

# The Daughters of King Daher

By Tom Hood



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**Sani Hussain Panhwar**

**The**  
**Daughters of King Daher,**  
**a story of the Mohammedan invasion of**  
**Scinde ...**

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# *Dedication*

TO

MRS. S. C. HALL.

My Dear Mrs. Hall,

If you will not allow that a recollection of your friendship, dated as far back as I can remember, is a sufficient reason for my inscribing this book to you, I must ask you to let me do so, on the ground that in January, 1853 you inserted in Sharpe's Magazine the first poem of mine which ever appeared in print – and thus introduced me to the public who have ever since been so kindly disposed to me.

Believe me,

My dear Mrs. Hall,

Yours very truly,

Tom Hood.

# *Preface*

The story upon which the following poem is founded I discovered in the shape of brief memoranda among papers to which I have had no cause to refer for some period. At this distance of time I am unable to say from what source I obtained them, but I believe I jotted down the plot from a note in an old review – being struck with its adaptability to verse.

It is possible that the note in question related to a metrical chronicle or the writings of a native poet, but I have not met with either; nor has the subject ever been attempted before in English to my knowledge.

The minor poems at the end are republished by permission from the St. James's, the Cornhill, and Macmillan's Magazines.

Thomas Hood.

Brompton, September, 1861.



## THE DAUGHTERS OF KING DAHAR

**S**WEET swam the sounds of night the whole night through

About the tamarisks and plumed palms,  
That clothed the scented vales and slopes of Scinde.

The drowsy churr of insects, and the note  
Monotonous of that dark bird, which flits  
Among the darkling stems till daylight, drowned  
In forest mists, made midnight musical.

The silver streamlets of the moonlight ran  
Between the shadows on the ground, and stole  
In little glimmering breaks among the grass.

Pale the gold roofs of Oomerkote, and pale  
Its silent streets in that wan flood of light.

Around the walls the wakeful sentinels  
In armour, studded with cold drops of dew,  
Paced through the weary hours, and woke the night  
With the long note of watch-cries, chanted round:

A wave of sound that on the listening ear  
Broke – died into the distance – grew again:  
As in its circle on from tower to tower  
The word was shouted to each lonely guard.  
Beneath the city in a hollow, washed  
By yellow Indus sweeping to the sea,  
And gemmed but late with flowers, that now were trod,  
Lavishly shedding perfume, into mire,  
Slept the white tents of the invader's camp.  
Stilly as statues stood beyond the lines  
The Arab outposts, each with long lithe lance  
Striking a black unwavering line of shade  
That pointed toward the city. Still as Death,  
Slumber – its herald to how many! – hung  
About the army; save when restless steeds  
Rattled their halter chains, or dreaming men  
Struggled in fight foreshadowed.

Oomerkote!

Oh Queen of Scinde, to-morrow's sun beholds  
Thy happy plains the scene of such a strife  
As leaves thee ever free – or ever fallen  
Down – down – and trampled 'neath the Moslem's heel.

But come what might with day, the night was calm,  
Smiling as Ocean smiles o'er cruel rocks,  
Whose rending fangs await the hapless barks  
Gliding across the soft, smooth swell to wreck.

Anon the moon 'mid drifted isles of cloud  
Paled slowly – dropt from sight. The sun unseen  
Yet smote the topmost peaks to ruby tints,  
And filled the quivering air with shafts of gold.  
From crag to crag the Day with rosy feet  
Leaped down into the valley – through the trees  
Weaving long woofs of light across the gloom.  
Then woke the stir of arms, the neigh of steeds,  
The hum of busy grooms ; and slumber died  
With the faint wreaths of smoke that floated off  
From the extinguished watchfires, shredded soon  
To tiny flocks of mist among the boughs  
Of interlacing forest-trees which ringed  
The rearward of the camp.

From point to point

The standard of the Prophet raised aloft  
Slid – like the strong-winged vulture hovering  
Where his strange instinct scents the coming blood.

But when the slant rays reached the sparkling sward  
And threw long shadows westward – rose the cry  
“To prayer – to prayer – good Mussulmans to prayer!”  
As in some level and slow-watered shire  
Beside a black and tardy-dimpled dyke,  
A wild gust swooping downward from a cloud  
Spreads o’er a whitening osier-bed, and bows  
The supple stems – across the army swept  
The call to prayer, and bent all heads to dust.

And while the Moslem still on Allah called,  
And turned to Mecca and Mohammed’s tomb,  
Swift were the gates of Oomerkote unbarred,  
Back swang the valves of the majestic doors  
Of scented sandal, bossed with silver nails –  
And loosed the torrent of the troops of Scinde  
Upon the vale beneath – a dusky flood  
Like that which fills and overfills the course  
Of some swift mountain-stream in winter-time,  
When all the peaks are mantled in a mist,  
And lashing rain-spouts slant across the sky,  
Dimming the pale horizon with black bars.

Amid the flashing tide of tossing arms,



And fluttering flags, and lances tremulous  
As brook-side reeds with the impetuous haste  
Of those who bore them – castled beasts of war  
Swayed like huge galleons when upon the flood  
Of some wide arm of sea they cross the bar.  
First on the plain, the swarthy cavalry  
Beat a rude rhythm on the trampled turf,  
And shrilled their trumpets.

High King Daher rode

Upon his mail-cased elephant that clanged  
Its armour-plates at every swinging stride.  
So down the Hindu on the Moslem drave.  
Then rose and roared the din of battle, rolled  
Far up among the echoes of the hills  
Reverberant, that woke the wolf, and roused  
The tiger in his lair – who crouched and whined  
To think it distant thunder.

At the first

The rush of Indian warriors, fierce and strong,  
Bare down the hosts of Islam till their line  
Wavered, and giving backward, in the midst  
Bulged just to breaking. This when Kasim saw –

The General of Khalif Waled's force —  
He spurred his fiery Arab to the point,  
And hurled himself and his true body guard  
So fiercely into battle that the foe,  
Weakened by his own loose advance, was checked —  
Was stayed at first — then stopt — then turned to rout,  
And driven backward on the morning's lines.  
So have you seen the long Atlantic wave  
Against a cliff, upright, deep-rooted, tall,  
Fling its white force in thunder, mounting up  
Swift toward the crest, then, failing, backward fall  
In mist and driving foam-flakes to the base.  
  
Not long delayed the Moslem to regain  
The yielded vantage, and with Hindu blood  
Purpled each step of the recovered ground.  
Hushed were the shouts. The clash alone of arms,  
And hissing rain of arrows, mixed with groans,  
Reached now the ears of listening Oomerkote:  
For teeth were clenched and blows in silence dealt,  
And cry for quarter none. Each foot of soil  
Was fiercely battled for, with life for life,  
As though it were the Empire of the East.

So all day long, while up the steep of Heaven  
The hot sun climbed, until his downward wheel  
Glowed to the westward, doubtful warfare raged.

Foremost in danger, bold King Daher strave  
To turn the wavering fortune of the fray.  
Where'er the foe upon his ranks brake in  
Or pressed his legions backward – there his voice  
Rang like a clarion. Then the coward turned  
And faced the foe again, and valiant men  
Vied with the king in onset.

But a cry

“Daher is slaughtered !” ran along the line  
That wavered as it heard – as you may note  
By nodding grasses where a noisome snake  
Slides from his sunny basking-place to hide.  
For, lo ! a crafty arrow smote the king  
Between the corselet and the hood of mail  
And buried in his throat its venomed barb.  
Then from his beast in death-throes Daher fell  
Headlong among the fighting-men – and lay  
Unknown and trampled in the panic flight

Which followed on his fall. Yet some there were  
Still faithful found, forgetful of themselves,  
Who gathered round the king and bare him back,  
Hoping where hope was none – until they saw  
A smile upon his face begin to grow;  
And then they knew him dead : and looking found  
The whole vast army, which the morn beheld  
Mass upon mass roll down from Oomerkote,  
Now driving scattered o'er the shameful field  
Like the last clouds – ragged and ruddy-stained –  
That fly across the heavens along the track  
Of some o'er-spent and broken summer storm.  
Then hastily they scooped a shallow grave  
Within the trampled oozy ground, and hid  
The kingly corse – and fled. But there was one,  
A wounded Moslem lying by the road,  
Who saw the deed; and when young Kasim pasted  
The dying soldier caught his stirrup – called  
The General to halt, and showed the place  
Where the retreating Hindus had bestowed  
The corse of one they honoured. The pursuit  
Was stayed – the hasty grave was oped in haste;  
And Kasim looked upon the dead man's face,

And knew the clay that once had been a king.  
Meanwhile the sun, a fiery shield, was quenched  
In russet mists along the horizon's edge.  
Above his lingering gold a single star  
Stood sudden forth – like pardon o'er the couch  
Of dying penitent – companioned soon,  
As darkness deepened all the vault of blue,  
By brother lamps, slow growing into sight.  
All night in Oomerkote the women wailed.  
The Moslem sentry on the battle field,  
Where dying men groaned to the shivering gale,  
Heard the sad song they sang. It rose and sank  
Through all the long hours of the weary watch  
And made night doubly lonely. This they sang:  
"Oh, Indus ! Tell the Sea to which you flow –  
And Ocean to the holy Ganges tell  
The burden of our sorrow. Moan ! moan ! moan !  
Daher the king is dead – is dead – is dead !"  
The cadence floated o'er the river's breast  
And sighed among the gorges in the hills,  
Till echoes murmured back "is dead – is dead !"  
"Oh, Indus ! By your banks he lies alone –

Bear down his corse to Ocean. Ocean bear  
His corse to holy Ganges. Moan ! moan ! moan !  
Daher the king is dead – is dead – is dead !”

The river flowed unheeding on its way,  
But spectral voices – high in the hollow hills –  
Sobbed back the mournful dirge “ is dead – is dead !”  
“Oh, Indus ! King and crown and kingdom fail:  
Fair Scindia, envied to the farthest chain  
Of white-peaked mountains – ceases. Moan! moan!  
moan ! Daher the king is dead – is dead – is dead !”  
On passionate wings of sorrow wafted far  
The dirge lamented till the snowy heights  
Soft whispered, each to each – “ is dead – is dead!”  
Not thus the Queen – the beautiful Ladhee –  
Not thus the daughters of King Daher wailed,  
But hoping where no hope was, still believed  
That he would come with day.  
With day he came! – Borne on a car before the invading host,  
His crownless head sunk on his lifeless breast,  
His strong hands idly hollowed in his lap.  
Then from the hearts of all in Oomerkote  
Arose a groan – as when a coming storm

Is voiced among the forest patriarchs,  
A thrill of horror rushing through the wood.  
The maidens wrung their hands – the warriors stern  
Wept without shame among the girls. Old men  
Shook their white heads at a remembered rhyme –  
“When that the King of Scinde,” it said, “ was seen  
Leading the enemy to Oomerkote,  
The crown of cities should be lost indeed!”  
But while the cry still shuddered on the air,  
A woman’s voice shrieked forth “I come – I come!”  
And with the sound of wings a silken robe  
Fluttered a moment o’er the battlements,  
And then the wind sang in its flapping folds  
As down it gleamed into the moat beneath.  
And where is Daher’s Queen – the proud Ladhee?  
A crushed corse cast like worthless ocean-waif  
Among the rank growths at the turret’s foot.  
Then all the hearts in Oomerkote sank down  
And e’en the brave in battle quailed – and thus  
The counsels of the coward did prevail.  
Before the noon young Kasim and his troops  
Passed into Oomerkote, and filled her streets  
With fear and tumult. In the city’s heart,

Coffer'd within the central palace-walls  
Like costly gems, the spoiling troopers found  
Two maids, the last of Daher's hapless race,  
Of beauty worthy children of a king.  
"The General's prize!" they cried. And swift they bare  
The shrinking virgins to young Kasim's tent,  
Hoping a guerdon for the welcome gift.  
The first was Fragrant called. Sweet lips were hers  
That wooed each other, lacking  
The second was the Sun – within whose eyes,  
As in the opal, lurked a tongue of fire  
To wither and consume the thrall'd soul.  
Oh what was Kasim's bosom, that those forms  
Should fail to fill it with the flame of love?  
Was there some maiden in his own dear land,  
Whose cherished image came between his eyes  
And all fair women else? Or did his heart  
Own but Ambition mistress?

He was young –

Stately beyond his years, a prince of men.  
The tender prisoners looked on him with awe  
That lost in admiration all its fear.



But vain coy looks beneath long lashes shot!  
Nor love nor pity woke they. So the girls  
Stood silent, half in anger. Who may tell  
What cruel vengeance will not woman wreak  
For beauty slighted – e'en where harm would spring  
Of approbation ?

Slowly Kasim spake,

And chose the trustiest of his trusty band  
To execute the mission. "Take," he said,  
"These maids to Baghdad, to my Lord, and tell  
How Daher is no more, and Omerkote  
Barracks the troops of Islam. Mark you, too! –  
These damsels are the Khalifs – have a care  
To treat them reverently, and give to them  
All liberties save one. In act, word, thought,  
Hold them most sacred prizes for our Lord,  
The Khalif Waled – whom may Allah guard!"

So they departed with their charge. But he  
Prest on thro' Scinde his conqu'ring hordes and bare  
The standard of the Prophet onward still  
Through all that province broad, which lay between

The swift Hydaspes and the Indian Sea.

And Victory followed where young Kasim led.

**T**HERE was great festival in Baghdad.

High,

Spire after spire into the heart of night,

Her minarets were starred with myriad lamps:

And Tigris as it flowed beneath her walls

Mirrored a mimic heaven – flaming back

Unnumbered spangles – as the autumn sea,

Lapping at piles and piers, with sparks of light

Gleams bluely. Cressets flared along the streets,

Trick'd out with boughs, and flowers, and waving scarves.

The tinkling zittern and the rippling harp,

Like sound of rivulets mingling with the waves

Of some cape-sheltered bay, made sweet the air,

And seemed the voices of the wind that stirred

The chaplets and the banners and the flames

Of scented torches shedding heavy smoke

Of incense. And the thronging people cried,

“Praise be to Allah – Who has turned the hearts

Of foemen from our faces – Who has given

Victorious progress to the Faithful. Praise

To Allah. And to Kasim honours great!"

The shouts of joy to Waled's casement rose,  
And passed the golden lattice – and his brow  
Was troubled for an instant with a shade,  
The shadow of a shade – as when afar  
Across a sunny landscape, o'er the fields  
Of waving grain, swiftly a fleck of blue,  
Cast by a pasting cloud, wings like a bird  
To lose itself in distance. So it died,  
And Waled smiled, as through the curtained arch  
He stept, and down the marble stairs to where  
The prisoner maids awaited his approach.  
A silvery fountain, plashing in a shell  
Of marble, made a sound of summer showers  
Through the still corridors; and frequent lamps  
Shed moonlight through their alabaster globes,  
While, here and there, among the orange trees,  
In gilded cages mimic-noted birds  
Sang snatches from sweet lays of various lands  
Learnt from the Khalif's favourites, who came  
From dusky India, fierce with sun-warm blood,  
From drowsed Circaffia, pale with amorous sleep,  
And every other clime where beauty glows.

In a small chamber, chosen far aloof  
By kindly forethought from the city's din,  
Which triumphed where they sorrowed, sat the maids.  
Like cowering birds that in the sky perceive  
The hawk – a moveless speck unseen of man,  
Within a distant corner close they crouched.  
But e'en their fears betrayed unstudied charms;  
The Fragrant's shoulder, from the scarf escaped,  
Gleamed, pinkly-tinted, and her tiny foot,  
A crumpled rosebud, peeped from out her dress  
Forgetful of its slipper. While the Sun,  
Her hair released upon her shoulders, gazed,  
Like a gazelle in toils, with lustrous eyes,  
That justified her name. Their lissome arms  
Were wound about each other, and their hearts  
Beat close in unison. As when you peer  
Among the snaky ivies, where they make  
At mid-day a green twilight, you discern  
A nest of fledglings – far away they creep  
As their small home allows, and huddling bend  
Their piteous eyes upon you silently :  
So on the Khalif gazed the virgins, claspt

In one another's arms and speechless. So  
The curious Khalif o'er them leant and scanned  
Their sun-kist beauty. At his near approach  
Their veils they dropt. But he by love inflamed  
Brimmed o'er with smiles, and " Oh sweet maids,"

he said,

"Fortune of War has borne you here. But, here,  
You shall find solace in Love's fortune, such  
As is in Waled's gift. Then fear not! know  
This palace as your own, with all of fair  
Or costly that is here in Baghdad found –  
The Abode of Peace! I pray you raise your veils,  
That so the beauties of your eyes and cheeks  
Be garlands to the music of your speech."

"Not so, great Khalif," said the Sun, "not so!  
We pray you let us thus be covered." "Nay,"  
Said Waled. "For the fountain of your lips  
Cools my heart's thirst – but yet a want remains,  
And I do hunger to behold your face."

Again they murmured, "Pray you let it be."  
But when they felt his brow grow dark, the Sun  
Said, "Good my Lord, we had been proud to lay  
Our little beauty at the Khalif's feet

Knowing that our unworthiness would find –  
In force of his acceptance – worth. Alas !  
Unworthy ever – now unworthy most,  
We do but crave your leave to be concealed.”  
“Is this your country’s custom,” Waled cried,  
“To hide ungathered blossoms from the day ?  
Or but the fancy of coy girls?” Then she,  
With accents fainter, “In my land the maids  
The brow uncovered wear. But those, unblest,  
Whose purity or violence or sin  
Has tarnished, hide the forehead.

Oh, not well

Does he his Khalif love who offers grapes,  
Whence his own lips have kissed the fragrant bloom!”  
With that she ended, with a sound of tears.  
As, after some long breath of wind sinks down,  
That woke a sudden rushing in the trees,  
The air grows dusk, and, silvery sweet, a shower  
Sobs, child-like, ‘mid the sunshine half-obscured,  
Smites the gray dust and from the thirsty earth  
Sucks up an incense, of fresh moisture born,  
Like odorous smoke of grateful sacrifice.

“How now?” cried Waled; and his grizzled brows  
Met in a hasty frown, and fiery sparks  
Gleamed dangerous in his eyes – “What words are these?”  
A careful hand had by the sisters placed  
A silver dish piled high with luscious fruits  
To tempt the captives with the fragrance fine  
Of pomegranates, ripe peaches, downy pink,  
And musky apples streaked with red and gold.

From these the elder chose one juicy globe,  
Whose mottled rind showed fair – but deep within  
The garden pirate, the black-belted wasp,  
Had scooped a hollow to the very core.

“See, dreaded Khalif, with what specious gifts  
Your slaves do service – like your Generals;  
And offer fruit corrupted – worthless – base  
With an enforced dishonour. Mighty Lord!  
When Kasim comes, the conqueror of Scinde,  
Prepare the purple robe, the ring of gold,  
And fling the mantle o’er his shoulders – place  
The signet on his hand, and bid the steed,  
Whereon the Khalif rides, be brought for him;



Then let the heralds cry, 'Behold the man  
The Khalif honours!' leading through the streets  
Kasim, thus mounted, thus arrayed.

But add

A farther mark of favour. Home returned,  
Let him within his palace waiting find  
The daughters of King Daher for his slaves—  
For we may be none other's else than his!"

Then Waled rose in anger from his place  
And took three hasty strides and smote his hands.  
Swift at the signal mute obedient slaves  
Stood in the doorway. "Bid me Jaffier here!"  
Said Waled. They were gone: and to the maids  
He turned his pale face and his fiery eyes.  
His white beard bristled with his rage, his hands  
Twitched angrily, and knotty muscles rose  
Along his arm, and in his forehead stood  
Ropes of blue veins.

"Speak clearly," so he cried,

His voice harsh-grating suddenly, "and tell  
What man is this, whose boldness has presumed

To give his sovereign what his own base soul,  
Sated, desired no longer. Women, speak!"  
Then with one voice the maidens answered him,  
And murmured "Kasim."

Through his breast there rushed

A torrent, fierce, ungovernable, full  
Of cruel thoughts, and drown'd his wiser mind.  
Then in his heart an ancient evil woke –  
Why did the babbling populace so love  
To bear that name upon their tongues, and cry –  
"Kasim did this – great Kasim – mightiest  
Of all in Baghdad"? – scarcely they reserved  
(So full their praise) the Khalif – or they said,  
"Saving the one who rules" – a parrot-phrase,  
And glibly spoken with such ready lips  
As waited not the judgment of the mind.  
So Waled from his inner heart awoke  
A thousand lulled suspicions and distrusts,  
That slept uneasily beneath the guard  
Of Friendship until then. The shade, which passed  
Across his brow, when through the lattice-work  
The cries of victory smote upon his ear

Burdened with Kasim's name, returned again,  
And darkly deepened to a solemn gloom,  
That spoke of coming anger – as at noon  
Gather the coppery clouds, and hanging low  
Spread o'er the landscape lurid glimmerings,  
Meanwhile the thunder in the distance growls,  
And round the ragged edges of the rack  
The livid lightning plays – high, pile on pile,  
The cumbrous vapours mount, with tempest stored,  
And hoarse the rain roars, beating down the wind.  
"Is't not enough," mused Waled, "that his name  
Is linked with mine in honour, and the voice  
Of Baghdad lauds his generalship – that now  
He sends me these dishonoured Indian slaves?  
They were his own to hold – the prize of war,  
And had he borne them to his own Hareem  
No thought of mine had blamed him for the deed.  
But now he wrongs me with a studied shame!  
Let Kasim tremble. Where the wrong is great  
Great shall the vengeance be!"

While yet he mused

Came Jaffier – at his side a scymetar,  
Gold-sheathed and ivory-hilted, smote the ground

At every step, until the palace rang  
With warlike sounds. The Captain of the Guard,  
Most trusted of the Khalif's followers,  
Was Jaffier. Lowly did he bow the head  
Before the Khalif – seeking his behest.  
Then Waled, with the fire within his eyes,  
But in his speech a calm unnatural, said,  
“Thus unto Kasim for the Khalif speak –  
When to the General comes this signet-ring  
Let him give order that a noble bull,  
Deep-dewlapped, and wide-horned, be brought to him,  
And let the beast be slaughtered, and its hide  
Stript from it.

In that hide let Kasim come,

Wrapt closely, to the Khalifate. And, hark!  
Let none delay to execute our will!”  
Low Jaffier bowed, his face unmoved with awe  
Or wonder, and strode quickly from the hall –  
His clamorous accoutrements proclaimed  
His haste in going. In his heart was grief  
For Kasim – friends from childhood had they been,  
As early playmates, and as comrades tried

Since then in frequent battle. When the troops  
Of Islam overran the plain of Scinde  
Fain had bold Jaffier shared their toils – their scars –  
Their marchings – fightings – and the glory shed  
Around their brows triumphant. But the call  
Of duty, never drowned in Jaffier’s breast  
By pulses of desire or greed, forbade  
The wifhed-for toils of warfare by the side  
Of his old comrade Kasim. “Ah,” he thought,  
“Had I been there, perchance a word of mine  
Had turned him from ill purpose.” For he deemed  
Sooner would Kasim from his duty swerve,  
Than the high justice of the Khalif err.  
Thus went he sorrowing, though never doubt  
Dimmed the allegiance that Jaffier held  
To Waled – and his sorrow did not pluck  
From its own heart excuses of delay.  
Ere yet the sounds of boisterous festival  
Had died away in Baghdad’s streets – ere yet  
The slender lances of the morning pierced  
The night’s dark shield of clouds along the range  
Of eastern mountains, wrapt in shrouds of snow,

Jaffier had reached El Basrah. On the quay  
He stood, his dappled Barbary in a mist  
Beside him panting.

By the signet's power

He swayed the seamen to his will; and soon  
A long low galley tossed beside the pier.  
About the bows a serpent coil'd, and thrust:  
Its pointed head and swelling scaly throat  
Above the water from a narrowing prow,  
Knife-edged that clave the billow. On the thwarts  
Twelve sturdy rowers poised the supple blades,  
And – when the foot of Jaffier dipped the boat  
In hissing ripples to the gunwale – broke  
The mirrored sky to foam. Then with a bound  
The vessel darted forth. Beneath the stem  
The eddies gurgled, and along the sides  
Danced off in flashing bubbles, dimly lit  
By gleams of azure light. The grey of morn  
Warmed overhead to rose – the thread of moon  
Melted above the bank of clouds – and day  
Made golden ripples on the sea, and hung  
Gold banners in the sky where clouds had been.

**T**HE rout was ended. Sated of pursuit

The Moslems halted, and to Omerkote,  
Where now young Kafim lodged his forces, turned  
Their o'er-tired steps. Day after day had passed  
In wearying victory. The Indian troops,  
Gathered in haste for the defence of all  
That life holds dear, before the veteran skill  
Of the invader, scattered, as the flocks  
Of timid sheep before a watch-dog scour,  
And shake the ground with quickly trampling feet:  
But when from following the pursuer stays,  
Huddling they circle round him and present  
A threatening front, yet – when he turns – retire.  
Thus Kasim's van across the Indus thrown  
Was wearied with alternate strife and flight  
By these poor patriots, vainly striving still  
To drive the Moslem from their soil. The foe,  
Slow-moving, yet advanced; and foot by foot,  
Long-wrestling for possession, took the land.  
So stands a cliff – about whose foot the waves

Hoarse, clamorous, all the winters rave and rage,  
And buffeting the headland, would encroach  
Upon the confines of the coast – in vain!  
The gray rock stands – and at its solid base  
Slow grows the land – slow sinks the sea. At length  
Ocean dethroned gives up its prey, and man  
Rescues betimes to tillage what it yields.  
And long years after, from its home, in-land,  
The green trees and the gleaming cottages  
Clustered about its foot, the ancient cape  
Across the smiling cornland looks to sea  
Where its old foe, back-barrier'd, sullen roars.  
So on the front of Kasim's vanguard trenched,  
Wave after wave, the hopeless force of Scinde  
Despairing broke – and from the battle fled,  
To rally on the morrow, and return  
Once more in iteration of defeat.  
The rout was ended ; and young Kasim led  
His tired steed homeward. Through a long ravine,  
Scattered with corpses prone, whose feet were turned  
To Oomerkote, he thrud his way. The sun  
Glared rayless in the wide expanse of blue  
Where not a fleece of thinnest vapour hung.



Welcome to Kasim's ear, a thread of spring,  
Unseen, betrayed itself with trillings soft  
Upon a hollow stone beneath the shade  
Of broad-leaved plants, a curtain glofly green  
Of red-flowered creepers hung in wild sestoon : –  
Welcome to Kasim's ear – as childish voice  
And pattering feet along the gravel walk,  
And the complaining of a tardy latch  
Rebellious to small fingers – to the heart  
Of some home-wishful traveller, who returns  
After long wandering, doubtful what may be  
His greeting at the gate.

The steed released

Cropt the luxuriant grasses that repaid  
The bounteous overflowing of the stream.  
And Kasim cooled his brow, and washed the dust  
And stain of battle from him. By his side  
His crimson blade lay among crimson flowers.  
Upon the mossy floor of that still nook  
The warrior flung him down. Through arching boughs  
Thick-interlaced, some drops of sunlight rained  
And flecked the shadows, moveless on the grass

Save for a flickering where a restless bird,  
Unseen among the branches overhead,  
Anon enhanced the silence with a song.  
The troopers turning from the chase beheld  
Their chieftain lying by the fount and passed,  
Lowering their lances in obeisance due,  
To seek for other springs to slake their thirst.  
But in the jaws of the defile they met  
A mounted messenger who rode in haste  
With marks of travel on his face and beard,  
And dust thick-lying in his mantle's folds.  
"Where is the General ? Turn back – turn back  
And guide me to him!" So his cry outran  
His steed, the while above his head he held  
The signet of the Khalif.

Then the men,

Obedient to the bearer of the ring,  
Rode back with him, and from the path's last turn  
Pointed the shady resting-place wherein  
Their General sought repose.

On Jaffer passed,

And Kasim saw him coming and arose

To greet him. But the sorrow in his face  
Reached him before his words, so grave a thought  
Sat on his brow, and spread o'ershadowing wings  
That blotted out the smile upon his lips.  
Then Kasim's arms fell – empty of the friend They fain had girdled.

Slowly Jaffier spake –

“Thus unto Kasim doth the Khalif say : –

‘When to the General comes this signet-ring

Let him give order that a noble bull,

Deep-dewlapped, and wide-horned, be brought: and let

The beast be slaughtered – and its tawny hide

Stript from it. And therein let Kasim come,

Wrapt closely to the Khalifate. ‘Twere well

That none delay to execute my will!’ “

Then grief and wonder Kasim's bosom filled –

Grief that his fealty was suspect of ill,

And wonder of what ill he was suspect.

Thus mutely questioned (for young Kasim's eye

Sought his in doubt) sad Jaffier shook his head.

“Nay, that I know not; search in thine own heart,

And if a thought of wrong therein has lurked –

Or, from it rising, was expressed in act,

Impute to that the sentence!”

“From the hour

When in his service I girt on the sword,  
That since has helped to spread his Khalifate  
Unto the snow-peaked hills of wealthy Scinde,  
My heart has never harboured e'en a thought  
Disloyal to my Lord. Wherefore my fault  
I know not. But I know that if he wills  
To take my life, he takes but of his own—  
In battle offered many a time to death,  
Seemingly certain, for him. And I would  
That thus it had been closed—upon a plain  
Where Victory trode before our troops, and led  
To glory all who fell. I will obey.”  
Truth sat on Kasim's brow, his inmost heart  
Was written in his eyes : and Jaffer groaned,  
And holding out his arms—for some brief space  
The friends upon each other's shoulders leaned,  
And shed such tears as men may shed unshamed.  
The shadow of the palm had travelled scarce  
A hand's breadth from the time when Kasim heard  
The Khalif's bidding—scarce the bird had reached  
The cadence of its song—when on their steeds

The friends remounted, and with hurried beat  
Of hoofs – re-echoed down the winding gorge,  
Rattling from point to point – they hurried back,  
And through the streets of Oomerkote rode fast  
To where, within the Palace Court, the tent  
Of Kasim stood. For so the General  
Decreed, and scorned to dwell beneath the roof  
Of palaces while Duty was a-field.  
Then Kasim bade his faithful body-guard  
Go flay the bull – and called his captains wise,  
To hold a council with him, and discuss  
The conduct of the war.

Then he declared

The best disposal of the troops, and showed  
Where victory would follow – where defeat:  
And having given to each in ordinance strict  
His future duties and his present charge,  
He told the Khalif's will concerning him,  
And how his heart was innocent of guilt,  
But listened to the bidding of his Lord.  
As, when a gallant bark glides o'er the wave,  
Her canvas bellying to the wind, her prow

Flaked with the foam of going – when at once  
A sudden flaw leaps rustling on the lake  
And dips her pennon – drowns her sail – and drags  
Her crew to swift destruction – bursts a groan  
Of helpless horror and amazement chill  
From the pent bosoms of a watching crowd.  
So, from the bold hearts round him, Kasim’s words,  
Hollow with grief, a deep-voiced echo woke,  
And sudden stir of sorrowing surprise.  
Was one among them, whom the General’s sword  
Had saved in battle. To his feet he sprang  
And eager words of love and gratitude  
Carried his heart away. So that he failed  
To note how every word he spoke was changed  
Into a cruel arrow as it sped.  
“Be you,” he cried, “ our Khalif. We have fought  
For you – not Waled. All the blood that runs  
To swell our hearts in victory, freely poured,  
Shall tide you on to Baghdad’s Khalifate.  
You prop our country’s honour – you have spread  
Its name among the nations. You are loved  
By our brave soldiers – as brave soldiers love

A chieftain, moulded after their own hearts,  
A conqueror, wresting kingdoms.”

Kasim rose,

His accents tremulous – his proud face pale,  
And sorrow sitting throned in his eyes.  
“What words are these ? Did I not say but now  
I did not know my guilt – but this did know  
That in the Khalif’s justice was no wrong?  
Here is my guilt – it finds my weakness out  
And smites me through my pride. And now I feel  
That would the Khalif pardon me, my life  
Were all disloyal, in disloyal thoughts  
It bred in others. Did great Waled spare  
My life this day – and add the further boon  
To grant me what my heart desired the most –  
It would be now to die.

For all the love

That you profess me – yield me this request  
To give my bosom peace before I die.  
Never hereafter think upon my death  
Save as an offering needful for the good  
Of him whom Allah chose to rule the state,

That by my ceasing from the hearts of men  
There might not be a corner kept from him  
In any living breast of those he ruled.”

Then rose the captains, one by one; and mute  
Past from the chamber, trusting not with speech  
Their lips – so near their hearts had climbed to them.  
Each after each approached the chief, and wrung  
His hand at parting – dropping on it tears  
Priceless beyond all jewels, being shed  
From the stout hearts of warriors.

As they filed

From out the hall, a tumult in the street  
Arose, where sturdy soldiers dragged along  
The bull, deep-dewlapped, and wide-horned, who hung  
Against the halter – snorting spummy smoke  
From his distended nostrils, while his hoofs  
Wide-parting, slid along the pavement, loath  
To tread except in freedom. At the door  
They smote him and he fell. His fiery eye  
Dulled quickly – his limbs shivered, while a thread  
Of purple blood across his muzzle streaked,  
And dropt into the dust – and he was dead.



From the warm flesh they stript the steaming hide  
As Kasim bade them. But ere yet the knife  
Had pierced the shaggy covering of the breast,  
Kasim was dead !  
The noble heart, so full  
Of passionate love of glory, burst in twain:  
So fierce the struggle which obedience held  
With conscious innocence and hate of shame.  
When to the tent the soldiers came to tell  
His 'hest accomplished – on the marble floor  
They found him, seeming sleeping. On his shield  
His noble head reposed – his glorious limbs  
Flung with an idle grace of listlessness,  
That well might tempt the sculptor, on his cloak.  
Then they took up the body – mourning him  
As a tried comrade, and a General  
Who loved his soldiers well, and never led  
His armies to defeat.

On Jaffier's heart

There fell a sense of loneliness and want:  
He missed the strong grasp of his hand – his voice  
In echoes incomplete still haunted him,

And made him long to hear its sound again,  
As those who wake by night would fain recall  
The song entire – from which a broken line  
Rings in their ears from weary chime to chime.  
And by his death his innocence was proved,  
And Jaffier sighed, “It is ill done – ill done;  
But how I know not. For his great heart burst  
To think that it was doubted.”

Then they wrapt

The corpse within the hide, and drew with cords  
The edges till they met. Next fashioned they  
A litter rude of boughs, and so bestowed  
The body on a bier unworthy.

High

Upon the moulders of four prisoners placed,  
Dead Kasim passed between the silent rows  
Of soldiers, who in sorrowing wonder came  
(For swift along the camp the evil news  
Flew upon wings of rumour) to behold  
For the last time, the chieftain who had led  
To Death – to Victory – never to Defeat.  
And from that hour the fortune of the war

Veered like a fickle wind that swings a vane  
Sudden from East to West, and holds it there  
With gusty perseverance. O'er the fords  
Of swelling Indus, e'er a week had passed,  
The invaders fled before the avenging steel  
Of Scinde's fierce tribes. Another week beheld  
Their troops retiring, harassed on the rear  
By hovering bands of archers, and the raids  
Of horsemen sweeping by the column's flank,  
And spreading death, disorder, and dismay.  
Then the retreating soldier wrung his hands,  
And cried, "Were Kasim here, this had not been!"

**S**ILENT the Khalif Waled sat. His brows

Were knit with lines of thought, for in his heart  
A vague misgiving – provident of ill –  
Had housed itself. In vain the dancing girls  
Swam through their threaded dances, and in vain  
The sweet-voiced slaves chanted in unison  
Their tales of love or war, or cunning praise  
O’ergarlanded with flattery. He was sad  
With waiting Jaffer’s seeming-slow return.  
As women pale and sicken, while they gaze  
Across the waters for their husbands’ sail,  
Bound homeward from the fishing ground, till

Hope

Dies like a lamp unfed within a tower  
O’erlooking Ocean. So Revenge assumed  
The aspect Love puts on, the while it waits  
For the return of the expected one.  
At length a horseman through the city rode  
To where the Palace o’er the Tigris hung –  
And lighted at the gate. The Khalif knew

Full well that stalwart rider – and full well  
The dappled Barbary he backed – for oft  
When in the plain below the warriors played  
At warlike games – when the jereed was flung –  
That horse and rider, seeming one, had skimmed  
Across the turf – as skims the long-winged swift  
Above a lake – and caught the flying dart  
And turned it back against the hand that cast.  
Meanwhile, the murmurs of a gathering crowd –  
Which questioned vainly what the soldiers bare  
Wrapt in a black bull’s hide – upon the wind  
Was borne into the chamber. Waled rose  
And smiled – for he perceived his will was done!  
They bare the burden in and laid it down  
Upon the marble table in the midst  
Of Waled’s Hall of Banquet. Curious slaves  
Peered from behind the pillars, or devised  
Errands imagined that could form excuse  
For near approach to where the Khalif stood,  
With hands that trembled in their eager haste  
To ope the hide. He toyed with it, as one  
Who finds a treasure-casket, yet delays

To raise the lid – tormenting his own mind  
With the delicious misery of doubt.

“Go call the Indian maids !” he cried to one,  
Who loitered nearest on a mission feigned.  
Then from the inner bower where they sat  
In a delightful twilight haze that swam  
Through many folds of curtains, dropt with gold,  
Looped with the white stud of a shapely pearl,  
And broidered o’er with cunning flowers in silk,  
The sisters came.

The Khalif grimly laughed,

And strode to meet them. On the Fragrant’s arm  
Laying his hand ungently in his haste,  
Until the blood blushed in the dusky skin,  
Against the cruel pressure of his grasp –  
“See how the Khalif is obeyed,” he said,  
And from the calm face shred away the hide  
And showed where Kasim lay.

A happy smile

Like that which curves the pouting rosebud lips  
Of sleeping children, lingered on the mouth,  
And Death had smoothed the furrows Time and Care

Had on his brow recorded. Still a flush,  
In memory of Life, was on the cheek,  
And underneath their lids the deep brown eyes  
Showed faintly. Death seemed only Life at rest,  
So peaceful and so perfect, free from touch  
Of dissolution, was the dead man's face.

“See how the Khalif is obeyed – behold  
The fate of him who dares to shame his lord!”  
Then in the dark eyes of the Indian maids

A subtle smile grew – brightening till their lips  
Smiled also. And the Fragrant overflowed  
The silence with the silver of her speech,  
As a slow-dripping fountain brims its shell  
And drops melodious on the marble base  
When the still moon is regnant.

Thus she spake:

“Kings of great justice do not make of Haste  
An ally in great deeds; or, on the charge  
Of those that hate him, slay a servant tried,  
And ever faithful found. Him we accused  
For that through him our father died – through him  
Our house was rendered desolate – ourselves

Made slaves and prisoners in a strange, strange land:

For had we come with but our simple tale

Of natural grief, your pride had laughed to scorn

Our supplication. Therefore our deceit.

For know that Kasim was to us, as is

A father or a brother; and his hand

Touched not our honour – from its very hem

Of purity refrained.

We do succeed –

Vengeance is ours, and in the Khalif's house

Of judgment, lo ! there is great sorrow !”

Dark

Grew Waled's countenance ; and loud his words

The cruel music of the maiden's speech

Drowned in their wrathful tumult, as the roar

Of thunder quenches the incessant sound

Of wind and rain, when Autumn's sultry nights

Are wept away in storms.

Thus lasting woe

Was wrought to Waled by a woman's craft.

Long – long the Moslem mourned the



General Mighty in action, pure in thought and word,  
Whom ready Envy slaughtered ruthlessly  
At prompting of the slanderous tongue of Hate.  
That night the daughters of the Indian King,  
Unsullied, pure as the unopened buds –  
That ne'er encounter summer's looks of love  
But drop untimely in the vernal frosts –  
Passed from the vexed earth to the quiet sky  
Where never sorrow mars the heart's repose.

**T**HUS ends an ancient tale of ancient times,

When on the provinces of wealthy Scinde  
The followers of the Prophet made descent,  
And spread their conquering armies o'er the land,  
Bearing the creed Mohammed's Koran taught.  
Among the tribes of India. Other arms,  
Since then victorious in the Eastern land,  
Have chronicles well worthy, telling much  
Of victory – treachery boldly quelled – and deeds  
Of savage wrong borne nobly, through a faith  
Purer than that of Islam – at whose spread  
A broader light arises in the East.  
Yet would the poet grieve did Time's swift lapse  
Carry this story to the silent sea  
Of dark Oblivion.  
Mournful is the tale,  
And pointing how the round of wrong completes  
Its perfect circle of sad circumstance,  
Inflexible – involving virtue's self  
In suffering sequent on an evil deed.

So on a mountain height a shard set loose  
By idle hands, that reck not what they do,  
Descending, gathers impulse as it speeds,  
Until whole snowfields, slipping from their hold  
Upon the steep, swoop downward, burying  
The sleeping villages within the vale:  
And after, melting – leave to mark their course  
Long furrows on the hill-side – in the plain  
Vast rocks, and trees uprooted, that may serve  
As solemn monuments in coming years  
Of the disastrous avalanche.

#### The Lyre

That lately to an Indian measure thrilled  
Is silent. Ended is the sad old song  
Of the two daughters of the King of Scinde.  
The Song of the Lark in the City.

## *The Song of the Lark in the City*

**T**HE rainy mist was hanging low,  
Creeping slow –  
Creeping along the crowded street,  
Dulling the echo of busy feet,  
As the throngs passed by in ceaseless flow  
Hastening, hurrying to and fro.  
Overhead was a sky of lead,  
Never a glimpse of blue to be seen –  
Never a gleam the clouds between –  
And my heart sank low with doubt and dread;  
And thoughts of the morrow,  
Its care and sorrow,  
And the toil for daily bread,  
Filled my heart with a wild misgiving:  
“Without a friend to love or pity,  
All alone in this crowded city –  
Where is the use of living?”

Trill – trill – trill!

The song of a lark

Scattered the visions dreary and dark,

And woke my heart with a thrill.

Poor little lark, in its tiny prison

It chanted its sweet song over and over,

As if it were only newly risen

From the fields of emerald wheat and clover:

And the notes came pouring,

Heavenward soaring –

Up – up – up !

As if the cup

Of its happiness were overflowing,

Out on the hills with a fresh breeze blowing,

And the sky to eastward redly glowing,

In the bright green country far away,

At the morn of a sunny summer day.

Sorrow vanished – gloom was banished –

Forgotten the dreary misty weather ;

And long leagues off, where the corn was green,

Up in the sunlight's golden sheen,

My heart and the lark were mounting together –

High – high – high  
In the bright blue sky.  
Trill – trill – trill!  
So cheerily still  
The lark in the midst of the busy city,  
Over and over sang its ditty ;  
Raising my heart like a holy beatitude.  
So, with all gratitude,  
Song of the Lark in the City.  
Cheered and chastened,  
Onward I hastened,  
Blessing the bird for its merry song,  
That haunted my heart the whole day long.  
Home at Loft.

## *Home at Last*

**S**ISTER Mary, come and sit

Here beside me, in the bay Of the window – ruby-lit

With the last gleams of the Day.

Steeped in crimson through and through

Glow the battlements of vapour ;

While above them, in the blue,

Hesper lights his tiny taper.

Look ! the rook flies westward, darling,

Flapping slowly overhead;

See, in dusky clouds, the starling

Whirring to the willow-bed.

Through the lakes of mist, that lie

Breast-deep in the fields below,

Underneath the darkening sky

Home the weary reapers go.

Peace and Rest at length have come,

All the day's long toil is past;

And each heart is whispering \*c Home –

Home at last ! “

Mary ! in your great grave eyes  
I can see the long-represt  
Grief, whose earnest look denies  
That to-night each heart's at rest.  
Seven years ago you parted –  
He to India went alone;  
Young, and strong, and hopeful-hearted –  
“Oh, he would not long be gone!”  
Seven years have lingered by ;  
Youth, and Strength, and Hope have fled :  
Life beneath an Indian sky  
Withers limb and whitens head.  
But his faith has never faltered;  
Time his noble heart has spared:  
Yet, dear, he is sadly altered –  
So he writes me. Be prepared!  
I have news – good news! He says –  
In this hurried note and short –  
That his ship, ere many days,  
Will be anchored safe in port.  
Courage! – soon, dear, will he come –  
Those few days will fly so fast;  
Yes ! he's coming, Mary – Home –



Home at last !

\* \* \* \* \*

Idle words !—yet strangely fit !

In a vessel, leagues away,

In the cabin, ruby-lit

By the last gleams of the

Day, Calm and still the loved one lies:

Never tear of joy or sorrow

Shall unseal those heavy eyes—

They will ope to no To-morrow.

Folded hands upon a breast,

Where no feverish pulses flutter,

Speak of an unbroken rest,

That no earthly tongue may utter.

And a sweet smile seems to grow—

Seems to hover on the lip,

As the shadows come and go

With the motion of the ship.

Rest and Peace at length have come

Rest and Peace how deep and vast !

Weary wanderer—truly Home—

Home at last!

## *A Shell*

### ITS JOURNEY.

**T**HE cold gray dawn was beginning to shine

Over the Austrian frontier-line.

From a streak of pink on the water's edge,

It climbed up the cloud-cliffs, ledge by ledge;

Till at last the day rose broad and bright,

Routing the scattered ranks of night.

The rays of the sun crept down and down

From the roof-tops into the streets of the town;

Where, on either side of the guard-house entry,

An imperturbable Austrian sentry,

Clad in grimed white coat and breeches,

Stood upright in the watch-box niches.

Each was smoking his morning pipe; and sweet

Curled the odorous incense along the street;

The morning air blew fresh but soft,

And lifted the tiny blue ringlets aloft,

Preserving their flavour soothing and bland,

Rich and mellow – so that, poor fellow,

The beggar, distant some hundred feet  
From the sentry-boxes black and yellow,  
Tasted the relish at second hand.  
And now, soon after the morning's break,  
The little town is beginning to wake.  
Shutters swing backward, and blinds arise,  
As the drowsy houses open their eyes.  
Heads peep forth at the windows, and yawn  
In the smiling face of the rosy dawn.  
Soon the urchins, knuckling sleep  
Out of their eyelids, schoolward creep;  
Then the girls for water going  
Set the tongues and fountains flowing;  
And last a general busy hum  
Tells that the time of toil is come.  
Hark! on the daybreak breezes borne,  
Rings the note of a distant horn;  
And rattle of wheel and rhythm of hoof  
Come faint from the high-road far aloof.  
But ever approaching nearer and nearer,  
The sound grows louder, the horn rings clearer;  
For the mail with its fiery horses eight  
Is galloping up to the frontier-gate;

Over the bridge with a roll like thunder,  
Then with a roar the archway under,  
And clattering, pattering over the stones,  
While the heavy Diligence sways and groans,  
Tossing the foam o'er their tangled manes,  
And guided by chances rather than reins,  
The eight little sturdy plunging nags  
Slide and scramble over the flags.  
When the journey commenced, in Italy's sky  
The sunset's glory began to die;  
Their hurrying hoofs the whole long night  
Have scattered the flint-sparks left and right,  
And now, when the moon has sunk to rest,  
The strong little horses, two abreast,  
Pull-up on the Austrian frontier-line,  
Just as the day is beginning to shine.  
The sentries have smuggled their meerschaums away –  
Never were sentries stiffer than they;  
When the Corporal fierce at the door appears,  
With a red moustache, and rings in his ears.  
Quick at his call the frontier-guard  
Comes wheeling out of the barrack-yard.

The Drummer smart raps out "The Surround,"  
And the butts of the muskets ring on the ground.  
Then each sleepy passenger climbs from his perch,  
And the Emperor's servants begin the search.  
So out come the keys, and down on his knees  
Goes a soldier devoutly at every box;  
And cords are unknotted, and opened are locks;  
While the things inside get tumbled about,  
As the contraband trifles are handed out –  
And the traveller's patience expires by degrees.  
At length the search approaches its close,  
When the fat little Corporal, poking his nose  
O'er the door of the mail, as he goes to unlock it,  
Finds a parcel there in the pocket!  
What it is he cannot discover –  
He turns it, and twists it, and feels it all over;  
And finishes up his careful inspection  
By spelling out the whole direction.  
"Ha ! this is a man we ought to watch –  
This exile in England – ready to hatch  
Any treason against the State!"  
So he orders the Diligence still to wait  
While he takes the package in, to see

What its hidden contents may be.  
In those crafty fingers what knots could hold?  
The seals give way, and the wraps unfold: –  
And the Corporal grunts in wonder, “Well!  
I thought it was something else than a shell!”  
Only a shell, that in former time  
Had a tiny habitant, wont to climb  
‘Mid the coral and weed of the azure deep,  
On whose bosom the shadows of Venice sleep.  
No great wonder the Corporal’s smile,  
As he cast his eye on the simple toy,  
Which, as he guessed, was meant to beguile  
The exile’s heart with a foolish joy,  
And empty remembrance of once-on-a-while !  
“Let it go!” said the Corporal stout,  
As he carried the little parcel out.  
So away went the mail with its eight fresh steeds,  
Out of the town, and over the meads;  
Till the sound of its going died away,  
And the sun had reached to the middle-day.  
Oh, the Corporal laughed as he entered the door,  
With its two stiff sentries standing before.

“Had it been a crazy Englishman, well  
Could I understand such folly. A shell!”

### ITS MESSAGE.

Over the land, and over the sea,  
The little parcel travelled to me.  
Quickly I tore the cover away  
And saw the shell that within it lay;  
Ah, I knew a friendly hand  
Had culled it on that distant strand.  
Ten long years ago, when I,  
From my native land, by night,  
Hurried in a secret flight,  
Such a shell as this did lie  
On the last verge of the shore  
I might tread again no more !  
Then in foolish idle fashion,  
In the homeliness of passion,  
Up I snatched the shell, and cast  
Far into the waters vast;  
Murmuring, “When the waves restore thee  
To the strand from which I tore thee,  
From my exile o’er the main



I, too, shall return again.”

That was ten long years ago –

Years how heavy-paced and slow! –

And again I see a shell,

Like that one – remembered well –

On the dear Italian strand

When I left my native land !

Spite of Austrian prohibition,

Spite of frontier inquisition,

Hearts Italian o’er the sea

Send their messenger to me

And the shell has done its mission.

With a holy deep delight,

As at some great sacred rite,

Reverently I raised the shell

That its errand it might tell –

Placed its pink lips to mine ear –

Heard its whisper low and clear: –

Faintly of the sea it sighed,

That dark blue, that distant tide –

Adria’s wave, that swells and falls

Round the fair Venetian walls.

And the murmur of the sea

Spoke the message sent to me: –

“Patience ! Venice will be free!”

*Lines on the Death of*  
*Catherine (Hayes) Bushnell.*

**B**UT late among us with that smile so tender,\*

Thrilling the hearts of the attentive throng

With all that Genius and true Feeling render

To give a charm to Song.

Now – gone ! Yet mourn her not, for she rejoices:

In the bright realm, to which her soul has fled,

She joins her voice with Heaven's exultant voices –

One of the happy dead!

Yet we must grieve – we, who are left behind her,

To lack companionship so fine and rare;

To feel a void where we were wont to find her –

To miss her everywhere!

As – in some soft Spring morning, dim and early-

Ere yet the daylight has dispersed the dark –

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\* Those who remember Mrs. Bushnell cannot fail to recall the peculiarly sweet smile with which she greeted the applause that never sailed to follow her song.

Soaring aloft above the meadows pearly,  
We hear the trilling lark;  
Our ear the mounting melody still follows,  
Towering in circles on its pinions strong –  
Till an abrupt and sudden silence swallows  
The clear yet distant song !  
Thus we – her voice within our hearts still ringing –  
Scarce feel our loss in full – but doubting, sigh,  
“She is not dead. We have but missed her singing,  
She was so near the sky!”

## *To Goldenhair.*

FROM HORACE.

**A**H, Pyrrha – tell me, whose the happy lot  
To clip thee on a couch of lavish roses  
Who, bathed in odorous dews, in his fond arms encloses  
Thee, in some happy grot?  
For whom those nets of golden-gloried hair  
Dost thou entwine in cunning carelessnesses?  
Alas, poor boy! – who thee, in fond belief, caresses,  
Deeming thee wholly fair?  
How oft shall he thy fickleness bemoan  
When fair to foul shall change – and he, unskilful  
In pilotage, beholds – with tempests wildly wilful –  
The happy calm o'erthrown !  
He, who now hopes that thou wilt ever prove  
All void of care, and full of fond endearing,  
Knows not that varies more, than Zephyrs everveering,  
The sickle breath of Love.  
Ah, hapless he, to whom – like seas untried –  
Thou seemest fair ! That my sea-going's ended

My votive tablet shows, to those dark Gods suspended,  
Who o'er the waves preside.

## *The Lost Expedition*

**L**IFT – lift, ye mists from off the silent coast,

Folded in endless winter's chill embraces;

Unshroud for us awhile our brave ones lost !

Let us behold their faces !

In vain – the North has hid them from our sight;

The snow their winding sheet – their only dirges

The groan of ice-bergs in the polar night

Racked by the savage surges.

No Funeral Torches with a smoky glare

Shone a farewell upon their shrouded faces ;

The Loft Expedition.

No monumental pillar tall and fair

Towers o'er their resting-places.

But Northern Streamers flare the long night through

Over the cliffs stupendous, fraught with peril,

Of ice-bergs, tinted with a ghostly hue

Of amethyst and beryl.

No human tears upon their graves are shed –

Tears of Domestic Love, or Pity Holy ;

But snow-flakes from the gloomy sky o'erhead,  
Down-shuddering, settle slowly.  
Yet History shrines them with her mighty dead,  
The hero-seamen of this Isle of Britain,  
And, when the brighter scroll of Heaven is read,  
There will their names be written !



## *Spring*

**H**ERE, where the tall plantation firs Slope to the river down the hill,  
Strange impulses – like vernal stirs  
Have made me wander at their will.  
I see, with half-attentive eyes,  
The buds and flowers that mark the Spring, And Nature’s myriad prophecies  
Of what the Summer Suns will bring.  
For every sense I find delight –  
The new-wed cushat’s murmured tones,  
Young blossoms bursting into fight  
And the rich odour of the cones.  
The larch, with tassels purple-pink,  
Whispers like distant falling brooks ;  
And sun-forgotten dew-drops wink  
Amid the grass in shady nooks.  
The breeze, that hangs round every bush,  
Steals sweetness from the tender shoots,  
With here and there a perfumed gush  
From violets among the roots.  
See – where behind the ivied rock

Grow drifts of white anemonies,  
As if the Spring, in Winter's mock,  
Were mimicking his snows with these,  
The single bloom those furzes bear Gleams like the fiery planet Mars ;—  
The creamy primroses appear  
In galaxies of vernal stars ;  
And grouped in Pleiad clusters round,  
Lent-lilies blow — some six or seven:  
With blossom-constellations crown'd  
This quiet nook resembles Heaven.