 It is a tale of every day.

My neighbour saw me old and poor,  
 With bribes he sought the richman's door.  
 Our *Gomashta*, a faithless man,  
 Transferred to him by fields of *dhan*,  
 Which we have tilled this hundred year  
 And I must wander,—where, oh where !  
 A week is gone, a week is come,  
 From village I to village roam,  
 Perchance a few more weeks will come  
 Before I cease to weep and roam.  
 My hut is down, my things are sold,  
 Gone is my son, so true and brave,  
 My heart is weary, I am old,  
 Great Alla ! speed me to my grave."

## 12

Enough, old man, thy simple tale  
 Doth smite this heart, as with a flail.  
 What throes of woe what deep-felt pain,  
 What bitter tears that unseen start,  
 What silent anguish of the heart,  
 Even at this hour pollute night's reign !  
 Ah, dreams of rural bliss are vain  
 And life hath trouble life hath pain !  
 Then toil, it is the will of Heaven,  
 And labour all thy mortal span,  
 For rest unto us is not given,  
 Still toil and help thy brother man !  
 When next thou sailest o'er life's calm sea  
 'Neath moon-beams of prosperity,

Thy work remember,—'tis to save  
The old man in the midnight wave !  
And thou ! proud man of wealth and power,  
When maddened in thy prosperous hour,  
Thou liftst thy hand to smite and quell,  
Be calm and stretch thy hand to save,  
Think of the maiden's midnight wail,  
Think of the old man in the wave !

MEHERPUR, }  
September, 1874. }



## FILIAL RECOLLECTIONS.

1

WHAT means this sudden transport? Why boundeth thus  
 my heart.  
 Why in me strange emotions in sudden rapture start?  
 'Twas but a passing zephyr, and as it hurried by,  
 Waked ripples on the river, long buried dreams in me.

2

It was the breeze of Aswin, I felt it on my brow,  
 And ere these words are spoken, it passed off even now.  
 It gently waked my fancy, a breath it hurried by,  
 But fancy worketh wonders in th' twinkling of an eye.

3

Methought I heard all sudden the loudly sounding shell,  
 The swelling voice of *Sankha*, the note of festive bell,—  
 Methought I saw all sudden, glad scenes of pomp and glee,  
 And well dressed men and women in joy and jubilee.

4

The tide of years rolled backward, and once more blithe  
 and free,  
 I was a little truant, and viewed those sights with glee.  
 And as the evening deepened, the moon it shone out brave,  
 I sought each dear relation to bow and blessings crave.\*

5

And there were forms among them, O how surpassing dear,  
 Who blessed the little prattler with many a loving tear.  
 O tears of love parental! O blessings rich and rare!  
 O tender recollections of joys, now where, O where?

BONGONG,  
 September, 1873. }

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\* A custom observed by Hindus on the last night of the Durga Puja.

## TO MY ELDER BROTHER.

## I

NINE years and nine have passed and rolled away,  
 Since last we strolled in village scenes so gay.  
 Since last on *Gunga's* silver shores we played,  
 And built sand-castles 'neath the evening's shade,  
 While lay our green-boat moored on *Gunga's* breast,  
 And mellow silence lulled a world to rest.  
 We played, or marked the smoke from some nigh wood,  
 Where on the sands was cooked our simple food,  
 Or viewed the moonbeams tinge the slumbering stream,  
 And silent gazed, as on a pictured dream,  
 Or heard the boatman's far halloo that came  
 Slow wafted o'er the evening's voiceless stream.  
 Since last we watched the fading morning star,  
 As on through village scenes we wandered far,  
 And hailed from upland fields the blushing sun,  
 As on the bashful dewy flowers he shone,  
 And raised a chorus from each bush and tree.  
 Young was our heart, we saw with boyish glee,  
 Each dew drop sparkle in the golden ray,  
 And heard with boyish joy the *Kokil's* lay.  
 I think of thee, and all these visions start,  
 Thou earliest, best of friends, thou brother of my heart !

## 2

Nine years and nine have passed of woe and glee,  
 And I have roamed on life's tempestuous sea,  
 In various climes, and various scenes have strayed,  
 The Rigi scaled, Loch Katrine's shores surveyed.

Have viewed the halls, on luxury's silken throne,  
 Mid song and mirth where wealth and beauty shone,  
 Have seen where anguish held her aching brow,  
 And let unseen her bitter tear-drops flow,  
 All heedless roamed life's shifting scenes among,  
 Or heard Ambition's call, or Pleasure's syren song !

## 3

Nine years and nine have passed of woe and glee,  
 Yet boyish days we passed so merrily,  
 Like glowing visions wake distinct and clear  
 And slowly fills my eyelids with a tear.  
 Nine years and nine have passed and done their part,  
 And robbed the lightness from our footsteps light,  
 And wiped the brilliance from our eyeballs bright,  
 And quenched the hopes and loves that lit our heart,  
 And those fond eyes that watched our boyish days,  
 And smiling shed bright sunbeams on our ways,  
 Are closed in sleep,—the light is quenched and gone,  
 And weary is our way, and darksome, cheerless, lone !

## 4

It matters not, for man must meekly take  
 Dame Fortune's favours and the woes she sends.  
 O'er troubled waters as o'er glassy lake,  
 In storm and sunshine, we shall ever make  
 The best of brothers, and the truest friends.

MEHERPUR, }  
 September, 1874. }

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## TO MY YOUNGER BROTHER.

*(On his departure for Europe.)*

## I

'Tis done! now far and farther still  
Each moment from thy native shore,  
Thou seest alone the billow's swell,  
Thou hearest alone the surge's roar.

## 2

Above an angry, azure sky,  
Beneath an angrier, bluer sea,  
And like a bird with outspread wings  
Thy vessel wafts thee ceaselessly.

## 3

And in thy heart, ah! what a strife  
Of doubtful hope, uncertain fear,  
Of parting sorrow, tender grief,  
Of recollections passing dear,

## 4

Of varied feelings ever new,  
As mid still-varying scenes you roam,  
A tear for what you leave behind,  
A hope for what is still to come.

## 5

Methinks I see thee on the deck,  
The canvas fluttering on the gale,  
The vessel cleaving through the main,  
And rolling on the billows' swell,

## 6

Methinks I see thee on the deck,  
Still gazing on a vacant sea,  
And gazing still and musing still,  
Of whom and what—ah, who shall say?

## 7

Ah who shall say, ah who can feel,  
The tumult that thy heart must know,  
In leaving thus a dear loved home,  
Long, long to wander, far to go!

## 8

But truce to such, nor this the hour  
When pensive thoughts should claim a sigh,  
And if a tear-drop clouds thy face,  
Dash down the tear-drop from thine eye.

## 9

For now thy bark is newly launched  
Upon life's wild and boistrous sea,  
Hold fast thy helm, keep fixed thy watch,  
An active life awaiteth thee.

## 10

And when thy travels all are o'er  
When to thy native land wilt come,—  
Long years of anxious watch then past,—  
An exile, to thy father's home.

## II

Then rich or poor, or high or low,  
 In thy own home art welcome ever,  
 One aching heart will bless the day  
 And brother's love it changeth never.

BONGONG, }  
 June, 1873. }

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*(Postscript Ten Years After.)*

## I

GREAT in thy gifts thou comest back,  
 For learning, what young-hearted strife,  
 For science, what a noble toil,  
 For truth, a consecrated life !

## 2

And goodness, more than man's, was thine,  
 What simple candour in thee shone,  
 What sympathy, what helpful love !  
 So young, so noble,—art thou gone ?

## 3

Oh, cruel, cruel was the blow,  
 My joys on earth are gone for ever.  
 But Death, you conquer not my love  
 For brother's love it changeth never.

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TO MY ELDEST DAUGHTER.  
*(On receiving some verses from her.)*

## 1

GENTLE daughter of my love !  
Meek and placid is thy face,  
Soft and deep and fond thine eyes,  
Sweetly gentle is thy grace.  
Didst thou for thy father feel  
Wishes kind and hopes so high,  
Didst thou drop for him a tear  
Didst thou waft for him a sigh ?

## 2

Thanks, dear child of love and light !  
These sweet lines, this pious art,  
Soothe like Nature's own sweet breath,  
Brace my nerves and stir my heart.  
And like music sweet thy words  
Fill my soul and cheer my day,  
Now I work with stronger faith  
Tread with firmer steps my way.

## 3

Work ! 'tis noble destiny !  
For the toiler in the field  
Seeks no loftier aim than his,  
Spurns what gold or pleasures yield.  
Duty bids, his strong right arm  
Wields the scythe once and again,  
Though at times his brow is moist,  
Heedless still he toils amain.

## 4

Blooming hopes of early youth  
 May have withered in decay,  
 Crystal springs of joy or love  
 May have dried and died away.  
 Flowers nor crystal springs he seeks,  
 Works in manhood's sterner fields,  
 Does the task that duty bids,  
 Tastes the joys ambition yields.

## 5

Sendest thou some wishes kind?  
 Child or Cherub from above!  
 Send my friends, a few that are,  
 Approbation and their love?  
 Thanks! it cheers the toiler's heart,  
 Thanks! it cheers his livelong day,  
 And he wipes his moistened brow,  
 Treads with former steps his way.

## 6

Gentle daughter of my love!  
 Meek thy eyes, thy brow is calm,  
 Gentler, softer doom be thine,  
 Life on thee shed sweetest balm!  
 And when years are past and gone,  
 Think of him who toiled in field,  
 Him who rested on his scythe,  
 Wafted blessings to his child.

BANKURA, }  
 April, 1881. }

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## TO MY SECOND DAUGHTER.

*(On her marriage and departure from Calcutta.)*

## I

GENTLE daughter of my heart !  
 Hear the bell, now we must part.  
 Love commands, 'tis duty's voice,  
     Thou shalt leave thy loved home,  
 With the husband of thy choice,  
     And in distant places roam.  
 Part we child, a father's true  
 Fervid blessings be with you !

## 2

Thou art ready in thy heart,  
 In thy sphere to do thy part,  
 Soft and meek as wife should do,  
     Bravely too as woman will.  
 Let no tear thine eye bedew,  
     Though thy heart must deeply feel,  
 Leaving all you loved so true,  
 Leaving him who blesses you !

## 3

Life is real, life is earnest,  
 Sings the bard whose strains thou lovest.  
 Face the duties of thy life  
     With a brave and hoping heart,  
 Make a true confiding wife,  
     And in life perform thy part.  
 And in joy or woe be true  
 And my blessings be with you !

4

Sweet and gentle life be thine,  
Peace and blessings round thee shine.  
Husband's love may bless thy heart,  
Smiling cherubs bless thy home!  
Hark the whistle! Child, we part,  
But wherever I may roam,  
Wheresoe'er may work my life,  
Father's love with you shall be.

BARISAL, }  
October, 1883. }

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## SIXTY YEARS HAVE COME AND PARTED.

SIXTY years have come and parted,  
 Friend and Brother, noble hearted !  
 We have wandered far and wide  
 O'er life's pathway, side by side,  
 Toil and trouble we have crost,  
 Joyed and sorrowed, loved and lost !  
 Chased in youth each bright illusion,  
 Proved in age life's vain delusion,—  
 Dreams of glory,—often shaded,  
     High ambitions,—often crost,  
 Dreams of love and friendship faded,  
     Comrades by the wayside lost !  
 { Gallant hands have dropped the oar,  
   Pious hearts have beat no more,  
   Souls have reached their haven shore !  
 Toiling still in rain and sun,—  
 Labour lost or purpose done,—  
 { We have walked through stress and strife,  
   Hand in hand the path of life,  
   Sixty years with struggles rife !  
 Days of childhood ! past and gone,—  
 Life's red morning radiant shone,—  
 Days of bliss and parents' love,  
 Pure as light from heaven above !  
 { Linked with them our happiest dreams,  
   Greenwoods streaked with golden gleams,  
   Peaceful fields, pellucid streams !  
 Every Peepul old and hoary  
 Had its weird sylvan story,

Every pebble we could hold  
 Was a gem of price untold,  
 Every stream when evening fell  
 Had its wond'rous tale to tell !  
 Sands on which our fires we lighted,  
     Echoing to the boatman's cry,  
 Groves through which we ran delighted,  
     Tremulous 'neath a moonlit sky !  
 { Scenes were gay when hearts were jolly,  
   Scenes of childish mirth and folly,  
   Birbhoom, Pabna, Kumarcolly.  
 Days of childhood ! ere our land  
 By the railway line was spanned,  
 On her rivers broad and deep  
 Rare was seen a steaming ship,—  
 Boats by thousands, up and down,  
 Carried trade to mart and town,  
 Pilgrims went, a month or more,  
 Benares to Pooree's shore !  
 Local craftsmen still supplied  
     Simple goods of village trade,  
 Village smiths their anvils plied,  
     Village women spun their thread.  
 { How we yet recall the day,—  
   Troops and horsemen lined the way,—  
   Canning came with us to stay !  
 Passed a year,—we heard from far  
 Thunders of the Sepoy War !  
 { Passed a year,—we saw that scene,—  
   Midst the cannon's roar and din,  
   India passed unto the Queen !

Days of childhood ! ere they ended,

Life in early grief was blended !

Fifty years have well now gone,—

Can we e'er forget the day,—

Pale on Her the morning shone,

Pale in death She silent lay !

{ And we wept beside the door,

{ Took her to the river shore,

{ Saw her on the earth no more !

Two brief years,—a fresher dart

Struck our young and bleeding heart,—

He,—in duty ever brave,—

Died beneath the midnight wave !

He had early struggles known,

Truth and mainly courage shown,

She, a Hindu woman true,

Woman's love and duty knew.

{ Pure their souls, by sufferings proved,

{ Man more saintly never moved,

{ Truer woman never loved !

Nature wipes the orphan's tear,

Kinsmen tend with parents' care,—

Onward then through joy and sorrow,

Through our course at school and college,

Still we worked and toiled each morrow,

Still we gathered fresher knowledge,—

And what legends, dreams and visions

Filled our hearts with new emotions !

Sindabad the tempest tost,

Crusoe in his island lost,

{ Romulus the king of old,  
 { Saladin with the scarf of gold,  
 { Moorish knights, crusaders bold !  
 Homer and his warriors grim,  
 Dante and his deathless dream,  
 Brave Macbeth who met his foe,  
 Robin Hood and Ivanhoe !

{ Gentler thoughts our souls did move,  
 { Blessings came from heaven above,  
 { Filled our homes and hearts with love !  
 Forty years have now departed,—  
 Dost thou still recall the day,  
 When from India's shores I started,  
 Crossed the boundless ocean way ?  
 Stealing, as the night descended,  
 From the loved and dearly tended,  
 Stealing 'neath the ship's white awning,  
 As the ruddy day was dawning !  
 And with me a friend true-hearted  
 Silent from his parents parted,  
 Shared with me my hopes and fears,  
 { Stood by me in joy and tears,  
 { Stood by me these forty years !  
 Life is sweeter, life is dearer,  
 When true friendship links us nearer,  
 Heart to heart and hand to hand,  
 As in youth, in age we stand !  
 { One more youth with beaming eye,  
 { Patriot's fire and purpose high,  
 { Sailed that day,—to do or die !

England ! when I reached thy strand,  
     Great in glory did'st thou stand !  
 Those were Bright's and Gladstone's days,  
 Tennyson's and Browning's lays,  
 { Truth was Darwin's, Spencer's aim,  
 Truth from Mill and Carlyle came,  
 Dickens found in truth his fame !  
 Pride of empire, pride of pelf,  
 Prostrates now thy sturdier self,  
 Genius dies when words grow bold,  
 Manhood sinks 'neath Eastern gold !  
 France ! I saw in fatal strife  
     Thy last empire sink in blood,  
 Italy ! new-freed to life,  
     On thy classic soil I stood !  
 O'er the castled Rhine I sailed,  
 High St. Gothard's mountains scaled,  
 { Saw bright Leman's sparkling foam,  
 Saw Venitia's sea-washed dome,  
 Came once more to dear-loved home !  
 Many winters, many rains  
     Now I ranged Bengala's plains,—  
 Jangipore, a land of dream,  
 Bongong, by her limpid stream,  
 Shabazpur, whose angry sea  
 Swept the land like fate's decree !  
 Tippra, proud of Lalmai hills,  
 Katwa, by the Ajay rills,  
 { Bankra, fairest scene of all,  
 Balasore and Barisall,  
 Varied work these names recall !

Sweeter objects claimed my care,  
 Playful prattlers fresh and fair,—  
 One, a beauteous gentle child,  
     One, a sprightly thing of love,  
 All, with winning ways and wild,  
     Ties of sweetness round me wove !

{ They have, through life's weary way,  
 Brightened toil with love's soft ray,  
 Scattered sunlight on my way !  
 Shadows cross the sunny way,  
 Sorrows gloom the halcion day,—  
 { Heart more brave and soul more just,  
 Ne'er this mortal earth has crost,  
 Than the comrade whom we lost !  
 Far in French and German soil,  
     Long he gathered Western lore,  
 And we saw his loving toil,  
     'Midst the friendless and the poor,  
 High his purpose,—brief his day,—  
 Soon he left and passed away !  
 In bereavement and in sorrow  
 Still we laboured, eve and morrow,  
 Thou in city's dusty round,  
 I in distant duties bound,  
 Years of arduous work were done  
 Till my Districts I had won.

{ Higher hope and loftier aim  
 To the sons of India came,—  
 Ripon ruled with righteous fame !  
 Two and twenty years have parted



Since I crossed again the sea,  
 With my loved ones, gentle hearted,  
 And, my brother, now with thee !  
 Was it tourist's zeal or gladness,  
 Was it Indian Pilgrim's madness,  
 { Urged thee to each distant land,  
 Ceylon's grove or Afric's sand,  
 Spanish mountains towering grand ?  
 Past each English summer scene,  
 Scottish hills and Irish green,  
 Past the beauteous Swedish town  
 Where Adolphus wore his crown,  
 Past the wild Norwegian shore  
 Where the Vikings ruled of yore,  
 Past the bleak Laplander's home  
 Still insatiate did'st thou roam !  
 { And thy wanderings were not done,  
 Till the Northern Cape was won,  
 Till thou saw'st the Midnight Sun !  
 Arctic calm to tropic toil,  
 Peaceful rest to life's turmoil,—  
 Such the burden of my song,  
 Wherefore then this tale prolong ?  
 Mymensing, thy jute-grown shore,  
 Sal-clad uplands, Midnapore,  
 Burdwan, thy classic plain  
 Saw the toiler's work again,  
 Nor on Mahanadi's breast  
 Weary wand'rer found his rest !  
 Large Divisions,—broader field,—

Saw my arduous labours done,  
 Life no higher joy can yield  
     Than the joy from duties won !  
 { And I saw Love's bright lamps shine,  
   Young hearts worshipped at His shrine,  
   Linked their lives with me and mine !  
 { They, my own by sacred ties,—  
   Loving comrades, helpers wise,—  
   Joy be theirs 'neath sunny skies !  
 Yet bereavements wait on age,  
 Tears bedew life's closing page !  
 They,—the gentle, meek and lowly,  
 Suffering much, serene and holy,—  
 They unto their rest have gone,  
 She in sadness lives alone !  
 Could I like a poet paint  
 Picture of an earthly saint,  
 { Apara ! thy patient life,  
   Gentleness in storm and strife,  
   Sorrowing mother, suffering wife,  
   Would reveal an unknown worth,—  
   Angel virtues on this earth !  
 I have seen thee in thy illness,  
     In thy penury and woe,  
 Pray in peace, in midnight's stillness,  
     Bless the Hand whence mercies flow !  
 { Few have known thee on this shore,  
   Earth shall know thee never more.  
 { Thou hast reached thy haven shore !

Now my arduous task was ended,  
 Life with lighter work was blended,—  
 Years in Europe's colder clime  
 Work of love beguiled my time,  
 { India's ancient tale of glory,  
 { India's epics old and hoary,  
 { India's mournful modern story !  
 I have felt and ever thought  
 Progress by ourselves is wrought,  
 And a Congress of my nation  
 Shared with me my aspiration !  
 Years in far Baroda's soil,  
     I have felt a workman's pride,  
 And for travel or for toil  
     Ranged o'er India far and wide,—  
 From the uplands of Mysore,  
 Palm-clad shores of Travancore,  
 { Khyber Pass to Eastern Bay,  
 { Brahmaputra to Bombay,  
 { Quetta's heights to Mandalay !  
 Sadder fate in life's decline  
 Gentle Brother ! hath been thine,  
 Wasting illness, lingering sorrow,  
 Chains thee down each joyless morrow,  
 Years of suffering come and past,  
 Cureless while this life will last !  
 Yet if patience in our woe,  
     Trial and trouble silent borne,  
 Sanctifies this life below,  
     Saint's white garment thou hast worn,

Thine is sweet-souled resignation,  
And thy life,—a dedication!

{ Heaven reward thy noble strife,  
Worthy son prolong thy life,  
Gentle be his wedded wife,  
And thy daughter in her love,  
She a guardian angel prove!

{ Brother! may this idle line  
Wake the past in life's decline,  
Link the love that's thine and mine!

Lo! a ruddy light is breaking  
O'er the sea, across the earth,  
Young Japan is slowly waking,  
Asia hails her glorious birth!

{ From Japan to Persian heights  
Man will seek for newer lights  
Man will conquer nobler rights!  
Hark! while yet we watch and wait,  
Mighty impulse, purpose great,  
'Midst the storm and stress of strife  
Wakes our land to higher life,—  
Stern resolve is manhood's breath,  
Deep is woman's inborn faith!  
Not as strangers in their soil,—  
Not as voiceless slaves of toil,—  
They demand the citizen's station,  
Lofty birthright of each nation!

{ Manly right and purpose high,  
Place mid nations 'neath the sky,  
Be our country's,—when we die!

LONDON,  
August, 1908. }

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## ROSE BUSH TO CREEPER.

SAID rose-bush to creeper—Arise lazy sleeper,  
Uprise and know deeper, the tidings of day !  
Rise for she comes stealing, the Damsel of Darjeeling,  
Overborne by her feeling, and blushing bright as May !  
Maid of form majestic, and smiling and mystic—  
A fairy all fantastic—say which will be her way ?

By railway and by steamer, her way is to the schemer,  
Oh the Patriotic Dreamer !—the creeper spoke above,  
So sing of bridal feasting, of *loochi-monda* tasting,  
Evening songs and jestings, and grandsire's changeless love !

Ring the bell from tower and dome,  
Chant the lay, the bride is come  
Decentralised from father's home !

*December, 1907.*

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## KOKIL TO RINGDOVE.

PRECIOUS good tidings,—said Kokil to Ring-dove,—  
Reached me this morning,—glad tidings of true love !  
Ah, is it real? Yes, true news we carry,  
The Belle of Baroda is now going to marry !  
Iron-strong in purpose, deep in thought as ocean,  
Music in her accents, grace in all her motion,  
Ah ! but of her chosen hast thou any notion ?

But I know,—said Ring-dove,—of the maiden true,  
Of the happy bridegroom, strong and steadfast too,  
Sing we then of bridal, for we may not tarry,  
E'en from Coromandel a grandsire's love we carry.

Ring the bell from tower to dome,  
Chant the lay the bride is come,  
Decentralised from father's home !

*April, 1908.*

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## LAY OF THE OLD MINSTREL.

WHEREFORE on this bed of Roses  
Scatter leaves of winter time,—  
With these thoughts of youth and ardour  
Wherefore blend an old man's rhyme ?

Joyous notes of mirth and laughter  
From this volume seem to rise,—  
Young hearts throb with tender passion,  
Young eyes meet responsive eyes !

Lightnings flash along these pages  
From each bright and beaming eye,—  
Shall I with my scanty tresses  
Venture 'neath this lurid sky ?

Each enthusiast brings a blossom  
To this pure and perfumed shrine,  
Every pen records a stanza,  
Every poet adds a line !

And they dance in mirth and gladness  
As they lightly come and go,  
Shall I dare to tread a measure  
With my poor rheumatic toe ?

In the olden days, Ulyses,  
So the ancient Homer says,  
Stuffed his crew with wool and cotton  
Dreading sirens' dulcet lays,—

Shall I, stuffed and over-coated,  
Bring my harp to join this cheer?  
How the maids will smile and giggle,  
How the youths will laugh and jeer!

Nathless lady! 'Tis thy mandate  
I should chant a lay of mine,  
To this store of youthful music  
Add an oldman's rugged line.

Be it so! Bright morning's radiance  
Beams upon thy budding life,  
Be the day as bright and beauteous,  
Be the evening free from strife!

Yet, in days of glowing sunshine—  
Shadows some times cross the path,  
And soft evenings, star-resplendent,  
Are bedimmed by tempest's wrath!

Care and sorrow and bereavement  
Darken oft the joys of life,  
Friend untrue or foe relentless  
Waken agony and strife!

Strong and true, pursue thy duty,  
Be it dark or sunny day,  
And a woman's high endurance  
Will not fail thee in thy way!



Lo! a youth of noble promise  
Seeks thee for his wedded wife,  
And will lead thee to the altar,  
And will guide thee in thy life,—

Braver in your lives united,  
Stronger in your mutual love,  
Tread the path of life undaunted  
Fearless through all perils move!

Make thy home a bower of virtue,  
Make thy dear ones rich in love,  
And with woman's peerless patience  
Woman's lofty mission prove!

Ask from High the truest guidance,  
In each battle lost or won,  
High or humble be thy fortune,  
Woman! be thy task well done!

*September, 1907.*

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## BEGUM! ON THY QUEENLY FOREHEAD.

BEGUM! On thy queenly forehead  
 I have read—unfaltering truth ;  
 In thy heart—a noble impulse,  
 In thy eyes—a woman's ruth !  
 Hast thou willed, a humble brother,—  
 Toiler in the field of life,—  
 Should herein record his verses,—  
 Noble Nawab's saintly wife ?

Be it so ! Though far asunder,  
 West and East our homes may be,—  
 Thou dost rule by Arab Ocean  
 And I toil by Bengal Sea,—  
 Still I claim a sacred kinship,  
 Sacred Ind our common home,  
 Common hopes and aspirations  
 Blend our hearts, where'er we roam.

Be it still thy lofty purpose  
 For that sacred land to toil,  
 Help the son of loom and anvil,  
 Raise the tiller of the soil.  
 Trust in duty humbly rendered,  
 Trust in India's future star,  
 And our inborn sons and daughters  
 Shall be higher than we are !

Unseen clouds will often darken  
Glamour of the brightest day,  
Doubt and discord and disaster  
Oft will bar our onward way,  
But the brother and the sister,—  
Man great-hearted, woman true,—  
Proudly sweep aside each hindrance,  
Serve the land their fathers knew !

Caste and creed will often wrangle,  
Tear apart those who are one,  
Greed and selfishness will hinder  
What by selfless work is won ;  
But true-hearted men and women—  
Moslem or of Hindu faith,—  
Love of men their high religion,—  
Serve their country until death !

And there are who mock our labours,  
Oft divide us by their art,  
But shall brother shun his brother,  
Sister from her sister part ?  
Comrades in a common sorrow,  
Comrades in a common toil,  
Heaven unites !—No man shall sever  
Children of a common soil !

Through each sorrow and disaster  
We will strive to win the goal,  
Better failure in our struggle  
Than the torpours of our soil !  
Be it failure, be it glory,  
Manlike let our work be tried  
And our sons will ponder proudly,  
" Thus our fathers lived and died !"

Begum ! O'er this boundless ocean  
We have met and we shall part,  
But thy truth and gentle virtues  
Shall endure within my heart !  
And perchance these rugged verses  
May at times, in toil and strife,  
Bring to mind a humble brother,—  
Toiler in the field of life !

*April, 1908.*

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## DID SOME PERI FROM THE RAINBOW.

DID some Peri from the rainbow,  
Hover o'er Miss Fyzee's birth,  
Did some WALI from the forest,  
Bless her when she saw the earth?  
Peri-like in wit and fancy,  
WALI-like in power of thought,  
Keen of eye that darkly flashes,  
Keen of words with wisdom fraught,

Hast thou seen the sun and shadow  
Playing over rock and den?  
So Miss Fyzee's observation,  
Plays upon poor mortal men!  
Nothing blinds her, nothing escapes her,  
Naught her searching glance can shun,  
Cloaks of falsehood melt before her  
Like the mist before the sun!

Hast thou seen the hail of winter,  
Beat upon a battered field?  
So Miss Fyzee's thoughts resistless.  
Force, opposing men to yield!  
Sure some WALI gave her wisdom,  
Or some Peri from the sky.  
Keen of wit and quick of reason—  
Maiden of the flashing eye!

Young of age but quick of impulse,  
    Gifted child of gifted line,  
I have watched with pride and wonder,  
    Gleams of genius in thee shine !  
Thou hast wandered near and further,  
    Lived with people East and West,  
Probed their thoughts and inner motives  
    Judged their worst, admired their best !

Noble in thy aspirations,  
    Truth-beloving in thy heart,  
Cast aside all nations' failings—  
    Choose the truer nobler part,  
Search in every distant region,  
    What is great and what is grand,  
Search the best in thought and action,  
    Plant it in thy native land.

On this blue and boundless ocean  
    I have met thee, noble maid ;  
And thy gifts and wondrous wisdom  
    Never from my mind shall fade !  
Will this line in thee awaken  
    Thoughts of him once known to thee,  
Him who met thee as a brother,  
    Met and parted on the sea ?

*April, 1908.*

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## O'ER THE BLUE AND BOUNDLESS OCEAN.

O'ER the blue and boundless ocean  
Fast the noble vessel flew,  
India's shores upon the waters  
Ever faint and fainter grew.  
Forty years have come and left me  
Since first I crossed this ocean's breast  
Forty years of work and wandering,—  
And as yet I find no rest!

Lo ! a maid in graceful garments, —  
Meekness in her gentle eye,  
Simple truth writ on her forehead,  
Sat and gazed upon the sky ;  
On her brow the red vermillion  
Like a star of beauty beamed,  
And the grace of India's daughters  
On her face and features beamed !

As a child unto her grandsire,  
Came the maiden simple-hearted,  
Spoke to me, of friends and parents,  
Of the home whence she has parted.  
I could see a passing shadow,  
I could see a tear unshed,—  
With a grandsire's love and blessing  
Gently touched the maiden's head.

Young in years, but firm in purpose,  
Bravely hast thou done thy part,  
Faced with men thy college studies,  
Learnt with men the healer's art.  
And, impelled by love of science,  
Boldly hast thou left thy Home,  
Dared to cross the trackless ocean  
Long in foreign lands to roam !

If at times to Amraoti  
Fondly turns thy inward eye,  
If a sister's sweet remembrance,  
Parent's love will wake a sigh,—  
I can feel such grief unspoken,  
I have felt as thou dost feel,—  
Duty bids us toil and travel,  
Cannot turn our hearts to steal !

Yet with woman's quiet courage  
Wipe the tear drops from thine eye  
Years of work and high endeavour  
Years of study wait for thee !  
Bravely hast thou chose thy duty,  
Bravely hast thy task begun  
Onward then ! with high ambition  
Be thy highest duty done !



Duty done, with hope and gladness,  
Cross again this azure main,  
Be a healer of the lowly,  
Of the sufferer in his pain.  
Father's love and mother's kisses,  
Sister's tears thy heart will move,  
Wilt thou still remember, maiden,  
Grandsire's blessings and his love ?

Hush !—an old man's daring visions  
With the highest hopes are life,—  
India's sons and duteous daughters  
Waking to a higher life !  
Workers true to toil and effort,  
Be the battle lost or won,—  
Manhood true to high endeavour.  
Woman's duty nobly done !

*April, 1908.*

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## TO A. OF MIDNAPORE.

'Twas a night in dark December,  
Eighteen-hundred-seventy-two,  
And she lay, a smiling infant,  
As the train incessant flew !  
Still she looked and still she wondered  
With her large and infant eye,—  
Did some visions of the future  
Come to haunt her from the sky ?  
Din and noise and whistle struck her  
As we sped for Jungipur,—  
Were they drum-beats of the battle  
Of her life which lay before ?

Fourteen years have come and parted,  
And she blossomed fresh and fair,  
And with girlhood's joyous ardour  
Did the boundless ocean dare !  
Aden, Egypt and Italia,—  
Past Atlantic's ceaseless roar,—  
She now viewed the cliffs of Albion,  
She now trod the English shore !  
Littlehampton, Linden Gardens,  
London summer's dubious gleams,  
Saw the girl with girl's romancing,  
Saw the maid with maiden's dreams!

Five years more have come and parted,—  
 It was eighteen-ninety-one,—  
 On Darjeeling's mist-clad mountains  
 Was the maiden sought and won !  
 He a youth of generous impulse,  
 Dauntless purpose, self-less heart,  
 She a woman true and tender,  
 Proudly bent to do her part !  
 Eighteen years in joy and sorrow,  
 Faithful man and loving wife,  
 They have walked, in truth united,  
 Hand in hand the path of life !

Infant,—Girl,—and bride bejewelled—  
 She now wears a prouder name,—  
 Mother of a troop of children,  
 Matron of unsullied fame ?  
 Still she doth her kindly mission,  
 Nobly as in days of yore,  
 Still he works,—an ardent patriot,—  
 Citizen King of Midnapur !  
 Oft achieving, often failing,  
 Dauntless still in task of life,—  
 Such is manhood's noble mission,  
 Mission of true-hearted wife !

'Tis a night in black December,  
 And beside an English fire,  
 Seated in his lovely chamber  
 Lo ! an old man tunes his lyre

And a troop of laughing children,  
Loving women, lightsome men,  
And a home across the ocean  
Burst upon his inner ken !  
Oh ! the loves of those we cherish  
Cheer us in our toil and strife,  
And the sunshine of affection  
Flings a glamour on our life !

*December, 1908.*

---

## TO S. OF SHILLONG.

Lo! a white bird of the mountains,  
 From the heights of far Shillong  
 Waves her wings of silk and satin,  
 Through the blue sky sails along!  
 Past the sea-like Brahmaputra,  
 And the Padma's heaving breast,  
 Past the waving fields of verdure  
 Comes she to her ancient nest!  
 Now she deftly treams her feathers,  
 Now she smiles upon her lord,  
 Till at last they come and nestle  
 In the home of Hungerford!

Five and thirty years have parted,—  
 How I still recall the day,—  
 Child of love and light and beauty,  
 When in Bongong's home she lay!  
 Years went by,—with ringing laughter  
 How she chased each childhood's toy,  
 How she picked the shells and pebbles  
 On the banks of fair Ajoy!  
 Years went by,—with eager gladness  
 How she crossed the boundless sea,  
 And in happy homes of England  
 Lived the maid in maiden glee!

Years went by, and brighter visions  
 Stirred her soul in Burdwan,—  
 She had counted twenty summers,  
 She in love was sought and won !  
 He a wondrous necromancer,  
 Softly gentle, wildly gay,  
 Versed in Shelly and in Ibsen,  
 Versed in Rabi's raptured lay !—  
 Yet a youth of deeper purpose,—  
 High ambition marked his goal,—  
 Versatile in gift of talent  
 Ardent in his love of soul !

Hand in hand for fifteen summers  
 They have walked the path of life,—  
 He a high and able ruler,  
 She a true and trusted wife.  
 I have watched them fondly, proudly,  
 As their gifts have brighter shone,—  
 Fame achieved by high endeavour,  
 Duty nobly faced and done !  
 I have watched them mounting higher  
 Higher with each passing year,—  
 And their growing worth and virtue  
 To a father's soul is dear !

I can see the loving faces  
 Gathered in my loving home,

REMINISCENCES.

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I can hear the sounds of laughter  
As across the seas they come !  
I can feel their love's young tendrils  
Wind around an old man's heart,  
Loves of children true and tender  
Lands and oceans cannot part !  
If at times my soul is weary  
Thoughts like these come from above,—  
Work is noblest human' mission,  
Noblest human bliss is Love !

*December, 1908.*

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## THE GIRL OF GOLD.

SHOULD you see a girl of gold,  
Useful, loving, meekly bold,  
So devoted to her mother,  
In her duties to her father,  
Loving little girls and boys,  
And arranging children's toys,  
Deep in Skat,—with tens and aces,  
Used to work,—the home she graces,  
True in duty, true in game,  
Tell me what may be her name !

*December, 1908.*

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## TWINS IN LOVE.

ONE, a mother young and beauteous,  
One, a nobly gifted maid,  
Blessed me with their sweet affection,  
Sang to me and often played,—  
Till my soul was drunk with music,  
Till my heart was wrapt in love,  
Ever, even as my daughters,  
They shall my affection prove !

One, a gentle Hindu mother,  
One, a duteous Moslem maiden,  
In their loves they were united  
Like two creepers perfume-laden !  
Sister streams that sweetly mingled,  
Sister blossoms on one stem,—  
Creeds might differ, love of duty,  
Love of country blended them !

They were of the Western region,  
I was from the farthest East,—  
How their truth and tender sweetness  
Filled my heart, my cottage blest !  
Earth hath streaks of light and sunshine,  
Life hath gleams that cheer and bless,—  
May the memory of their kindness  
Never in my heart grow less !

Dost thou sometimes, dear Sharada,  
 Call to mind the days of old? —  
 Oft I met thee and thy husband,  
 Heard the lays thy Lila told!  
 Dost remember, — on the green sward,  
 In the gay and lighted hall, —  
 How thy presence graced the *Garba*,  
 How thy song enraptured all?

Dost thou sometimes, dear Sharifa, —  
 I have seen thee maid and bride, —  
 Think of that "*mere man*," Sharifa,  
 Thou didst help in maiden pride?  
 O! what gift of song and music  
 As thy fingers swept the lyre!  
 For thy lord, what love and duty  
 Sparkled in thine eyes of fire!

Oceans part us! But remembrance  
 Of your truth shall never die, —  
 Twins in love! May New Year's blessings,  
 Grace of Heaven unto you hie!  
 Earth has trials, earth has triumphs,  
 Task to every man is given, —  
 Thoughts of true friends, kind and loving,  
 Cheer him like the dew of Heaven!

January, 1909.

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## NYMPHS AND THE MINSTREL.

IN the days when nymphs and fairies  
     Dwelt by every wood-land stream,  
 In the days when cloud-land visions  
     Still inspired the minstrels dream,  
 When each Muni sang his verses,  
     And each Rishi roamed the earth,  
 And at times a hunter-monarch  
     Met a maid of heavenly birth !  
 In those days two beauteous fairies, —  
     One was sweet and one was fair, —  
 Ranged the green woods, dale and mountain,  
     Ranged the regions of the air !

Where with lightning-guilded chariots  
     Dharamtolla's echoes rung,  
 Dwelt a fairy in her mansions,  
     And her fairy verses sung !  
 Where on Sylhet's cloud-capped Tila  
     Darksome rains incessant fell,  
 Dwelt the other wrapt in visions  
     And her Esraj played so well !  
 Oft they mounted on their pinions, —  
     Param Bandhus of the sky, —  
 Whispered thoughts, (half-anna postage)  
     And the thoughts were pure and high !

Wouldst thou witness sense and sweetness,  
     Tenderness with wisdom fraught,

Would'st thou see a child's affection  
 With a woman's deeper thought ?  
 Wouldst thou claim an angel's tendence  
 With a human being's love,—  
 She, the nymph of Dharamtolla  
 Did these gentle virtues prove !  
 Wouldst thou seek for wilder graces,  
 Depth and patriotic fire,  
 Sylhet's fairy, blest by Muses,  
 Waked to notes of flame her lyre !

From their clouds they oft descended,—  
 So the ancient legends tell,—  
 To the earth where dwelt a minstrel,  
 And they loved the minstrel well.  
 He a poet and a wanderer,  
 With his scanty locks of hair,  
 Somewhat old and somewhat gouty,  
 Somewhat fond of *Dahi* rare !  
 And the fairies oft would nurse him,  
 Oft beside his grotto creep,  
 And they gently stroked his forehead,  
 And the minstrel fell asleep !

But a change came o'er his vision,—  
 Nymphs of air are fond of flight,—  
 And they spread their feathery pinions  
 Soaring to a nobler height !  
 And the bard was sorely puzzled  
 As he saw them winging high,—

Would they wander through the cloud-land,  
Would they pierce the vault of sky ?  
No! But one on Beadon's pathway  
With her mate had built her nest,  
And the other with her chosen  
By the ocean took her nest !

Strange and fickle are these fairies !—  
Spake the minstrel in despair,—  
Would they leave me, old and gouty,  
Nor provide my *Dahi* rare ?  
Would they sing me not old legends,  
Newer songs of patriot's fire,  
Would they soothe me not to slumber,  
Striking deep the sounding lyre ?  
Yes !—They said from town and ocean,  
Minstrel's love we ever guard, —  
And the minstrel loved the fairies,  
And the fairies loved the bard !

January, 1909.

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# English Works

BY

R. C. DUTT, Esq., C.I.E.

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