

The Beauteous Terrorist and Other Poems

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All quotation marks retained as data
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1885

THE BEAUTEOUS TERRORIST

THE BEAUTEOUS TERRORIST

“She was beautiful. It was not the beauty which dazzles at first sight, but that which fascinates the more, the more it is regarded.

“A blonde, with a pair of blue eyes, serious and penetrating, under a broad and spacious forehead. A delicate little nose; a charming mouth, which showed, when she smiled, two rows of very fine white teeth.

“It was, however, her countenance as a whole which was the attraction. There was something brisk, vivacious, and at the same time, ingenuous in her rounded face. She was girlhood personified. Notwithstanding her twenty-six years, she seemed scarcely eighteen. A small, slender, and very graceful figure, and a voice as charming, silvery, and sympathetic as could be, heightened the illusion. It became almost a certainty when she began to laugh, which very often happened. She had the ready laugh of a girl, and laughed with so much heartiness, and so unaffectedly, that she really seemed a young lass of sixteen.

“She gave little thought to her appearance. She dressed in the most modest manner, and perhaps did not even know what dress or ornament was becoming or unbecoming. But she had a passion for neatness, and in this was as punctilious as a Swiss girl.

“She was very fond of children, and was an excellent schoolmistress. There was, however, another office which she filled even better, that of nurse. When any of her friends fell ill, Sophia was the first to offer herself for this difficult duty, and she performed that duty with such gentleness, cheerfulness, and patience that she won the hearts of her patients for all time.

“Yet this woman, with such an innocent appearance and with such a sweet and affectionate disposition, was one of the most dreaded members of the Terrorist party.

* * * * *

“Sophia Perovskaia belonged, like Krapotkine, to the highest aristocracy of Russia. The Perovski are the younger branch of the family of the famous Rasumousky, the morganatic husband of the Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, who occupied the throne of Russia in the middle of last century (1741-1762).

* * * * *

“Such was the family to which this woman belonged, who gave such a tremendous blow to Czarism.”— *Underground Russia*

SOFT as the morning's pearly light,
Where yet may rise the thunder-cloud,
Her gentle face was ever bright
With noble thought and purpose proud.

Dreamt ye that those divine blue eyes,
That beauty free from pride or blame,
Were fashion'd but to terrorize
O'er Despot's power of sword and flame?

Beware! Those beauteous lineaments
Of girlhood shrine a force sublime,
Which moulds to fearful use events,
And dares arraign Imperial crime.

A fear was in the peasants' eyes,
A palsy smote both tongue and hand;
A network of police and spies
O'erspread the tyrant-tortured land.

The dungeons swallowed all our best—
Who next should perish none could say;
A thousand victims of arrest
Were torn from us one summer day.

The judges, sworn to guard the right,
Interpreted the tyrant's bent ;
Though cleared by witnesses of light,
'Twas hard to save the innocent.

The Senate, in its ordered state,
Might free — its voice inspired no awe
Acquittal did not liberate —
The Autocrat annulled the law.

The tender, sweet Enthusiast,
The bright-eyed maid with hero's soul,
Had watched the thickening shadow cast
O'er all the land, in death and dole.

Her girlhood's secret studies, late
And early, in her princely home;
Her converse with the good and great,
The lessons taught by Greece and Rome,

Had nerved her heart to action strong ;
She joined the few who dared the worst,
Resolved to strike the monster Wrong —
To wrestle with the Thing accurst!

Pale Freedom's devotees, whose creed

Was vengeance, who in silent trust
Prepared themselves to bear and bleed,
And bravely die — if die they must.

What matter'd, so the Despot's doom,
And Freedom's advent, nearer drew ?
Their chosen path was through the gloom —
The perils of their choice they knew.

To give their all, even life, were sweet —
Not half, as Ananias gave —
So they might see the work complete,
Or feel it finished in the grave.

The early rose of womanhood
Had scarce illumed her angel face,
When 'mongst conspirators she stood —
The bravest in the darkest place.

In danger, failure, suffering, she
Cheer'd on with her unchanging smile,
Still looking forth to victory,
As free from doubt as far from guile.

Stern men pursued the work of death —
No war-cry raised, no flag, unfurled —
They laid the mine whose nitric breath
Should blow the tyrant from the world.

Dark warfare! — oh, how pitiless!
What else for them? — no right of speech,
No right of meeting for redress,
No right the rights of man to teach:

How plead their cause in burning words?
How arm'd in just rebellion rise? —
Where gleam a million servile swords,
Where Drown for prey a million spies.

To counsel, organize, sustain,
To plan escape, to lead attack,
Her steady hand and luminous brain
Were ever Onward — never Back!

Her voice was like a holy bell,
Calling to highest sacrifice ;
When black disaster heaviest fell,
She stood all smiles to pay the price!

Baffled surprise and bold escape,
Endurance long, at last are o'er;

The Monster's jaws insatiate gape,
Whose cry for blood is ever "More!"

The hunters close around her path,
Her forfeit life is in their hands ;
She neither bends before their wrath,
Nor braves her captor's hireling bands.

She meets her fate serene and still,
Above all earthly hopes and fears;
If once her eyes the teardrops fill,
Her mother's grief unlocks the tears.

The mockery of trial came,
And follow'd swift the words of doom;
But ignominy, woe, and shame
Were far from her — her dungeon-tomb

Held spiritual companions; there
A light, which others could not see,
Shone in her heart, and everywhere —
To die was only to be free!

Six days no friendly face came near,
No sister's clinging arm, no word
From all the loved ones reach'd her ear —
Her mother's voice no more was heard.

Six days the weeping mother sought
To see her sentenced child in vain;
Their eyes ne'er met till she was brought
Forth in the daylight — to be slain!

She stood beneath the felon rope —
Her beauty felt the hangman's hand;
But, steadfast in her life-long hope,
She only saw "the promised land!"

The promised land of Truth and Right —
The holy cause of Freedom won!
She only saw the far-off Light,
And heard the People marching on!

She stood — her cheek rose-lighted still —
A moment, calm and iron-willed;
Then all of her which Power could kill
Was mercilessly crushed and killed.

The scaffold had its radiant prey,
The Despot's minions breathed secure —
The proud and haughty went their way,

Spurning the dead so young and pure.

But souls like her's survive the fate
Which tyrants in their might decree,
And ever live to animate
The nations struggling to be free.

Purged of the dross of earth, the fire
Of one great spirit's holocaust
Will thousands wake to patriot ire —
Will raise to life a patriot host!

THE SILVER WEDDING DAY.

FIVE-AND-TWENTY years are gone
Since our hearts were joined in one!
Thou the day rememberest —
Day of days most richly blest —
When, my Sweetest and my Bravest,
Thy true heart to me thou gavest,
With that faith unquestioning
Which has silver'd everything.
Five-and-twenty years ago !
What escapes from nameless woe,
And what blessings positive,
In the silver meaning live!
Like a hand stretch'd out from Heaven,
Thy sweet love to me was given.
Had I never known its light,
When so little else was bright;
Had I never felt its truth,
In the bitter toils of youth,
Oh! how different might have been
All of that dear day and this —
All the pictured past between —
All my sorrows — all my bliss!

How the light of memory gives
All thy girlhood's beauty back!
Ever fresh the rosebud lives —
Ever blooming on life's track!
Time may thin the soft brown hair,
Touch the cheek so dewy fair,
Send a dimness to surprise
Those for-ever-trusting eyes;
But thy rosebud heart's as young,
And thy woman's soul's as strong
As they were in passion's dawn,
On our quiet bridal morn.

Five-and-twenty years, and we
Are parted by the cruel sea,
Many a cruel thousand miles!
When shall our dear children's smiles
Bless us both in one home-light ?
When shall we two feast our sight
On each other's eyes anew?
I should like it — would not you?

1861.

BOUNDING O'ER THE SUMMER SEA.

BOUNDING o'er the summer sea,
 Breezes blow, breezes blow!
Happy thoughts and fancies free,
 Come and go, come and go!

Happy thoughts of Love's surprise,
 Breezes blow, breezes blow!
Fancies of the loved one's eyes,
 Beaming so, beaming so!

Bounding like a joyous spright,
 Through the foam, through the foam!
Like a bird before the night,
 Winging home, winging home!

Will they meet us, child and wife,
 Bud and rose, bud and rose?
He who counts the sands of life,
 Only knows, only knows!

1863.

TRUST.

THOU know'st, thou know'st, O Lord of life,
How few the victors are!
Who strive and stumble in the strife,
Thou seest, though from afar.

Thou seest the tears in sorrow shed,
Though lost to mortal sight;
Thou seest the way the wanderers tread,
Though in the darkest night.

BISMARCK.

WHAT all-consuming love of fatherland
Inflamed his heart and nerved his tireless hand,
As day by day he drew, in conscious pride,
Light from all sources, strength from every side;
While yet he urged his silent quest of power,
Foreseeing, 'midst the blind, the crowning hour.
How in his giant's work he planned and built,
Unswayed by fear and undismayed by guilt,
Proud Austria curbing by Italia's blow,
And striking down the open Gallic foe;

Appraising at low cost the "iron and blood,"
So the strong ramparts stay the surging flood,
While foams the wild democracy all round,
And the new Empire rises arm'd and crown'd!
Yet oh, how little all which men call great
Has bless'd men's homes, or form'd a happy state!
In what faint letters on the scroll of Fame
Will be inscribed the world-resounding name,
How far from those who hold the highest place, —
The benefactors of the human race !

SEVENTY.

THREE score and ten, — the weight of years
Scarce seems to touch the tireless brain;
How bright the future still appears,
How dim the past of toil and pain !

In that fair time when all was new,
Who thought of three score years and ten
Of those who shared the race, how few
Are number'd now with living men!

Some fell upon the right, and some
Upon the left, as, year by year,
The chain kept lengthening nearer home —
Yet home ev'n now may not be near.

But yesterday I chanced to meet
A man whose years were ninety-three,
He walked alone the crowded street —
His eye was bright, his step was free.

And well I knew a worthy who,
Dying in harness, as men say,
Had lived a hundred years and two,
Not halting on his toilsome way.

How much of action undesigned
Will modify to-morrow's plan!
The gleams of foresight leave us blind,
When we the far-off path would scan.

What task of glorious toil for good,
What service, what achievement high,
May nerve the will, re-fire the blood,
Who knows, ere strikes the hour to die!

The next decade of time and fate,
The mighty changes manifold,
The grander growth of Rule and State,
Perchance these eyes may yet behold!

But be it late, or be it soon,
If striving hard we give our best,
Why need we sigh for other boon —
Our title will be good for rest.

SOLITUDE.

WHERE the mocking lyre-bird calls
To its mate among the falls
Of the mountain streams that play,
Each adown its tortuous way;
When the dewy-fingered even
Veils the narrow'd glimpse of Heaven:
Where the morning re-illumes
Gullies full of ferny plumes,
And a woof of radiance weaves
Through high-hanging vaults of leaves;
There, 'mid giant turpentines,
Groups of climbing, clustering vines,
Rocks that stand like sentinels,
Guarding Nature's citadels,
Lowly flowering shrubs that grace
With their beauty all the place —
There I love to wander lonely,
With my dog-companion only;
There, indulge unworldly moods
In the mountain solitudes;
Far from all the gilded strife
Of our boasted "social life,"
Contemplating, spirit-free,
The majestic company
Grandly marching through the ages —
Heroes, martyrs, bards, and sages —
They who bravely suffered long,
By their struggles waxing strong,
For the freedom of the mind,
For the rights of humankind!

Oh, for some awakening cause,
Where we face eternal laws,
Where we dare not turn aside,
Where the souls of men are tried —
Something of the nobler strife
Which consumes the dross of life,
To unite to truer aim,
To exalt to loftier fame!
Leave behind the bats and balls,
Leave the racers in the stalls,
Leave the cards forever shuffled,
Leave the yacht on seas unruffled,
Leave the haunts of pampered ease,

Leave your dull festivities! —
Better far the savage glen,
Fitter school for earnest men!

TO INEZ.

OH! 'tis not that thy form is fair,
Thy every motion light and grace;
'Tis not the glory of thy hair—
'Tis not the sunshine of thy face.

The spell that holds me, fond and true,
Is that dear self unspeakable—
That something which is always you—
In simplest acts most beautiful.

What is it, love ?—I cannot tell!
Those honey'd lips, those passion'd eyes,
I kiss because I know so well
The heart that to my heart replies.

With thee I walk the crowded street,
With thee I roam the travell'd sea;
A thousand lovely forms I meet,
But never; never one like thee.

The burden of my future years—
It may be more than I can bear;
But where the darkest cloud appears,
Thy love will beam the brightest there.

THE DAUGHTER OF TOIL.

RADIANT as the summer morning,
Spotless as the new-blown rose,
Stood she with a beauteous scorning
Of the prizes Wealth bestows.

Yet her mein was more than queenly,
Rich in all the grace of youth —
One who could do nothing meanly,
Born to live for love and truth.

With a look of sweet defiance
In her large, bright azure eyes;
And the pride of self-reliance
Thrilling through her low replies.

Hand and fortune he had offer'd,
Never dreaming, in his pride,
That the splendid state he proffer'd
Would be meekly thrust aside.

Nobly born, with riches laden,
Ordering but to be obeyed,
He had stooped to woo a maiden,
Proudly owning Labour's grade.

Proudly stood she in his presence,
Listened to his lordly voice,
Seemed it that her acquiescence
Was assumed, beyond her choice.

But her woman's true discernment,
Wisdom of the guileless heart,
In all things of love's concernment,
Gave her strength to bear her part.

Woman's light of soul unerring,
When the soul's unsoil'd by wrong,
In the purple tumult stirring
Her young bosom, made her strong!

All the promptings of her nature
Told her she was worthy of
Higher place than titled creature,
With no resting-place in love.

Proudly stood she in her beauty,
Softly fell the words she spake

“No, my Lord! I owe you duty
Higher far, for honour's sake!

“Twere not meet that I should stumble
In the dazzle round me cast,
Or forget the mean and humble
Ties that bind me to the past.

“You have all that wealth and station
Bring to crown the favoured few;
And fair women's adoration,
And men's homage, as your due.

“But my life,—it is the holy
Gift of Him whose love endures;
And I dare not cast its lowly
Hopes of happiness on yours.

“Were I of all else forgetful,
Could I bear the speechless pain
Of your wearied eyes regretful,
And your kindred's cold disdain ?

Oh, no, no! the future never
Would to-day's enchantment own —
Our two paths are two for ever,
Each to other still unknown.”

Proudly, one of Labour's daughters,
Turned she from his haughty face,
And, like drop in ocean's waters,
Dropped among her toiling race.

Who would say she chose in error,
Could the sum of future years
Be reveal'd, as in a mirror,
All the changes, smiles, and tears ?

THE CRY OF “LAND!”

“LAND, land!” the joyful cry at last,
Long watch and lonely waiting past:
What home-tied heart can understand
Our joy-burst at that cry of “Land!”

“Land, land!” The land that looked so far,
Where blooms the glorious waratah,
Where all is new and all is bright,—
The land of all our hopes,—in sight!

“Land, land!” It seems but yesterday
The world's expanse before us lay !
And can it be those seas are cross'd
Since England to our eyes was lost ?

“Land, land!” The heart is borne on wings,
And like a bird its gladness sings;
And can it be those moons have waned,
And we the promised land have gained ?

THE FLAG.

FLING out the flag—our virgin flag,
Which foeman's shot has never rent,
And plant it high on mount and crag,
O'er busy town and lonely tent.

Where commerce rears her stately halls,
And where the miner rends the rock,
Where the sweet rain on cornfield falls,
Where pastures feed the herd and flock.

Still let it float o'er homes of peace,
Our starry cross — our glorious sign!
While Nature's bounteous gifts increase,
And Freedom's glories brighter shine.

Brave hearts may beat in Labour's strife,
They need no spur of martial pride;
High deeds may crown a gentle life,
And spread their radiance far and wide.

Fling out the flag, and guard it well!
Our pleasant fields the foe ne'er trod;
Long may our guardian heroes dwell
In league with truth—in camp with God!

In other lands the patriot boasts
His standard borne through Slaughter's flood,
Which, waving o'er infuriate hosts,
Was consecrate in fire and blood.

A truer charm our flag endears;
Where'er it waves, on land or sea,
It bears no stain of blood and tears—
Its glory is its purity.

God girdled our majestic isle
With seas far-reaching east and west,
That man might live beneath His smile,
In peace and freedom ever blest.

STELLA.

THE beauteous star of Southern climes
Is gone, and other stars shine o'er me;
But one bright star of happier times,
My Stella's face, still smiles before me.

What leagues of sea divide us now,
What tracks of desert stretch behind me;
But in the wild Sierras thou,
With thy dear arms, hast still entwined me.

Nevada's bitter snows are past,
With Colorado's mountains hoary;
On every side the prairies vast,
Round to the sky in lonely glory.

But on the Rocky Mountains' height,
Eight thousand feet above the sea, love,
My Stella kiss'd me through the night—
Yes, darling, thou wert still with me, love.

BROUGHAM.

HE stood erect in manhood's golden dawn,
His work—to free the slave, t' instruct the free!
He stood, and saw the Nineteenth Century born,
With all his gifted life's renown to be.

Unknown, yet did he dream of coming years?
Was there vouchsafed to him, as through the rents
Of the black cloud of ignorance and tears
All round, some dim foreknowledge of events

That were to make his time, so stored with strife,
The birth-time of great thoughts to stir mankind,
And wake the nations to a nobler life—
The moving power, thro' all, his marvellous mind.

Bow'd in the dust! the thund'rous, snow-crown'd, grand
Old head that bow'd to none in its stern pride;
Silent in death ! the voice that shook the land,
Ere Waterloo was fought or Nelson died.

But yesterday he stood amongst us still—
A giant of a generation past,
All obstacles receding from his will,
All schemes of good in his conceptions cast.

Is it a jealous weakness, looking far
To find its idols, which obscures th' array
Of circling lights, where disappear'd this star—
Which sees no equal where lie pass'd away?

Not that he match'd in statecraft lesser men,
If statecraft be the mastery of the hour
But that the stature of the citizen
Still rose above the statesman flush'd with power;

And that his strong heart's sympathies went out
To meet the struggling millions of his race;
And that he never paused in fear or doubt
To raise his fellow to the freeman's place.

Look down the muster-roll of Death, and say
What name is written greater of his peers—
Peel, Lyndhurst, Canning, Wellington, and Grey
What greater shall arise in after years ?

THE MARTYR TREE.

RIGHT through its heart the fire's red teeth
Had gnaw'd and torn their cinderous way;
The sap still mounted from beneath,
Its tortured ribs to bind and stay.

And there the grand old tree remains,
In garniture of glistening leaves,
Rejoicing in the winds and rains;
But o'er the past it never grieves.

And still it rears its martyr form,
And still it wears its crown of green,
And still it braves the thunder-storm,
Though through its heart the fire has been.

TO ARABELLA G., OF SACRAMENTO.

You ask me why I love you, Sweet!
Go, ask the silly moth that flies
Into the burning flame, to meet
A death unpitied, why he dies?
Since mother Eve first ask'd the reason,
What lover ever yet could tell ?
But love, like fruit when out of season,
Is sweet without a reason, Belle!

I love you, Sweet! because 'tis nice
To cherish thoughts we can't disclose,
Because the sunbeams melt the ice,
Because the bee will rob the rose,
Because the lark will seek the sky,
Because the water finds the well;
I know no better reason why
I love you, but I love you, Belle!

HOMeward IN THE TROPICS.

CHEERILY o'er the tropic sea,
All cheerily!
Merrily homeward journey we,
All merrily!

Silvery voices o'er the sea
Call you and me!
Many a voice of childhood's years
Stirs us to tears.

Happier will their accents fall
In hut and hall;
Many a time when faces dear
Again draw near.

Sunnier lands we leave behind,
And still may find;
Lovelier than old England none
Beneath the sun !

Merrily sing the songs we knew
When life was new;
Cheerily 'neath the tropic moon,
All hearts in tune.

Merrier yet our songs shall be,
Beyond the sea;
Merrier faces laughing round—
The lost ones found.

Merrily o'er the moonlight sea!
Yet, 'midst our glee,
Others that weary wait behind,
Recall to mind.

Merrily o'er the moonlight sea,
All merrily!
Cheerily homeward journey we,
All cheerily!

LIFE ON THE MOUNTAINS.

LISTEN to the blustering rain,
Beating on the window-pane;
Stamping with hobgoblin tread,
On the iron roof o'erhead;
Coursing through the forest wild —
Through the trees in gloom up-piled
Dashing, splashing, down the gully,
Bent on desolation fully!
How it drenches, drives, and pours!
What a night for out-of-doors!

Is not this, my Princess, grand —
Cottage life on mountain-land!
Yet the situation, dearie,
Might be far less snug and cheery.
See, before the blazing logs,
How untroubled sleep the dogs!
And how happy pussy purrs,
Sitting in her queenly furs!
What care they for wind and rain,
While the hearthrug's their domain?
And, with fancy-lighted look,
You are bending o'er your book,
Only raising those soft eyes
When you deign to drop replies —
Contradictions, phrased so mildly,
To my comments, scatter'd wildly.

Fairer picture who could paint,
Than my little household saint?
Let the tempest rage outside,
You and I are satisfied
To be safely housed together,
Independent of the weather,
Independent of the haughty,
Hectoring world that is so naughty.

And have we no visions pleasant
Of the playful lyre-tail'd pheasant,
As some neighbour bird he mocks
Down among the gully rocks,
In the evenings cool and grateful,,
When the storm and all its hateful
Gusts of fury are forgotten ?

And of rambles where the rotten
Trees of ancient giant mould,
Fell'd by ruthless storms of old,
In their robes of golden moss,
Stretch their shatter'd limbs across
Runlets of sweet water purling
Through the ferns in beauty curling,
Down four hundred feet or more
From our mountain cottage door?

And of rambles on the ranges,
Where wild Nature's aspect changes,
Every step we onward take
Through the tangled flowery brake,
Every step we press the sweet
Woof of flowers beneath our feet;
Shapes dissolve and colours mingle —
Woody slope to rocky dingle;
Trees by tempests toss'd and torn,
Long ere living man was born,
Standing still on steadfast root;
Currant bushes gemm'd with fruit;
Soft clematis, forming bowers,
With its wreaths of pearly flowers
And the waratahs in state,
With their queenly heads elate,
And their flamy blood-red crowns,
And their stiff-frill'd emerald gowns;
And Australia's Christmas trees,
Budding to the wooing breeze;
And the robins and the thrushes,
Flitting through the fragrant bushes?

And as still we ramble onward,
Where the forest opens sunward,
Where the mountain grasses spread
Carpet fit for queen to tread ;
And the mountain stream forever
Runs impatient for the river,
With the brightest of bright faces,
Into bowery hiding places;
Out again like child that knows
He is loved where'er he goes ;
In cascades of crystal leaping,
Ever still its glad course keeping —
What a world of joyous life!
You remember, don't you, wife ? —
Scenes of beauty, peace, and love,

With the blue still heaven above;
Pleasant rambles, days of light ? —
“Yes; but how it rains to-night!”

MINNIE.

MINNIE, darling, far away,
Fondly clings my heart to thee;
Farther, farther, day by day,
Yet my Minnie stays with me.
When the sun goes down at sea,
In his cloud-made golden train
Minnie's love-lit face I see,
Minnie comes to me again.

Minnie, darling, where thou art,
In my dreams I linger yet;
Oh, how could we ever part?
Oh, how can we e'er forget ?
When the lonely deck I tread,
With the midnight heaven above,
O'er me shines thy star-like head,
In the breeze I feel thy love.

Minnie, darling, think of me,
When the summer days decline;
Think how soon the time will be,
When my eyes shall feast on thine,
When my lips shall press thy lips,
When my arms shall hold thee fast;
Cruel seas and lonely ships
Things for ever with the past.

A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

SOFTLY, faintly,
Floating on the solemn Sabbath air,
Came a voice, low, sweet, and saintly,
Laden with a mother's prayer.

Holy, holy,
Father, Thou who mark'st the sparrow's fall,
Save my child, now sinking slowly,
Slowly sinking, past recall.

Baby beauty!
Father, give me strength my load to bear
Teach me, Lord, my chasten'd duty;
Father, hear my sobbing prayer.

Baby, baby!
Mother never had so dear a child
Other hearts as broken may be,
Never one with love so wild.

Father, father !
Hear my prayer — and yet I know not how
Prayer can help my life, — oh, rather
Take me with my baby now.

THE MOUNTAIN GRAVE.

THE railway's heavy-freighted trains
Go by, like giant things of life,
Fresh from the fields of human strife;
But there the wilderness remains.

The free, wild creatures of the wood
Scarce heed the trains that past them glide,
The trains that never turn aside
To break their peaceful solitude.

All wild beyond the one dear spot,
Where loving hands, for his dear sake,
A garden for the dead will make —
For Death himself a garden plot.

The lyre-bird from the ferny glen,
At morn and evening, softly calls ;
The rains but bring the waterfalls ;
And never comes the noise of men.

They rent the mountain's rocky breast,
Still toiling through the silent hours,
To make a bed for forest flowers —
A bed for his unbroken rest.

All night they toil'd to make his grave,
With pick and spade, all through the night;
They made it by the fitful light
The clouded moon in pity gave.

A lonely spot we chose for him —
Along the lonely path that led
Our footsteps to his lonely bed,
His corse we bore, with eyes all dim.

With tear-dimm'd eyes, and hearts like lead,
We gently laid him down to sleep —
We left him for the grave to keep,
Until the grave gives up its dead.

Fit resting place for him whose soul
Was gentleness itself, who trod
His humble path in fear of God,
And sought no higher earthly goal.

EPITAPH.

SOFTLY rests his fever'd brow,
Earth can give nor more nor less,
All that we remember now
Is his life of gentleness.

NELLIE.

WHEN all is silent, far and near,
And midnight's mantle o'er me falls,
I hear a voice none else can hear —
My Nellie through the darkness calls.

The morning breaks! I gaze upon
Old Father Mississippi's tide;
I tread the shore, but not alone -
My Nellie's form is at my side.

I wander by Lake Michigan,
And see, where fire once swept the land,
A city built by restless man
In a child's lifetime, vast and grand.

But in Chicago's halls of trade,
Where Mammon leaves no mortal free,
Where fortunes in a day are made,
My Nellie's voice is calling me.

On, on, through Winter's snows that sweep
And drift around Canadian farms;
On, on, the Rapids foam and leap, —
A magic name my memory charms.

At last, in wondering pride, I see
Niagara's eternal Falls!
But, 'midst the scene entrancing me,
My Nellie for her lover calls.

Thou shalt not call in vain, my Sweet!
Oh, soon I'll come across the sea;
And, Nellie darling, when we meet
How lost in bliss we two shall be!

THE STRONG MAN.

LIKE a rock that breasts the sea,
Firm he stood, in front of foes;
To his friends a sheltering tree
That in changeless beauty grows.

Firm alike to friend and foe,
Firm in gentleness and faith,
Firm in "yes," and firm in "no,"
Firm thro' life, and firm

TO A WILFUL CHILD.

BRIGHT child of passion! Thou
Art born no idle part to play;
Defiant eye, imperious brow —
How much they say!

Even in thy mother's arms,
The frowns of a set purpose rise
Behind the smile that charms
Her doating eyes.

What will thy future be ?
The sunny land that gave thee birth
Holds fairest fields for thee,
Of all on earth.

Here starry Science throws
Her light o'er wide unfathom'd seas;
New depths for her disclose
New mysteries.

And thou may'st win a place
Among the mighty wrestlers whom
The Powers of time and space
Shall crown and plume.

And thou may'st lead the just,
Contending for thy country's cause;
And build the People's trust
On righteous laws.

All prizes of the land,
All noble strife, all grand emprise —
A world, fresh to thy hand,
Before thee lies.

There's nought thou may'st not be,
If thou can'st match the eagle's flight!
'Tis well we cannot see,
Dear child of light!

AT SEA.

As sadly we are thinking
Of some it still will light,
Our beauteous Southern Cross is sinking
Adown the Southern night.

Resplendent constellation!
Australia's chosen sign,
When first the yearnings of a nation
Throbb'd through this land of mine!

How fondly will they greet thee —
The loved ones left behind —
To think our weary eyes still meet thee,
With thoughts of them half blind !

The Tropics' golden splendours
Are gone, like starry dreams ;
And onward Ursa Major renders
For us his long-lost beams.

The winter-robed Pacific,
Deep-surg-ing on the Horn,
The midnight iceberg's gleam terrific,
Are things in memory borne.

But other thoughts we're thinking,
Cross of our Southern night !
Our hearts, Australian still, are sinking
With thy retiring light.

THE PATRIOT.

FAIR women cast sweet flowers before his feet;
From all the housetops 'kerchiefs gaily waved;
Ten thousand voices hail'd him in the street;
In blear-eyed joy the monster Rabble raved.

The town was mad with triumph where he passed,
The very flags flew out as wild with glee;
The few who dared dissent fell back aghast,
Like weeds washed past by that tumultuous sea.

A year! — and jibe, and jeer, and savage yell
Salute his cars ; and missiles rank and foul
Fall thick about him where the garlands fell ;
No cheer breaks through the monster Rabble's howl.

And yet it is the same unswerving soul!
He only kept his faith when others changed,
And heeded not in scorn the ominous roll
Of jarring threats, from foes, and friends estranged.

He only kept his onward path, when they,
Who could not see the grandeur of his aim,
Turned to the new-fledged creatures of the day,
And drank their slanders, feeling not the shame.

So ever rise the Feeble 'gainst the Fit;
So ever first the noblest blood is shed;
So surged the hungry waters round De Witt:
So tortured France was robbed of Danton's head.

GONE!

'Tis over — thou art gone — so far!
More distant scarcely could'st thou be,
If now thou wast a beauteous star,
Lighting the desert left to me.

“Love and forever!” Oh, how light
The words that had such power to bless!
And still the vision comes as bright,
But never more for me to press.

Gone!— bitterly I know 'twas wise
That we should thus be torn apart;
But who shall change our destinies,
Or pluck thine image from my heart ?

RAGGED JANE.

MY ragged Jane is rough and brown,
Her words are few, and plainly spoken;
She never wore a silken gown,
For her no hearts were ever broken.

But ragged Jane is true as steel,
Her bosom heaves with pure affection;
A woman like a Queen may feel,
Whose wardrobe will not bear inspection.

To feed the hungry Jane will give
The biggest half of her own dinner,
And never ask the way they live,
Nor draw the line 'twixt saint and sinner.

She loves all dumb and helpless things:
The little children cling about her:
Poor neighbours tell their sufferings
To Jane, and cannot do without her.

I would not give my ragged Jane
For all the peacock ladies going.
She knows the way to banish pain —
What she don't know is not worth knowing

THE WANDERERS.

SOMEWHERE, Father, we shall find
Resting-place for weary feet;
Tender, hearts and faces kind,
Somewhere, Father, we shall meet.

Bitter smites the blinding rain;
Winds, how cruelly they blow!
But the Spring will come again;
Dearest Father, grieve not so!

NOTES

“Sophia Perovskaia's mother, who adored her daughter, hastened from the Crimea at the first announcement of the arrest. She saw Sophia for the last time on the day of the verdict. During the five other days, under one pretext or another, she was always sent away. At last she was told to come on the morning of the 15th April, and that then she would see her daughter. She went; but at the moment when she approached, the prison door was thrown wide open, and she saw her daughter, in truth, but upon the fatal cart.”— *Underground Russia*.

Note to “The Martyr Tree” p.51: Addressed to a turpentine tree on the Blue Mountains. The bush fires had burnt a hole through its giant trunk large enough to admit the passage of a man; yet it was flourishing in growth and foliage.