Where the thistle lifts a purple crown

Six foot out of the turf,

And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—

O breath of the distant surf!—

The hills look over on the South,

And southward dreams the sea;

And with the sea-breeze hand in hand

Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry

Red for the gatherer springs;

Two children did we stray and talk

Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,

Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:

Her skin was like a grape whose veins

Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,

Nor knew her own sweet way;

But there's never a bird, so sweet a song

Thronged in whose throat all day.

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington

On the turf and on the spray;

But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills

Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smoothed earth's furrowed face.

She gave me tokens three:—

A look, a word of her winsome mouth,

And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,

A still word,—strings of sand!

And yet they made my wild, wild heart

Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,

And candid as the skies,

She took the berries with her hand,

And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,

Their scent survives their close:

But the rose's scent is bitterness

To him that loved the rose.

She looked a little wistfully,

Then went her sunshine way—

The sea's eye had a mist on it,

And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,

She went and left in me

The pang of all the partings gone,

And partings yet to be.

She left me marvelling why my soul

Was sad that she was glad;

At all the sadness in the sweet,

The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still

Look up with soft replies,

And take the berries with her hand,

And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,

That is not paid with moan,

For we are born in other's pain,

And perish in our own.