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Some well-known

"Sugar'd Sonnets"

BY

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

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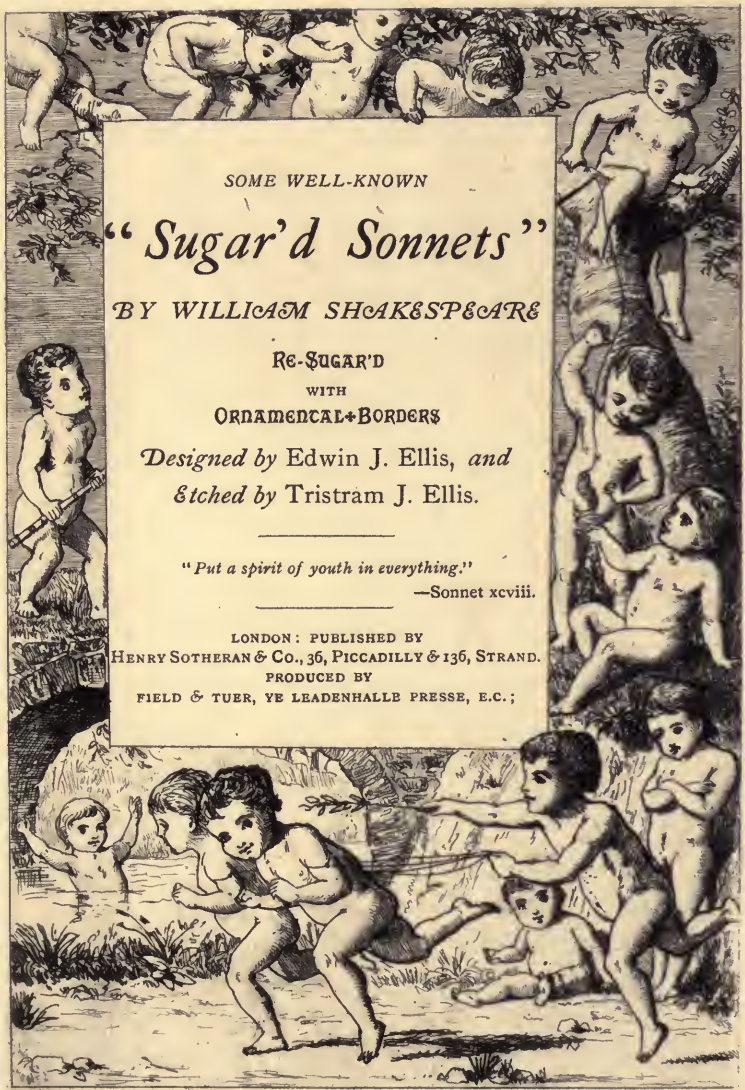


BEQUEST OF
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TORONTO, 1907

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SOME WELL-KNOWN
 “*Sugar’d Sonnets*”

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

RE-SUGAR’D
 WITH
 ORNAMENTAL+BORDERS

*Designed by Edwin J. Ellis, and
 Etched by Tristram J. Ellis.*

“Put a spirit of youth in everything.”
 —Sonnet xcviij.

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY
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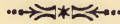
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SHAKESPEARE'S

SONNETS.



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PREFACE.

DEAR MR. W. H.

THREE hundred years since, or more, the sonnets of which you were the "only begetter" astonished the other "private friends" of their author. We are not altogether sure who you were, and even your initials are suppressed in some of the collected editions of Shakespere's Works, which is hard on you, I confess. But just now there is something else to apologise for. Messrs. Field & Tuer have selected a few of the celebrated "Sugar'd Sonnets" and re-sugared them with some little etched borders, where

dramatis

dramatis personæ in an age of innocence are represented playing at the actions which the poems so seriously and beautifully describe. I do not suppose Mr. William Shakespeare would have deigned to give more than a smile to this frolic, could he have known of it, but you may well demand an explanation of the lines having been treated as though they had been addressed to a lady, and a little baby-lady is represented in the illustrations as the praised person who receives the compliments paid to you three centuries ago.

There is one excuse which you would not refuse to admit if you revisited the glimpses of the sun in our modern London atmosphere. The fact is that the taste of the day refuses to endure such violently pretty adoration, coming from one man-friend to another, as Mr. W. S. addressed to you. I know that the whole set of poems are a moral exhortation to you to be good and get married, and have as many lovely children like yourself as you can ;
and

and when you went astray a little you were most tenderly prayed to remember how valuable to those who loved you was your "good report."

Yet it will not do now. This is not the only endowment which has been diverted after many generations from the original intention of its founder, and I trust you will bow as we all do to the necessities of the times.

Yours faithfully,

And gratefully,

THE DESIGNER.



THE first of our chosen ten is a preface in itself. As a piece of writing it is in alternate rhyme like the rest, yet the sense of it is in couplets, the lines falling by their meaning into pairs all the way through, the second of each pair repeating and completing the first after the manner of "parallelisms" which form the rhyme of Biblical poetry. The fifth and sixth lines are exceptions, but the rest shew this accidental quality so strikingly that they suggest how Hebrew poetry might be translated into English without losing its own intention, and yet be made to belong to the songship of another language. In the pictorial border to this, as in most of the others, the lover and the lady are repeated several times over. But all through they are meant for the same lover and same lady in different positions, nor is anything hinted of their love more especially mature than our youngest children, who "play at being married" almost before they can walk and talk, might take on themselves to personate.

SONNET XXIII.

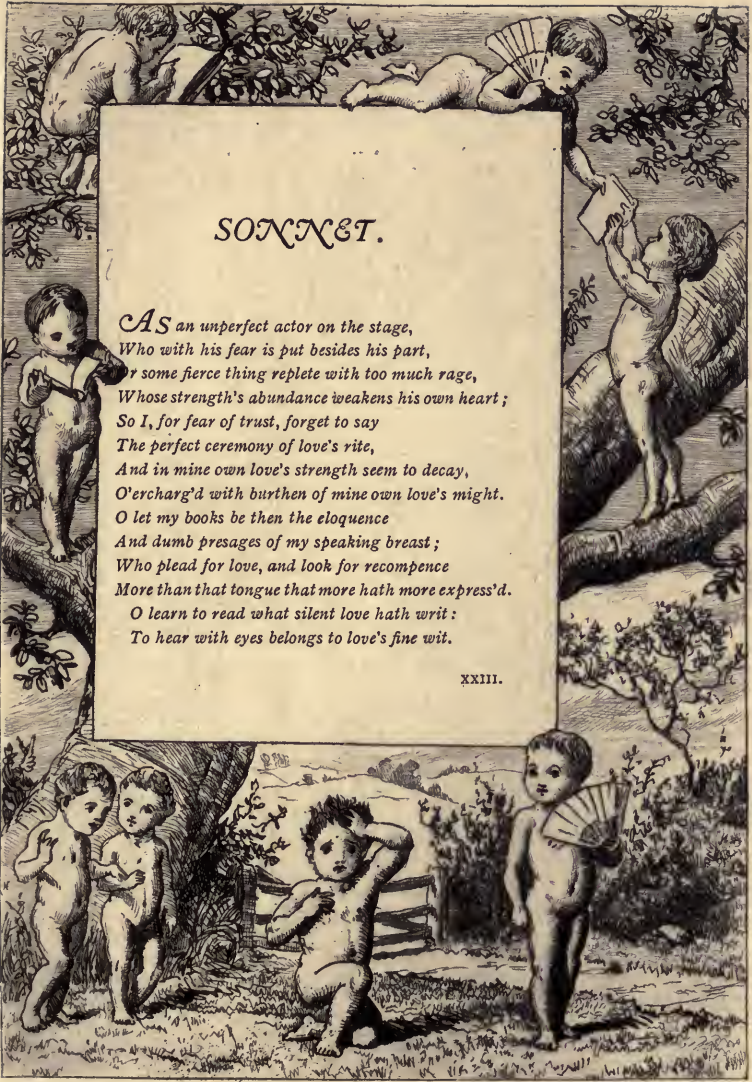


SONNET.

As an unperfect actor on the stage,
Who with his fear is put besides his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart ;
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharg'd with burthen of mine own love's might.
O let my books be then the eloquence
And dumb presages of my speaking breast ;
Who plead for love, and look for recompence
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O learn to read what silent love hath writ :
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

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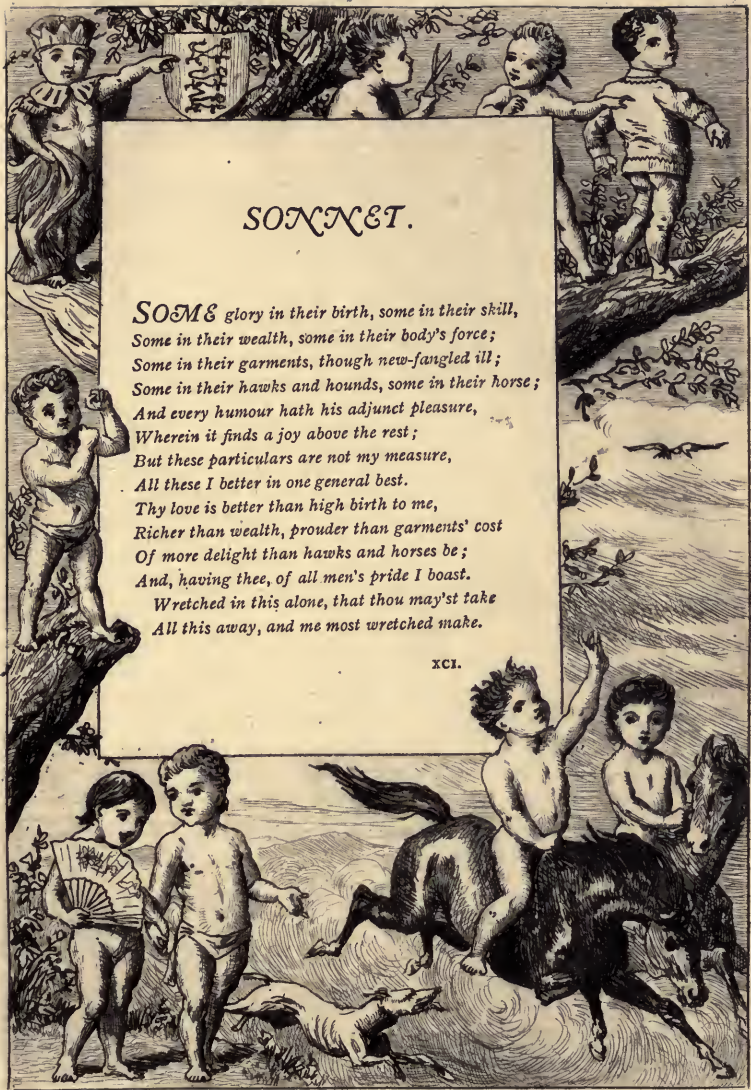
IT seems an absurd jump to go straight from Sonnet XXIII. to Sonnet XCI., but the series is not progressive, and except that the selection here has aimed chiefly at choosing such as could bear the border-treatment to which they have been subjected, the only quality of arrangement in the set of ten consists in placing five of praise in presence first, and five that have reference to praise in absence after.

Here the personages of the border are not all repetitions of the lover and dame, who only occur once, walking together. The rest are those who have other things to glory in, and are represented glorying away as hard as they can.

SONNET XCI.

SONNET.

Some glory in their birth, some in their skill,
Some in their wealth, some in their body's force ;
Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill ;
Some in their hawks and hounds, some in their horse ;
And every humour hath his adjunct pleasure,
Wherein it finds a joy above the rest ;
But these particulars are not my measure,
All these I better in one general best.
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
Of more delight than hawks and horses be ;
And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast.
Wretched in this alone, that thou may'st take.
All this away, and me most wretched make.



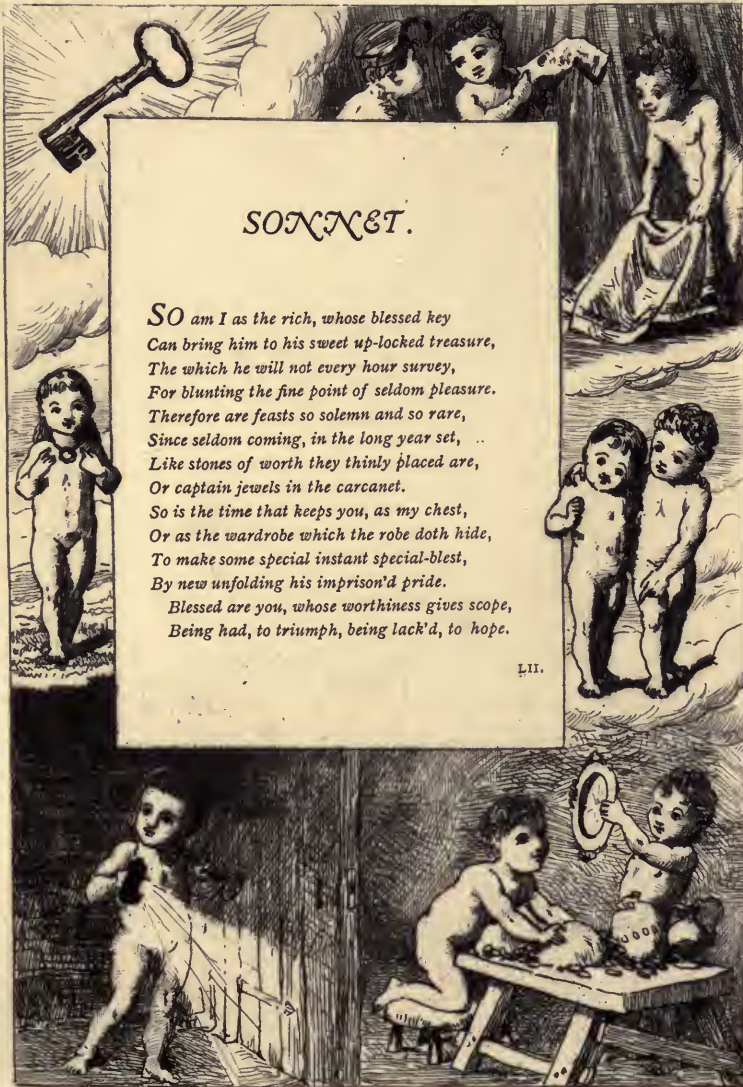
SONNET.

SOME glory in their birth, some in their skill,
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Some in their garments, though new-fangled ill;
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And, having thee, of all men's pride I boast.
Wretched in this alone, that thou may'st take
All this away, and me most wretched make.

THE blessed key speaks for itself here. It is a common key enough personally, and only belongs to a cellar door by rights, but imagination of the gold it locks up sheds an amount of glory about it which a good average saint in an old master might be glad of. Down below we have "The Rich"—(evidently but one person, as he has but one blessed key) about to enter the cellar. At the other side of the door are seemingly robbers or the like. But it must be remembered that these decorative borders are not all one picture with only a blank space in the middle, even though the edges are but vaguely divided into compartments, and it is therefore open to commentators to find in the figures with the treasure "The Rich" over again, enjoying the sight of it with a friend. The two figures above, walking and embracing, are evidently the poet himself reciting the sonnet to the lady who has so unscrupulously supplanted poor Mr. W. H. in our minds' eyes. Pendant to them opposite she stands alone, showing by a gesture what "the captain jewels in the carcanet" are, and so saving a reference to the glossary. The "Sunday-best" being got out of the wardrobe at the top needs no explanation to any respectable person.

SONNET.

So am I as the rich, whose blessed key
Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
The which he will not every hour survey,
For blunting the fine point of seldom pleasure.
Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,
Since seldom coming, in the long year set,
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.
So is the time that keeps you, as my chest,
Or as the wardrobe which the robe doth hide,
To make some special instant special-blest,
By new unfolding his imprison'd pride.
Blessed are you, whose worthiness gives scope,
Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.




SONNET.

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Can bring him to his sweet up-locked treasure,
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Being had, to triumph, being lack'd, to hope.

PRAISE, and the poetic sweetness of it, certainly go one step higher in this Sonnet than in the last. No one need be told that the figure at the bottom is the childish equivalent for the poet, all alone, weeping his outcast state, or that above where he is reading, he is envying the art and scope of other writers, as he lingers over their volumes, pen in hand. But as the sun rises he looks into the lark's nest and out flies the bird, and in a moment a sunny thought of the loved one almost gives him wings. As he dances for joy, his state, if not himself, sings songs at heaven's gate, while a little leaping on the earth is not too much for a bodily accompaniment. As for the beam that goes diagonally across the whole page, it is manifestly only a device to divide the thing into compartments like a heraldic shield. It is not meant to represent part of a house, any more than the clouds that divide other borders are to be counted as part of the sky.

SONNET.

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope.
With what I most enjoy contented least ;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,—and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate ;
For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.



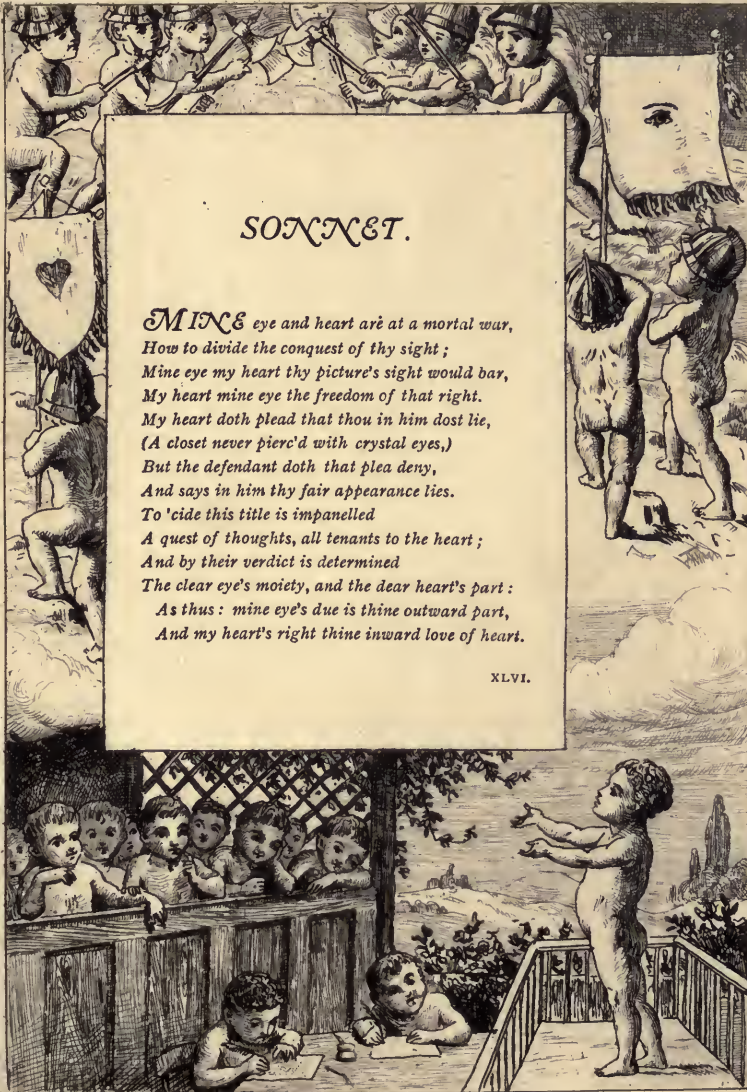
SONNET.

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I all alone bewep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
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Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
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OF course the eye and heart send forth their portraits with their legions by way of banners. The legions themselves meet in rows with halberds, and holding them out in an uncomfortable way wobble them slowly up and down in each other's faces. If any one doubts that this is the proper way to carry on a "mortal war" in Shakesperian style, let him go to see *Macbeth* next time it is played, and stay to the last act. Or rather let him go back in memory to the good old traditionary Drury Lane days. What the future will be it would be rash to try to imagine. Perhaps an enterprising manager will buy a sufficiency of cheap Turks and Armenians, and get them to go on a little with their "Question" on the boards. The Trial below has no prisoner, no visible plaintiff or defendant, and only one counsel speaking. But he is understood to be the poet, speaking for both sides. There are two reporters at any rate, which is satisfactory. This time Mr. (or Miss) W. H. being absent altogether, it is hard to say how otherwise the poetic proceedings could have been preserved for us.

SONNET.

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war,
How to divide the conquest of thy sight ;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie,
(A closet never pierc'd with crystal eyes,)
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impanelled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart ;
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety, and the dear heart's part :
As thus : mine eye's due is thine outward part,
And my heart's right thine inward love of heart.



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XLVI.

HALF the small selection has been passed in review, and the remaining five change the subject and include ideas of absence and yearning with those of pure love and admiration. The heavy journey must be the first of them, from its moment of parting—already quite small and far back in the mists of memory—to the fiftieth milestone, by which it becomes almost unendurable. Care sits behind the slow horseman sometimes as well as the fast one. The grief of our poor poet is made of pretty suggestions. He might be at this moment (as the etching hints that his imagination is telling him) sitting beside the loved one, pouring out more complicated and charming little bits of adoration. But the journey has to go on still, and the worst is that there has been no illusion about it. From the very first a spectral sign-post has pointed out which way lay grief, and which way joy. There was no necessity to use much aquafortis in this etching. Tears would have done.

SONNET L.

SONNET.

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek—my weary travel's end—
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
'Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend!'
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider lov'd not speed, being made from thee :
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide,
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side ;
For that same groan doth put this in my mind,
My grief lies onward, and my joy behind.



SONNET.

HOW heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek—my weary travel's end—
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,
' Thus far the miles are measur'd from thy friend !'
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,
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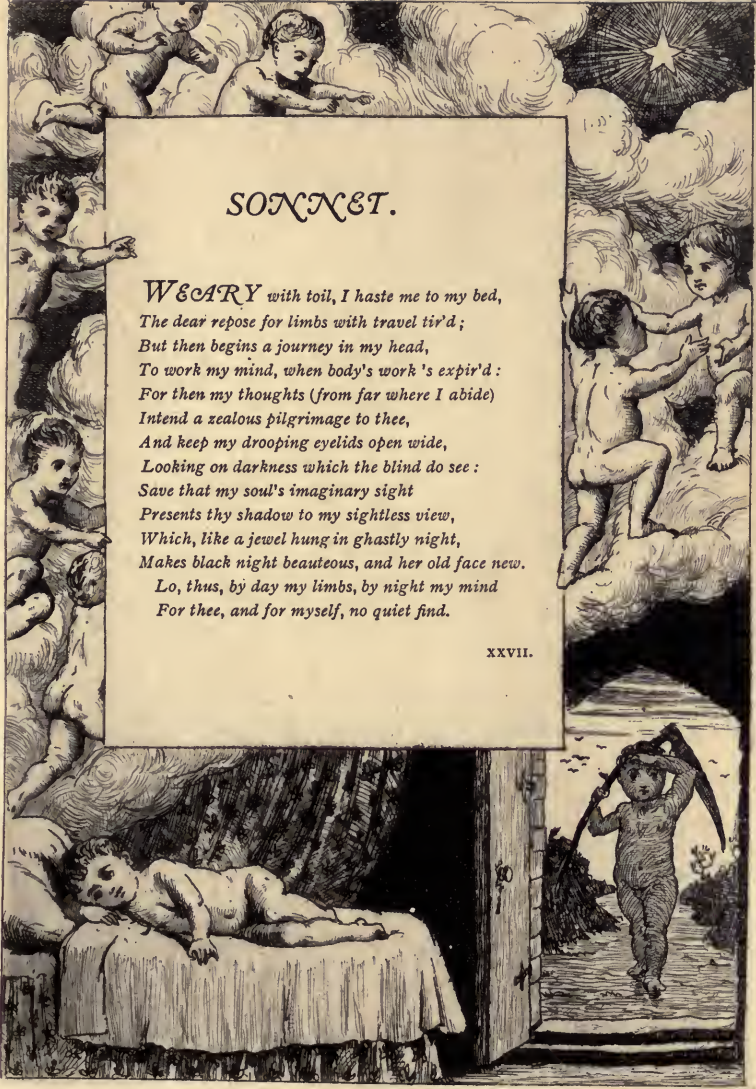
L.

NO one supposes that this Sonnet necessarily refers to life after the journey mentioned in No. L. But it gives a general picture of a night during absence, and may as well be at this as at another time. The Poet appears here frequently. We see him "weary with toil"—a reaper's toil in the fields of imagination—"hasting to his bed." We see him on the bed—(it is manifestly summer time)—very wide awake though tired, and above we meet with indefinite numbers of him over and over again flying, as in imagination he now flies, to the place where he would be. One more favoured figure has already arrived, but all are the same seen in different points of the journey, and seemingly multiplied as the corners of a room are to a giddy person who sees it going round and round. Gentles! May we all be saved from such nights, and that anon.

SONNET XXVII.

SONNET.

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tir'd ;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when my body's work's expir'd :
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see :
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new.
Lo, thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind
For thee, and for myself, no quiet find.



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NO doubt can hang over this, either as to who the figures are at the banquet—for they are manifestly the “Those” made happy while the “Slave” is away; nor who the courtiers are before whom he sees himself in chains, for they are the same; nor who the figure with the stone is, for it is clearly the poet bearing his burden like Bunyan’s “Pilgrim”; nor who the youth eyeing sadly the hour-glass, for it is the same; or reading the time by a tall clock—probably his grandfather’s—which tells him nothing, as its works did not outlast its owner’s time, for it is himself once more.

Of all the Sonnets perhaps this is the politest, and no one will dare to say it is the least poetic. To many it will be the most so, in spite of the lovely fancifulness of the two that can never be separated, forming one poem, and ending our small volume.

SONNET.

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
Upon the hours and times of your desire ?
I have no precious time at all to spend,
Nor services to do, till you require.
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour,
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,
When you have bid your servant once adieu ;
Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
Where you may be, or your affairs suppose.
But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought,
Save, where you are how happy you make those :
So true a fool is love, that in your will
(Though you do anything) he thinks no ill.



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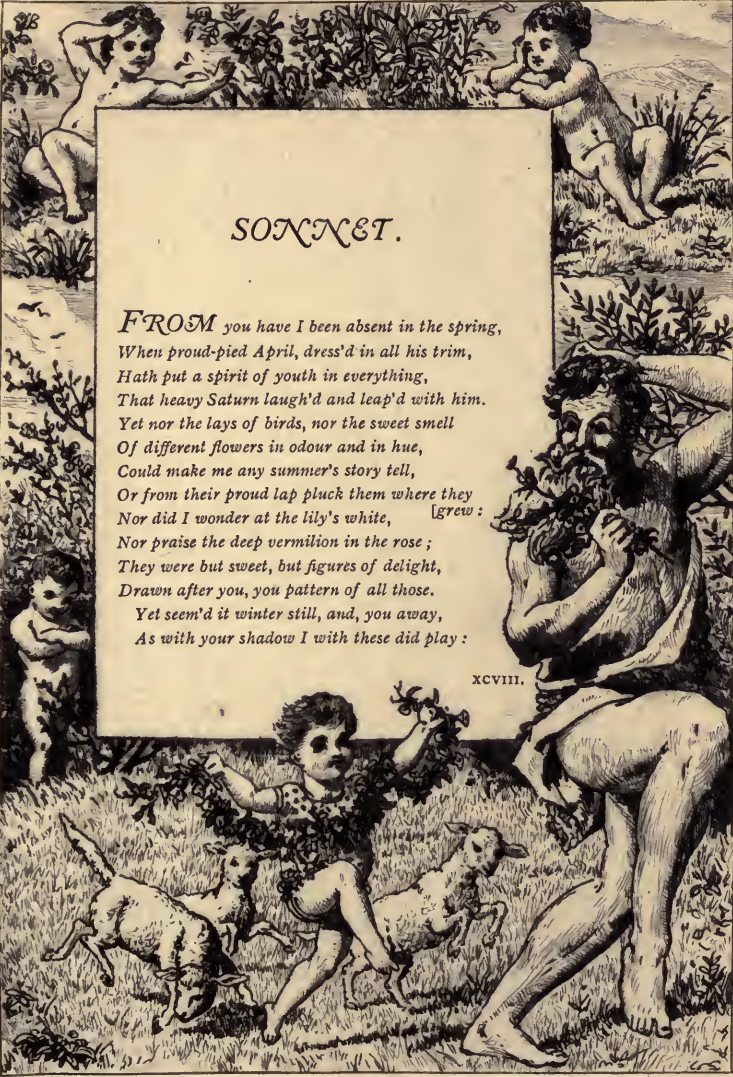
LVII.

FROM this one we have taken our motto, that we may have something better behind, lest anyone should accuse us of having been wantonly trivial, though we would not willingly have passed the bounds of quaintness—that sober playfulness admitted even to serious places in all Anglo-Saxon art.

Here, in the border, we have the Poet three times. To the right he is refusing to wonder at the lily's white ; to the left he sees but does not praise the deep vermilion of the rose. Below he stands moodily in a hedge and sees "proud-pied April dressed in all his trim" doing what we have tried to do in these etchings. Heavy Saturn is trying as well as he can to laugh and leap with him, but is aware with whimsical consternation that this is quite out of his line. The last line of the Sonnet is not illustrated, as it really belongs to the next one. The Poet's notions of playing with flowers are sufficiently pleasant. He seems chiefly to have played with their feelings, as he proceeds to scold them roundly after refusing to admire them in the slightest degree.

SONNET.

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet not the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose ;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play :



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Hath put a spirit of youth in everything,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white, ^{grew:}
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Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
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XCVIII.

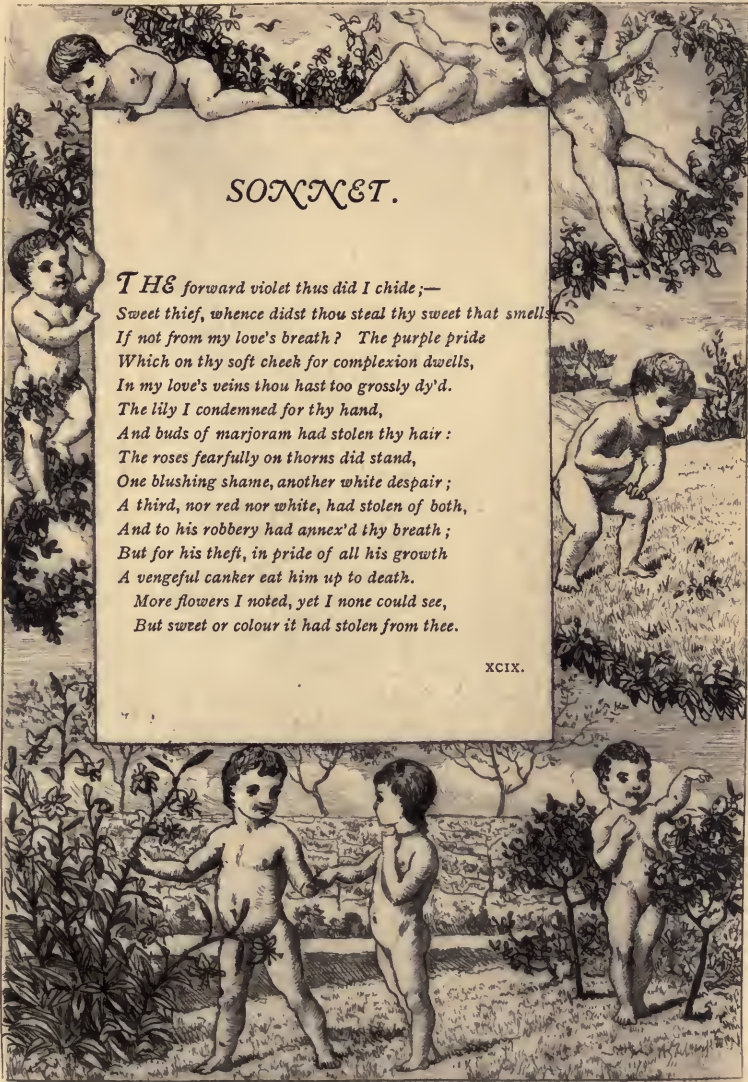
HERE the Poet is seen seven times over, the lady once. Above he has got together whole garlands of flowers of all sorts, and is swaggering about among them in a melancholy way, heaping goodnatured but unsparing contempt on the whole company. Below, to the right, he has caught a defenceless violet out alone, and is abusing it in the words of the poem. Further down, again, he is making whole bushes of standard roses inexpressibly uncomfortable in a most personal manner, while with the lilies he goes to the extreme of actually summoning up in imagination the very hand for which their whiteness is to be condemned—though, in reality, it was far enough away at the time—and introducing the most odious comparisons while the lilies writhe on their stalks, or bow to their mistress.

And so ends our little handful. There are plenty more of the Sonnets that would have borne this treatment, though not all are suited to it. But these are surely enough, and as everyone can draw a little at the present day, those who like them will no doubt find amusement in continuing the set at home, finishing the collection with their own pens.

SONNET.

The forward violet thus did I chide ;—
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath ? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells,
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dy'd.
The lily I condemned for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair :
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair ;
A third, nor red nor white, had stolen of both,
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath ;
But for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.

More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee.



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Shakespeare, William
Some well-known
"sugar'd sonnets"

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