

VARIOUS

BALLADS OF
BEAUTY

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Various Ballads of Beauty

*"IF EYES WERE MADE FOR SEEING,
THEN BEAUTY IS ITS OWN EXCUSE FOR BEING."*

Emerson.

Beauty

Beauty gives
The features perfectness, and to the form
Its delicate proportions: she may stain
The eye with a celestial blue, the cheek
With carmine of the sunset; she may breathe
Grace into every motion, like the play
Of the least visible tissue of a cloud;
She may give all that's rich – her own
Bright cestus – and one glance of Intellect,
Like stronger magic, will outshine it all.

Waiting in the Twilight

Slowly from the western hill-sides
Fades the sunset's ruddy light,
While the birds amid the tree-tops
Softly chirp their sweet "Good-night."

Where the elm trees' spreading branches
Hide the streamlets with their shades,
Stands the fair-faced, blue-eyed Dolly,
Flower of all the village maids, —

Looking, in the growing twilight,
Towards the grassy fields ahead,
Listening still, with eye expectant,
For the ever-welcome tread.

From across the verdant meadow
Comes a whistle, loud and shrill,
Sounding through the evening stillness,
Seemeth but the whip-poor-will.

But the fair face glows still brighter,
And the eyes more eager grow,
As the notes come near and nearer,
Louder than the streamlet's flow.

Soon she hears the well-known music
Of his voice, borne on the air:
"Don't you hear me coming, Dolly?
Dolly, dear, I'll soon be there."

And the one she's long been waiting,
Hat upraised, now comes in sight,
Hastening towards the blue-eyed maiden,
Waiting in the soft twilight.

Happy hearts, so young and trusting,
May no frost e'er blight your love,
But may blessings all unnumbered
Fall upon you from above!

Life Songs

A brook flashed from a rugged height,
Merrily, merrily glancing;
The songs of the summer light
Kept time to the tune of its dancing.
Fond eyes looked on its dewy sheen,
Reading fate in its waters;
"Darling, the song of the brook is for you,
Fairest of earth's dear daughters."
Bright eyes looked on its dewy sheen,
And the songs of their lives rang clearly, —
"The world is fair! the world is fair!"
"And I love, I love you dearly."

Autumn leaves, like a fairy fleet,
Swept down towards the river;
The false wind moaned through the dreary sleet,
"The flowers are dead forever!"
Sad eyes looked down on the shadowed stream,
Reading fate in its measure:
"For me your song, for my withered life,
Pain in the mask of pleasure."
Sad eyes looked on the shadowed stream,
And the songs of their lives rang clearly, —
"The world is sad! the world is sad!"
"Oh! I loved, I loved him dearly."

A flush, a glow on the winter skies,
Earth smiles in her happy dreaming;
Whispers the wind, "Arise! arise!"
The dawn of spring is beaming."
Calm eyes look down on the sunny brook,
With a smile that has conquered sadness —
"Your song is for me in this sweet spring-time,
In heaven is perfect gladness."
Calm eyes look on its dewy sheen,
And the songs of their lives ring gayly, —
"The spring is here! the spring is here!"
"I find strength for my burden daily."

The Welcome

I

Come in the evening or come in the morning,
Come when you're looked for or come without warning,
Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you,
And the oftener you come here the more I'll adore you!
Light is my heart since the day we were plighted,
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted;
The green of the trees looks far greener than ever,
And the linnets are singing, "True lovers don't sever!"

II

I'll pull you sweet flowers, to wear if you choose them,
Or, after you've kissed them, they'll lie on my bosom;
I'll fetch from the mountain its breeze to inspire you;
I'll fetch from my fancy a tale that won't tire you.
Oh! your step's like the rain to the summer-vexed farmer,
Or sabre and shield to a knight without armor.
I'll sing you sweet songs till the stars rise above me,
Then, wandering, I'll wish you in silence to love me.

III

We'll look through the trees at the cliff and the eyrie;
We'll tread round the rath on the track of the fairy;
We'll look on the stars, and we'll list to the river,
Till you ask of your darling what gift you can give her.
Oh! she'll whisper you, – "Love, as unchangeably beaming,
And trust, when in secret, most tunefully streaming,
Till the starlight of heaven above us shall quiver,
As our souls flow in one down eternity's river."

IV

So come in the evening or come in the morning,
Come when you're looked for or come without warning,

Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you,
And the oftener you come here the more I'll adore you!
Light is my heart since the day we were plighted,
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted;
The green of the trees looks far greener than ever,
And the linnets are singing, "True lovers don't sever!"

Love at First Sight

Into my heart a silent look
Flashed from thy careless eyes;
And what before was shadow, took
The light of summer skies.
The first-born Love was in that look;
The Venus rose from out the deep
Of those inspiring eyes.

My life, like some lone, solemn spot
A spirit passes o'er,
Grew instinct with a glory not
In earth or heaven before.
Sweet trouble stirred the haunted spot,
And shook the leaves of every thought
Thy presence wandered o'er!

My being yearned, and crept to thine,
As if in times of yore
Thy soul had been a part of mine,
Which claimed it back once more —
Thy very self no longer thine,
But merged in that delicious life
Which made us ONE of yore!

There bloomed beside thee forms as fair,
There murmured tones as sweet;
But round thee breathed the enchanted air
'Twas life and death to meet.
And henceforth thou alone wert fair,
And though the stars had sung for joy,
Thy whisper only sweet!

O Fairest of the Rural Maids

O fairest of the rural maids!
Thy birth was in the forest shades;
Green boughs, and glimpses of the sky,
Were all that met thine infant eye.

Thy sports, thy wanderings, when a child,
Were ever in the sylvan wild;
And all the beauty of the place
Is in thy heart and on thy face.

The twilight of the trees and rocks
Is in the light shade of thy locks;
Thy step is as the wind, that weaves
Its playful way among the leaves.

Thine eyes are springs, in whose serene
And silent waters heaven is seen;
Their lashes are the herbs that look
On their young figures in the brook.

The forest depths, by foot unpresed,
Are not more sinless than thy breast;
The holy peace that fills the air
Of those calm solitudes, is there.

Louise on the Doorstep

Half-past three in the morning!
And no one in the street
But me, on the sheltering doorstep
Resting my weary feet,
Watching the rain-drops patter
And dance where the puddles run,
As bright in the flaring gas-light
As dew-drops in the sun.

There's a light upon the pavement,
It shines like a magic glass,
And there are faces in it
That look at me and pass.
Faces – ah! well remembered
In the happy Long Ago,
When my garb was white as lilies,
And my thoughts as pure as snow.

Faces! ah, yes! I see them —
One, two, and three – and four —
That come in the gust of tempests,
And go on the winds that bore.
Changeful and evanescent,
They shine mid storm and rain,
Till the terror of their beauty
Lies deep upon my brain.

One of them frowns; *I* know him,
With his thin, long, snow-white hair, —
Cursing his wretched daughter
That drove him to despair.
And the other, with wakening pity
In her large, tear-streaming eyes,
Seems as she yearned towards me,
And whispered "Paradise."

They pass, – they melt in the ripples,
And I shut mine eyes, that burn,
To escape another vision
That follows where'er I turn —
The face of a false deceiver
That lives and lies; ah, me!
Though I see it in the pavement,
Mocking my misery!

They are gone, all three! – quite vanished!
Let nothing call them back!
For I've had enough of phantoms,
And my heart is on the rack.
God help me in my sorrow!
But *there*, – in the wet, cold stone,
Smiling in heavenly beauty,
I see my lost, mine own!

There, on the glimmering pavement,
With eyes as blue as morn,
Floats by the fair-haired darling
Too soon from my bosom torn.
She clasps her tiny fingers,
She calls me sweet and mild,
And says that my God forgives me
For the sake of my little child.

I will go to her grave to-morrow,
And pray that I may die;
And I hope that my God will take me
Ere the days of my youth go by.
For I am old in anguish,
And long to be at rest,
With my little babe beside me,
And the daisies on my breast.

Our Skater Belle

Along the frozen lake she comes
In linking crescents, light and fleet;
The ice-imprisoned Undine hums
A welcome to her little feet.

I see the jaunty hat, the plume
Swerve bird-like in the joyous gale, —
The cheeks lit up to burning bloom,
The young eyes sparkling through the veil.

The quick breath parts her laughing lips,
The white neck shines through tossing curls;
Her vesture gently sways and dips,
As on she speeds in shell-like whorls.

Men stop and smile to see her go;
They gaze, they smile in pleased surprise;
They ask her name; they long to show
Some silent friendship in their eyes.

She glances not; she passes on;
Her steely footfall quicker rings;
She guesses not the benison
Which follows her on noiseless wings.

Smooth be her ways, secure her tread,
Along the devious lines of life,
From grace to grace successive led, —
A noble maiden, nobler wife!

Augusta

"Handsome and haughty!" a comment that came
From lips which were never accustomed to malice:
A girl with a presence superb as her name,
And charmingly fitted for love – in a palace!
And oft I have wished – for in musing alone
One's fancy is apt to be very erratic —
That the lady might wear – No! I never will own
A thought so decidedly undemocratic!
But *if 'twere* a *coronet*– this, I'll aver,
No duchess on earth could more gracefully wear it;
And even a democrat – thinking of *her*—
Might surely be pardoned for wishing to share it!

Lord Ullin's Daughter

A chieftain to the Highlands bound,
Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry."

"Now who be ye would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?"
"Oh, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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