

Be Thou near, when they, they *only*, bear those faces  
in remembrance,

And the number of their children strangers ask  
them with a smile ;  
And when other childlike faces touch them by the  
strong resemblance  
To those turned to them erewhile.

Be Thou near, each chastened Spirit for its course  
and conflict nerving,

Let Thy voice say, "Father — mother — lo ! thy  
treasures live above !  
Now be strong, be strong, no longer cumbered over  
much with serving  
At the shrine of human love."

Let them sleep ! In course of ages e'en the Holy  
House shall crumble, [its decline,  
And the broad and stately steeple one day bend to  
And high arches, ancient arches bowed and decked  
in clothing humble,  
Creeping moss shall round them twine.

Ancient arches, old and hoary, sunny beams shall  
glimmer through them,  
And invest them with a beauty we would fain they  
should not share,

And the moonlight slanting down them, the white  
moonlight shall imbue them  
With a sadness dim and fair.

Then the soft green moss shall wrap you, and the  
world shall all forget you,

Life, and stir, and toil, and tumult unawares shall  
pass you by ;  
Generations come and vanish : but it shall not grieve  
nor fret you,  
That they sin, or that they sigh.

And the world, growing old in sinning, shall deny  
her first beginning,

And think scorn of words which whisper how that  
all must pass away ;  
Time's arrest and intermission shall account a vain  
tradition,  
And a dream, the reckoning day !

Till His blast, a blast of terror, shall awake in shame  
and sadness

Faithless millions to a vision of the failing earth  
and skies,  
And more sweet than song of Angels, in their shout  
of joy and gladness,

Call the dead in Christ to rise !  
Then, by One Man's intercession, standing clear  
from their transgression,  
Father — mother — you shall meet them fairer than  
they were before,  
And have joy with the Redeemèd, joy ear hath not  
heard — heart dreamèd,  
Ay forever — evermore !

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THE TWO MARGARETS.

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I.

MARGARET BY THE MERE SIDE.

LYING imbedded in the green champaign  
That gives no shadow to thy silvery face,  
Open to all the heavens, and all their train,  
The marshalled clouds that cross with stately pace,  
No steadfast hills on thee reflected rest,  
Nor waver with the dimpling of thy breast.

O, silent Mere! about whose marges spring  
 Thick bulrushes to hide the reed-bird's nest;  
 Where the shy ousel dips her glossy wing,  
 And balanced in the water takes her rest:  
 While under bending leaves, all gem-arrayed,  
 Blue dragon-flies sit panting in the shade:

Warm, stilly place, the sundew loves thee well,  
 And the greensward comes creeping to thy brink,  
 And golden saxifrage and pimpernel  
 Lean down to thee their perfumed heads to drink;  
 And heavy with the weight of bees doth bend  
 White clover, and beneath thy wave descend:

While the sweet scent of bean-fields, floated wide  
 On a long eddy of the lightsome air  
 Over the level mead to thy lone side,  
 Doth lose itself among thy zephyrs rare,  
 With wafts from hawthorn bowers and new-cut hay,  
 And blooming orchards lying far away.

Thou hast thy Sabbaths, when a deeper calm  
 Descends upon thee, quiet Mere, and then  
 There is a sound of bells, a far-off psalm  
 From gray church towers, that swims across the  
 fen;  
 And the light sigh where grass and waters meet,  
 Is thy meek welcome to the visit sweet.

Thou hast thy lovers. Though the angler's rod  
 Dimple thy surface seldom; though the oar  
 Fill not with silvery globes thy fringing sod,  
 Nor send long ripples to thy lonely shore;  
 Though few, as in a glass, have cared to trace  
 The smile of nature moving on thy face;

Thou hast thy lovers truly. 'Mid the cold  
 Of northern tarns the wild-fowl dream of thee,  
 And, keeping thee in mind, their wings unfold,  
 And shape their course, high soaring, till they see  
 Down in the world, like molten silver, rest  
 Their goal, and screaming plunge them in thy breast.

Fair Margaret, who sittest all day long  
 On the gray stone beneath the sycamore,  
 The bowering tree with branches lithe and strong,  
 The only one to grace the level shore,  
 Why dost thou wait? for whom with patient cheer  
 Gaze yet so wistfully adown the Mere?

Thou canst not tell, thou dost not know, alas!  
 Long watchings leave behind them little trace;  
 And yet how sweetly must the mornings pass,  
 That bring that dreamy calmness to thy face!  
 How quickly must the evenings come that find  
 Thee still regret to leave the Mere behind!

Thy cheek is resting on thy hand; thine eyes  
 Are like twin violets but half enclosed,  
 And quiet as the deeps in yonder skies.  
 Never more peacefully in love reposed  
 A mother's gaze upon her offspring dear,  
 Than thine upon the long far-stretching Mere.

Sweet innocent! Thy yellow hair floats low  
 In rippling undulations on thy breast,  
 Then stealing down the parted love-locks flow,  
 Bathed in a sunbeam on thy knees to rest,  
 And touch those idle hands that folded lie,  
 Having from sport and toil a like inamunity,

Through thy life's dream with what a touching grace  
 Childhood attends thee, nearly woman grown;  
 Her dimples linger yet upon thy face,

Like dews upon a lily this day blown ;  
Thy sighs are born of peace, unruffled, deep ;  
So the babe sighs on mother's breast asleep.

It sighs, and wakes, — but thou ! thy dream is all,  
And thou wert born for it, and it for thee ;  
Morn doth not take thy heart, nor even-fall

Charm out its sorrowful fidelity,  
Nor noon beguile thee from the pastoral shore,  
And thy long watch beneath the sycamore.

No, down the Mere, as far as eye can see,  
Where its long reaches fade into the sky,  
Thy constant gaze, fair child, rests lovingly ;

But neither thou nor any can descry  
Aught but the grassy banks, the rustling sedge,  
And flocks of wild-fowl, splashing at their edge.

And yet 'tis not with expectation hushed  
That thy mute rosy mouth doth pouting close ;  
No fluttering hope to thy young heart e'er rushed,

Nor disappointment troubled its repose ;  
All satisfied with gazing evermore  
Along the sunny Mere and reedy shore.

The brooding wren flies pertly near thy seat,  
Thou wilt not move to mark her glancing wing ;  
The timid sheep browse close before thy feet,

And heedless at thy side do thrushes sing,  
So long amongst them thou hast spent thy days,  
They know that harmless hand thou wilt not raise

Thou wilt not lift it up — not e'en to take  
The foxglove bells that flourish in the shade,  
And put them in thy bosom ; not to make

A posy of wild hyacinth inlaid  
Like bright mosaic in the mossy grass,  
With freckled orchis and pale sassafras.

Gaze on ; — take in the voices of the Mere,  
The break of shallow water at thy feet,  
Its splash among long reeds and grasses sere,

And its weird sobbing, — hollow music meet  
For ears like thine ; listen and talk thy fill,  
And dream on it by night, when all is still.

Full sixteen years have slowly passed away,  
Young Margaret, since thy fond mother here  
Came down, a six months' wife, one April day,

To see her husband's boat go down the Mere,  
And track its course, till, lost in distance blue,  
In mellow light it faded from her view.

It faded, and she never saw it more ; —  
Nor any human eye ; — oh, grief ! oh, woe !  
It faded, — and returned not to shore ;

But far above it still the waters flow —  
And none beheld it sink, and none could tell  
Where coldly slept the form she loved so well !

But that sad day, unknowing of her fate,  
She homeward turn'd her still reluctant feet ;  
And at her wheel she spun, till dark and late,

The evening fell ; — the time when they should  
meet ; —  
Till the stars paled that at deep midnight burned —  
And morning dawned, and he was not returned.

And the bright sun came up, — she thought too soon, —  
And shed his ruddy light along the Mere ;  
And day wore on too quickly, and at noon

She came and wept beside the waters clear.  
“ How could he be so late ? ” — and then hope fled ;  
And disappointment darkned into dread.

He NEVER came, and she with weepings sore  
Peered in the water-flags unceasingly ;

Through all the undulations of the shore,  
 Looking for that which most she feared to see.  
 And then she took home sorrow to her heart,  
 And brooded over its cold, cruel smart.

And after, desolate she sat alone  
 And mourned, refusing to be comforted,  
 On the gray stone, the moss-embroidered stone  
 With the great sycamore above her head;  
 Till after many days a broken oar  
 Hard by her seat was drifted to the shore.

It came, — a token of his fate, — the whole  
 The sum of her misfortune to reveal;  
 As if sent up in pity to her soul,  
 The tidings of her widowhood to seal;  
 And put away the pining hope forlorn,  
 That made her grief more bitter to be borne.

And she was patient; through the weary day  
 She toiled; though none was there her work to  
 bless,  
 And did not wear the sullen months away,  
 Nor call on death to end her wretchedness,  
 But lest the grief should overflow her breast,  
 She toiled as heretofore, and would not rest.

But, her work done, what time the evening star  
 Rose over the cool water, then she came  
 To the gray stone, and saw its light from far  
 Drop down the misty Mere white lengths of flame,  
 And wondered whether there might be the place  
 Where the soft ripple wandered o'er his face.

Unfortunate! In solitude forlorn  
 She dwelt, and thought upon her husband's grave,  
 Till when the days grew short a child was born

To the dead father underneath the wave;  
 And it brought back a remnant of delight,  
 A little sunshine to its mother's sight;

A little wonder to her heart grown numb,  
 And a sweet yearning pitiful and keen:  
 She took it as from that poor father come,  
 Her and the misery to stand between;  
 Her little maiden babe, who day by day  
 Sucked at her breast and charmed her woes away.

But years flew on; the child was still the same,  
 Nor human language she had learned to speak,  
 Her lips were mute, and seasons went and came,  
 And brought fresh beauty to her tender cheek;  
 And all the day upon the sunny shore  
 She sat and mused beneath the sycamore.

Strange sympathy! she watched and wearied not,  
 Haply unconscious what it was she sought;  
 Her mother's tale she easily forgot,  
 And if she listened no warm tears it brought;  
 Though surely in the yearnings of her heart  
 The unknown voyager must have had his part.

Unknown to her; like all she saw unknown,  
 All sights were fresh as when they first began,  
 All sounds were new; each murmur and each tone  
 And cause and consequence she could not scan,  
 Forgot that night brought darkness in its train,  
 Nor reasoned that the day would come again.

There is a happiness in past regret;  
 And echoes of the harshest sound are sweet.  
 The mother's soul was struck with grief, and yet.  
 Repeated in her child, 'twas not unmeet  
 That echo-like the grief a tone should take  
 Painless, but ever pensive for her sake.

For her dear sake, whose patient soul was linked  
 By ties so many to the babe unborn ;  
 Whose hope, by slow degrees become extinct,  
 For evermore had left her child forlorn,  
 Yet left no consciousness of want or woe,  
 Nor wonder vague that these things should be so.

Truly her joys were limited and few,  
 But they sufficed a life to satisfy,  
 That neither fret nor dim foreboding knew,  
 But breathed the air in a great harmony  
 With its own place and part, and was at one  
 With all it knew of earth and moon and sun.

For all of them were worked into the dream, —  
 The husky sighs of wheat-fields in it wrought ;  
 All the land-miles belonged to it ; the stream  
 That fed the Mere ran through it like a thought.  
 It was a passion of peace, and loved to wait  
 'Neath boughs with fair green light illuminate ;

To wait with her alone ; always alone :  
 For any that drew near she heeded not,  
 Wanting them little as the lily grown  
 Apart from others, in a shady plot,  
 Wants fellow-lilies of like fair degree,  
 In her still glen to bear her company.

Always alone : and yet, there was a child  
 Who loved this child, and, from his turret towers  
 Across the lea would roam to where, in-ised  
 And fenced in rapturous silence, went her hours,  
 And, with slow footsteps drawn anear the place  
 Where mute she sat, would ponder on her face,

And wonder at her with a childish awe,  
 And come again to look, and yet again,  
 Till the sweet rippling of the Mere would draw  
 His longing to itself ; while in her train

The water-hen come forth, would bring her brood  
 From slumbering in the rushy solitude ;

Or to their young would curlews call and clang  
 Their homeless young that down the furrows  
 creep ;

Or the wind-hover in the blue would hang,  
 Still as a rock set in the watery deep.  
 Then from her presence he would break away,  
 Unmarked, ungreeted yet, from day to day.

But older grown, the Mere he haunted yet,  
 And a strange joy from its wild sweetness caught ;  
 Whilst careless sat alone maid Margaret,  
 And "shut the gates" of silence on her thought,  
 All through spring mornings gemmed with melted  
 rime,  
 All through hay-harvest and through gleaning time.

O pleasure for itself that boyhood makes,  
 O happiness to roam the sighing shore,  
 Plough up with elfin craft the water-flakes,  
 And track the nested rail with cautious oar ;  
 Then floating lie and look with wonder new  
 Straight up in the great dome of light and blue.

O pleasure ! yet they took him from the wold,  
 The reedy Mere, and all his pastime there,  
 The place where he was born, and would grow old  
 If God his life so many years should spare ;  
 From the loved haunts of childhood and the plain  
 And pasture-lands of his own broad domain.

And he came down when wheat was in the sheaf,  
 And with her fruit the apple-branch bent low,  
 While yet in August glory hung the leaf,  
 And flowerless aftermath began to grow ;  
 He came from his gray turrets to the shore,  
 And sought the maid beneath the sycamore.

He sought her, not because her tender eyes  
 Would brighten at his coming, for he knew  
 Full seldom any thought of him would rise  
 In her fair breast when he had passed from view ;  
 But for his own love's sake, that unbeguiled  
 Drew him in spirit to the silent child.  
 For boyhood in its better hour is prone  
 To reverence what it hath not understood ;  
 And he had thought some heavenly meaning shone  
 From her clear eyes, that made their watchings  
 good ;  
 While a great peacefulness of shade was shed  
 Like oil of consecration on her head.  
 A fishing wallet from his shoulder slung,  
 With bounding foot he reached the mossy place,  
 A little moment gently o'er her hung,  
 Put back her hair and looked upon her face,  
 Then fain from that deep dream to wake her yet,  
 He " Margaret ! " low murmured, " Margaret !  
 " Look at me once before I leave the land,  
 For I am going, — going, Margaret."  
 And then she sighed, and, lifting up her hand,  
 Laid it along his young fresh cheek, and set  
 Upon his face those blue twin-deeps, her eyes,  
 And moved it back from her in troubled wise,  
 Because he came between her and her fate,  
 The Mere. She sighed again as one oppressed ;  
 The waters, shining clear, with delicate  
 Reflections wavered on her blameless breast ;  
 And through the branches dropt, like flickerings fair,  
 And played upon her hands and on her hair.  
 And he, withdrawn a little space to see,  
 Murmured in tender ruth that was not pain,  
 " Farewell, I go ; but sometimes think of me.

Maid Margaret ; " and there came by again  
 A whispering in the reed-beds and the sway  
 Of waters : then he turned and went his way.  
 And wilt thou think on him now he is gone ?  
 No ; thou wilt gaze : though thy young eyes grow  
 dim,  
 And thy soft cheek become all pale and wan,  
 Still thou wilt gaze, and spend no thought on him ;  
 There is no sweetness in his laugh for thee —  
 No beauty in his fresh heart's gayety.  
 But wherefore linger in deserted haunts ?  
 Why of the past, as if yet present, sing ?  
 The yellow iris on the margin flaunts,  
 With hyacinth the banks are blue in spring,  
 And under dappled clouds the lark afloat  
 Pours all the April-tide from her sweet throat.  
 But Margaret — ah ! thou art there no more,  
 And thick dank moss creeps over thy gray stone :  
 Thy path is lost that skirted the low shore,  
 With willow-grass and speedwell overgrown ;  
 Thine eye has closed forever, and thine ear  
 Drinks in no more the music of the Mere.  
 The boy shall come — shall come again in spring,  
 Well pleased that pastoral solitude to share,  
 And some kind offering in his hand will bring  
 To cast into thy lap, O maid most fair —  
 Some clasping gem about thy neck to rest,  
 Or heave and glimmer on thy guileless breast.  
 And he shall wonder why thou art not here  
 The solitude with " smiles to entertain,"  
 And gaze along the reaches of the Mere ;  
 But he shall never see thy face again —  
 Shall never see upon the reedy shore  
 Maid Margaret beneath her sycamore.

## II.

## MARGARET IN THE XEBEC.

[“Concerning this man (Robert Delacour), little further is known than that he served in the king’s army, and was wounded in the battle of Marston Moor, being then about twenty-seven years of age. After the battle of Naseby, finding himself a marked man, he quitted the country, taking with him the child whom he had adopted; and he made many voyages between the different ports of the Mediterranean and Levant.”]

RESTING within his tent at turn of day,

A wailing voice his scanty sleep beset:  
He started up — it did not flee away —

’Twas no part of his dream, but still did fret  
And pine into his heart, “Ah me! ah me!”  
Broken with heaving sobs right mournfully.

Then he arose, and, troubled at this thing,

All wearily toward the voice he went  
Over the down-trodden bracken and the ling,

Until it brought him to a soldier’s tent,  
Where, with the tears upon her face, he found  
A little maiden weeping on the ground;

And backward in the tent an aged crone

Upbraided her full harshly more and more,  
But sunk her chiding to an undertone

When she beheld him standing at the door,  
And calmed her voice, and dropped her lifted hand,  
And answered him with accent soft and bland.

No, the young child was none of hers, she said,

But she had found her where the ash lay white  
About a smouldering tent; her infant head

All shelterless, she through the dewy night  
Had slumbered on the field, — ungentle fate  
For a lone child so soft and delicate.

“And I,” quoth she, “have tended her with care,  
And thought to be rewarded of her kin,  
For by her rich attire and features fair

I know her birth is gentle: yet within  
The tent unclaimed she doth but pine and weep,  
A burden I would fain no longer keep.”

Still while she spoke the little creature wept,

Till painful pity touched him for the flow  
Of all those tears, and to his heart there crept

A yearning as of fatherhood, and lo!  
Reaching his arms to her, “My sweet,” quoth he,  
“Dear little madam, wilt thou come with me?”

Then she left off her crying, and a look

Of wistful wonder stole into her eyes.

The sullen frown her dimpled face forsook,

She let him take her, and forgot her sighs,

Contented in his alien arms to rest,

And lay her baby head upon his breast.

Ah, sure a stranger trust was never sought

By any soldier on a battle-plain.

He brought her to his tent, and soothed his voice,

Rough with command; and asked, but all in vain  
Her story, while her prattling tongue rang sweet,  
She playing, as one at home, about his feet.

Of race, of country, or of parentage,

Her lisping accents nothing could unfold; —

No questioning could win to read the page

Of her short life; — she left her tale untold,

And home and kin thus early to forget,

She only knew, — her name was — Margaret.

Then in the dusk upon his arm it chanced

That night that suddenly she fell asleep;

And he looked down on her like one entranced,

And listened to her breathing still and deep,

As if a little child, when daylight closed,  
With half-shut lids had ne'er before reposed.

Softly he laid her down from off his arm,  
With earnest care and new-born tenderness :  
Her infancy, a wonder-working charm,  
Laid hold upon his love ; he stayed to bless  
The small sweet head, then went he forth that night  
And sought a nurse to tend this new delight.

And day by day his heart she wrought upon,  
And won her way into its inmost fold —  
A heart which, but for lack of that whereon  
To fix itself, would never have been cold ;  
And, opening wide, now let her come to dwell  
Within its strong unguarded citadel.

She, like a dream, unlocked the hidden springs  
Of his past thoughts, and set their current free  
To talk with him of half-forgotten things —  
The pureness and the peace of infancy,  
“ Thou also, thou,” to sigh, “ wert undefiled  
(O God, the change!) once, as this little child.”

The baby-mistress of a soldier's heart,  
She had but friendlessness to stand her friend,  
And her own orphanhood to plead her part,  
When he, a wayfarer, did pause, and bend,  
And bear with him the starry blossom sweet  
Out of its jeopardy from trampling feet.

A gleam of light upon a rainy day,  
A new-tied knot that must be severed soon,  
At sunrise once before his tent at play,  
And hurried from the battle-field at noon,  
While face to face in hostile ranks they stood,  
Who should have dwelt in peace and brotherhood.

But ere the fight, when higher rose the sun,  
And yet were distant far the rebel bands,  
She heard at intervals a booming gun,  
And she was pleased, and laughing clapped her  
hands ;

Till he came in with troubled look and tone,  
Who chose her desolate to be his own.

And he said, “ Little madam, now farewell,  
For there will be a battle fought ere night.  
God be thy shield, for He alone can tell  
Which way may fall the fortune of the fight.  
To fitter hands the care of thee pertain,  
My dear, if we two never meet again.”

Then he gave money shortly to her nurse,  
And charged her straitly to depart in haste,  
And leave the plain, whereon the deadly curse  
Of war should light with ruin, death, and waste,  
And all the ills that must its presence blight,  
E'en if proud victory should bless the right.

“ But if the rebel cause should prosper, then  
It were not good among the hills to wend ;  
But journey through to Boston in the fen,  
And wait for peace, if peace our God shall send ;  
And if my life is spared, I will essay,”  
Quoth he, “ to join you there as best I may.”

So then he kissed the child, and went his way ;  
But many troubles rolled above his head ;  
The sun arose on many an evil day,  
And cruel deeds were done, and tears were shed ;  
And hope was lost, and loyal hearts were fain  
In dust to hide, — ere they two met again.

So passed the little child from thought, from view —  
(The snowdrop blossoms, and then is not there,



Forgotten till men welcome it anew),  
 He found her in his heavy days of care,  
 And with her dimples was again beguiled,  
 As on her nurse's knee she sat and smiled.

And he became a voyager by sea,  
 And took the child to share his wandering state;  
 Since from his native land compelled to flee,  
 And hopeless to avert her monarch's fate;  
 For all was lost that might have made him pause,  
 And, past a soldier's help, the royal cause.

And thus rolled on long days, long months and  
 years,

And Margaret within the Xebec sailed;  
 The lulling wind made music in her ears,  
 And nothing to her life's completeness failed.  
 Her pastime 'twas to see the dolphins spring,  
 And wonderful live rainbows glimmering.

The gay sea-plants familiar were to her,  
 As daisies to the children of the land;  
 Red wavy dulse the sunburnt mariner  
 Raised from its bed to glisten in her hand;  
 The vessel and the sea were her life's stage —  
 Her house, her garden, and her hermitage.

Also she had a cabin of her own,  
 For beauty like an elfin palace bright,  
 With Venice glass adorned, and crystal stone,  
 That trembled with a many-colored light;  
 And there with two caged ringdoves she did play,  
 And feed them carefully from day to day.

Her bed with silken curtains was enclosed,  
 White as the snowy rose of Guelderland;  
 On Turkish pillows her young head reposed,  
 And love had gathered with a careful hand

Fair playthings to the little maiden's side,  
 From distant ports, and cities parted wide.

She had two myrtle-plants that she did tend,  
 And think all trees were like to them that grew;  
 For things on land she did confuse and blend,  
 And chiefly from the deck the land she knew,  
 And in her heart she pitied more and more  
 The steadfast dwellers on the changeless shore.

Green fields and inland meadows faded out  
 Of mind, or with sea-images were linked;  
 And yet she had her childish thoughts about  
 The country she had left — though indistinct  
 And faint as mist the mountain-head that shrouds,  
 Or dim through distance as Magellan's clouds.

And when to frame a forest scene she tried,  
 The ever-present sea would yet intrude,  
 And all her towns were by the water's side,  
 It murmured in all moorland solitude,  
 Where rocks and the ribbed sand would intervene,  
 And waves would edge her fancied village green;

Because her heart was like an ocean shell,  
 That holds (men say) a message from the deep,  
 And yet the land was strong, she knew its spell,  
 And harbor lights could draw her in her sleep;  
 And minster chimes from piercèd towers that swim,  
 Were the land-angels making God a hymn.

So she grew on, the idol of one heart,  
 And the delight of many — and her face,  
 Thus dwelling chiefly from her sex apart,  
 Was touched with a most deep and tender grace —  
 A look that never aught but nature gave,  
 Artless, yet thoughtful; innocent, yet grave.

Strange her adornings were, and strangely blent:  
 A golden net confined her nut-brown hair;  
 Quaint were the robes that divers lands had lent,  
 And quaint her aged nurse's skill and care;  
 Yet did they well on the sea-maiden meet,  
 Circle her neck, and grace her dimpled feet.

The sailor folk were glad because of her,  
 And deemed good fortune followed in her wake;  
 She was their guardian saint, they did aver —  
 Prosperous winds were sent them for her sake;  
 And strange rough vows, strange prayers, they  
 nightly made,  
 While, storm or calm, she slept, in naught afraid.

Clear were her eyes, that daughter of the sea,  
 Sweet, when uplifted to her aged nurse,  
 She sat, and communed what the world could be;  
 And rambling stories caused her to rehearse  
 How Yule was kept, how maidens tossed the hay,  
 And how bells rang upon a wedding day.

But they grew brighter when the evening star  
 First trembled over the still glowing wave,  
 That bathed in ruddy light, mast, sail, and spar;  
 For then, reclined in rest that twilight gave,  
 With him who served for father, friend, and guide,  
 She sat upon the deck at eventide.

Then turned towards the west, that on her hair  
 And her young cheek shed down its tender glow.  
 He taught her many things with earnest care  
 That he thought fitting a young maid should know,  
 Told of the good deeds of the worthy dead,  
 And prayers devout, by faithful martyrs said.

And many psalms he caused her to repeat  
 And sing them, at his knees reclined the while,

And spoke with her in all things good and meet,  
 And told the story of her native isle,  
 Till at the end he made her tears to flow,  
 Rehearsing of his royal master's woe.

And of the stars he taught her, and their names,  
 And how the chartless mariner they guide;  
 Of quivering light that in the zenith flames,  
 Of monsters in the deep sea caves that hide;  
 Then changed the theme to fairy records wild,  
 Enchanted moor, elf dame, or changeling child.

To her the Eastern lands their strangeness spread,  
 The dark-faced Arab in his long blue gown,  
 The camel thrusting down a snake-like head  
 To browse on thorns outside a walled white town,  
 Where palmy clusters rank by rank upright  
 Float as in quivering lakes of ribbed light.

And when the ship sat like a broad-winged bird  
 Becalmed, lo, lions answered in the night  
 Their fellows, all the hollow dark was stirred  
 To echo on that tremulous thunder's flight,  
 Dying in weird faint moans; — till, look! the sun  
 And night, and all the things of night, were done.

And they, toward the waste as morning brake,  
 Turned, where, in-isled in his green watered land,  
 The Lybian Zeus lay couched of old, and spake,  
 Hemmed in with leagues of furrow-faced sand —  
 Then saw the moon (like Joseph's golden cup  
 Come back) behind some ruined roof swim up.

But blooming childhood will not always last,  
 And storms will rise e'en on the tideless sea;  
 His guardian love took fright, she grew so fast,  
 And he began to think how sad 'twould be  
 If he should die, and pirate hordes should get  
 By sword or shipwreck his fair Margaret.