

## HER IMMORTALITY

Upon a noon I pilgrimed through  
A pasture, mile by mile,  
Unto the place where I last saw  
My dead Love's living smile.

And sorrowing I lay me down  
Upon the heated sod:  
It seemed as if my body pressed  
The very ground she trod.

I lay, and thought; and in a trance  
She came and stood me by--  
The same, even to the marvellous ray  
That used to light her eye.

"You draw me, and I come to you,  
My faithful one," she said,  
In voice that had the moving tone  
It bore ere breath had fled.

She said: "'Tis seven years since I died:  
Few now remember me;

My husband clasps another bride;

My children's love has she.

"My brethren, sisters, and my friends

Care not to meet my sprite:

Who prized me most I did not know

Till I passed down from sight."

I said: "My days are lonely here;

I need thy smile alway:

I'll use this night my ball or blade,

And join thee ere the day."

A tremor stirred her tender lips,

Which parted to dissuade:

"That cannot be, O friend," she cried;

"Think, I am but a Shade!

"A Shade but in its mindful ones

Has immortality;

By living, me you keep alive,

By dying you slay me.

"In you resides my single power

Of sweet continuance here;

On your fidelity I count

Through many a coming year."

- I started through me at her plight,

So suddenly confessed:

Dismissing late distaste for life,

I craved its bleak unrest.

"I will not die, my One of all! -

To lengthen out thy days

I'll guard me from minutest harms

That may invest my ways!"

She smiled and went. Since then she comes

Oft when her birth-moon climbs,

Or at the seasons' ingresses

Or anniversary times;

But grows my grief. When I surcease,

Through whom alone lives she,

Ceases my Love, her words, her ways,

Never again to be!