

Nay, but the port where my sailor went,  
 And the land where my nestlings be :  
 There is the home where my thoughts are sent,  
 The only home for me —

Ah me !

A COTTAGE IN A CHINE

WE reached the place by night,  
 And heard the waves breaking :  
 They came to meet us with candles alight  
 To show the path we were taking.  
 A myrtle, trained on the gate, was white  
 With tufted flowers down shaking.

With head beneath her wing,  
 A little wren was sleeping —  
 So near, I had found it an easy thing  
 To steal her for my keeping  
 From the myrtle bough that with easy swing  
 Across the path was sweeping.

Down rocky steps rough-hewed,  
 Where cup-mosses flowered,  
 And under the trees, all twisted and rude,  
 Wherewith the dell was dowered,  
 They led us, where deep in its solitude  
 Lay the cottage, leaf-embowered.

The thatch was all bespread  
 With climbing passion flowers ;  
 They were wet, and glistened with rain-drops, shed  
 That day in genial showers.  
 " Was never a sweeter nest," we said,  
 " Than this little nest of ours."

We laid us down to sleep :  
 But as for me — waking,  
 I marked the plunge of the muffled deep  
 On its sandy reaches breaking ;  
 For heart-joyance doth sometimes keep  
 From slumber, like heart-aching.

And I was glad that night,  
 With no reason ready,  
 To give my own heart for its deep delight,  
 That flowed like some tidal eddy,  
 Or shone like a star that was rising bright  
 With comforting radiance steady.

But on a sudden — hark !  
 Music struck asunder  
 Those meshes of bliss, and I wept in the dark,  
 So sweet was the unseen wonder ;  
 So swiftly it touched, as if struck at a mark,  
 The trouble that joy kept under.

I rose — the moon outshone :  
 I saw the sea heaving,  
 And a little vessel sailing alone,  
 The small crisp wavelet cleaving ;  
 'Twas she as she sailed to her port unknown —  
 Was that track of sweetness leaving.

We know they music made  
 In heaven, ere man's creation ;  
 But when God threw it down to us that strayed,  
 It dropt with lamentation,  
 And ever since doth its sweetness shade  
 With sighs for its first station.

Its joy suggests regret —  
 Its most for more is yearning ;  
 And it brings to the soul that its voice hath met

No rest that cadence learning,  
But a conscious part in the sighs that fret  
Its nature for returning.

O Eve, sweet Eve! methought  
When sometimes comfort winning,  
As she watched the first children's tender sport,  
Sole joy born since her sinning,  
If a bird anear them sang, it brought  
The pang as at beginning.

While swam the unshed tear,  
Her prattlers, little heeding,  
Would murmur, "This bird, with its carol clear,  
When the red clay was kneaden,  
And God made Adam our father dear,  
Sang to him thus in Eden."

The moon went in — the sky  
And earth and sea hiding;  
I laid me down, with the yearning sigh  
Of that strain in my heart abiding;  
I slept, and the bark that had sailed so nigh  
In my dream was ever gliding.

I slept, but waked amazed,  
With sudden noise frightened,  
And voices without, and a flash that dazed  
My eyes from candles lighted.  
"Ah! surely," methought, "by these shouts upraised  
Some travellers are benighted."

A voice was at my side —  
"Waken, madam, waken!  
The long prayed-for ship at her anchor doth ride.  
Let the child from its rest be taken,  
For the captain doth weary for babe and for bride —  
Waken, madam, waken!

"The home you left but late,  
He speeds to it light-hearted;  
By the wires he sent this news, and straight  
To you with it they started."  
O joy for a yearning heart too great,  
O union for the parted!

We rose up in the night,  
The morning star was shining;  
We carried the child in its slumber light  
Out by the myrtles twining:  
Orion over the sea hung bright,  
And glorious in declining.

Mother, to meet her son,  
Smiled first, then wept the rather;  
And wife, to bind up those links undone,  
And cherished words to gather,  
And to show the face of her little one,  
That had never seen its father.

That cottage in a chine,  
We were not to behold it;  
But there may the purest of sunbeams shine,  
May freshest flowers enfold it,  
For the sake of the news which our hearts must twin  
With the bower where we were told it!

Now oft, left alone again,  
Sit mother and sit daughter,  
And bless the good ship that sailed over the main,  
And the favoring winds that brought her;  
While still some new beauty they fable and feign  
For the cottage by the water.

## PERSEPHONE.

[Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY, January, 1862.]

*Subject given — "Light and Shade."*

SHE stepped upon Sicilian grass,  
Demeter's daughter fresh and fair,  
A child of light, a radiant lass,  
And gamesome as the morning air.  
The daffodils were fair to see,  
They nodded lightly on the lea,  
Persephone — Persephone!

Lo! one she marked of rarer growth  
Than orchis or anemone;  
For it the maiden left them both,  
And parted from her company.  
Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,  
And stooped to gather by the rill  
The daffodil, the daffodil.

What ailed the meadow that it shook?  
What ailed the air of Sicily?  
She wondered by the brattling brook,  
And trembled with the trembling lea.  
"The coal-black horses rise — they rise:  
O mother, mother!" low she cries —  
Persephone — Persephone!

"O light, light, light!" she cries, "farewell;  
The coal-black horses wait for me.  
O shade of shades, where I must dwell,  
Demeter, mother, far from thee!  
Ah, fated doom that I fulfil!  
Ah, fateful flower beside the rill!  
The daffodil, the daffodil!"

What ails her that she comes not home?  
Demeter seeks her far and wide,  
And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless roam  
From many a morn till eventide.  
"My life, immortal though it be,  
Is nought," she cries, "for want of thee,  
Persephone — Persephone!  
"Meadows of Enna, let the rain  
No longer drop to feed your rills,  
Nor dew refresh the fields again,  
With all their nodding daffodils!  
Fade, fade and droop, O liliated lea,  
Where thou, dear heart, wert reft from me —  
Persephone — Persephone!"

She reigns upon her dusky throne,  
'Mid shades of heroes dread to see;  
Among the dead she breathes alone,  
Persephone — Persephone!  
Or seated on the Elysian hill  
She dreams of earthly daylight still,  
And murmurs of the daffodil.

A voice in Hades soundeth clear,  
The shadows mourn and flit below;  
It cries — "Thou Lord of Hades, hear.  
And let Demeter's daughter go.  
The tender corn upon the lea  
Droops in her goddess gloom when she  
Cries for her lost Persephone.

"From land to land she raging flies,  
The green fruit falleth in her wake.  
And harvest fields beneath her eyes  
To earth the grain unripened shake.  
Arise, and set the maiden free;  
Why should the world such sorrow dree  
By reason of Persephone?"

He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds :  
 "Love, eat with me this parting day ;"  
 Then bids them fetch the coal-black steeds —  
 "Demeter's daughter, wouldst away?"  
 The gates of Hades set her free ;  
 "She will return full soon," said he —  
 "My wife, my wife Persephone."  
 Low laughs the dark king on his throne —  
 "I gave her of pomegranate seeds."  
 Demeter's daughter stands alone  
 Upon the fair Eleusian meads.  
 Her mother meets her. "Hail," saith she ;  
 "And doth our daylight dazzle thee,  
 My love, my child Persephone?"  
 "What moved thee, daughter, to forsake  
 Thy fellow-maids that fatal morn,  
 And give thy dark lord the power to take  
 Thee living to his realm forlorn?"  
 Her lips reply without her will,  
 As one addressed who slumbereth still —  
 "The daffodil, the daffodil!"  
 Her eyelids droop with light oppressed,  
 And sunny wafts that round her stir,  
 Her cheek upon her mother's breast —  
 Demeter's kisses comfort her.  
 Calm Queen of Hades, art thou she  
 Who stepped so lightly on the lea —  
 Persephone, Persephone?  
 When, in her destined course, the moon  
 Meets the deep shadow of this world,  
 And laboring on doth seem to swoon  
 Through awful wastes of dimness whirled —  
 Emerged at length, no trace hath she  
 Of that dark hour of destiny,  
 Still silvery sweet — Persephone.

The greater world may near the less,  
 And draw it through her weltering shade,  
 But not one biding trace impress  
 Of all the darkness that she made :  
 The greater soul that draweth thee  
 Hath left his shadow plain to see  
 On thy dear face, Persephone !  
 Demeter sighs, but sure 'tis well  
 The wife should love her destiny :  
 They part, and yet, as legends tell,  
 She mourns her lost Persephone ;  
 While chant the maids of Enna still —  
 "O fateful flower beside the rill —  
 The daffodil, the daffodil!"

## A SEA SONG.

OLD ALBION sat on a crag of late,  
 And sung out — "Ahoy ! ahoy !  
 Long life to the captain, good luck to the mate,  
 And this to my sailor boy !  
 Come over, come home,  
 Through the salt foam,  
 My sailor, my sailor boy !  
 "Here's a crown to be given away, I ween,  
 A crown for my sailor's head,  
 And all for the worth of a widowed queen,  
 And the love of the noble dead.  
 And the fear and fame  
 Of the island's name  
 Where my boy was born and bred.  
 "Content thee, content thee, let it alone,  
 Thou marked for a choice so rare :

Though treaties be treaties, never a throne  
Was proffered for cause as fair.  
Yet come to me home,  
Through the salt sea foam,  
For the Greek must ask elsewhere.

“’Tis a pity, my sailor, but who can tell?  
Many lands they look to me;  
One of these might be wanting a Prince as well,  
But that’s as hereafter may be.”  
She raised her white head  
And laughed; and she said,  
“That’s as hereafter may be.”

—♦—

BROTHERS, AND A SERMON.

It was a village built in a green rent,  
Between two cliffs that skirt the dangerous bay.

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,  
And you may lie on it and look sheer down,  
Just where the “Grace of Sunderland” was lost,  
And see the elastic banners of the dulse  
Rock softly, and the orange star-fish creep  
Across the laver, and the mackerel shoot  
Over and under it, like silver boats  
Turning at will and plying under water.

There on that reef we lay upon our breasts,  
My brother and I, and half the village lads,  
For an old fisherman had called to us [they?]  
With “Sirs, the syle be come.” “And what are  
My brother said. “Good lack!” the old man cried,  
And shook his head; “to think you gentlefolk  
Should ask what syle be! Look you; I can’t say  
What syle be called in your fine dictionaries,

Nor what name God Almighty calls them by  
When their food’s ready and He sends them south:  
But our folk call them syle, and nought but syle,  
And when they’re grown, why then we call them  
herring.

I tell you, Sir, the water is as full  
Of them as pastures be of blades of grass;  
You’ll draw a score out in a landing net,  
And none of them be longer than a pin.

“Syle! ay, indeed, we should be badly off,  
I reckon, and so would God Almighty’s gulls,”  
He grumbled on in his quaint piety,  
“And all His other birds, if He should say  
I will not drive my syle into the south;  
The fisher folk may do without my syle,  
And do without the shoal of fish it draws  
To follow and feed on it.”

This said, we made  
Our peace with him by means of two small coins,  
And down we ran and lay upon the reef,  
And saw the swimming infants, emerald green,  
In separate shoals, the scarcely turning ebb  
Bringing them in; while sleek, and not intent  
On chase, but taking that which came to hand,  
The full-fed mackerel and the gurnet swam  
Between; and settling on the polished sea,  
A thousand snow-white gulls sat lovingly  
In social rings, and twittered while they fed.  
The village dogs and ours, elate and brave,  
Lay looking over, barking at the fish;  
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the bait,  
And when they heaved and floundered on the rock,  
In beauteous misery, a sudden pat  
Some shaggy pup would deal, then back away,  
At distance eye them with sagacious doubt,  
And shrink half frightened from the slippery things.