



THE CHILD

FOUNDED 1

THE flower may wither, and the plant may die,
Yet leave behind a ling'ring fragrance rare
Which fades not from the mem'ry thro' long years :
So mused the artist Flamen as he sat,
Amid luxuriance in his gilded halls,
Wherein were gathered all the costly gifts
Which from a distant prince had travelled far
As off'ring to the man, who half in scorn
And half in pride, within the world of art
The sceptre swayed, and homage could command.
Yet it was not on these his fancy ran,
Nor on the gems from Persia's sun-dried land,
Nor trophies worn by Egypt's peerless queen,
Nor gold, nor whatsoever power could bring
To grace this temple of the muses nine ;
But rather on a little silver cask
Of curious work of some forgotten age,
Wherein two shoes, such as the peasants wear,
Wooden and worn in holes through length of use,
Lay shrined, as some memento, dear to him
Their owner, and as dearer far than gold
Or jewelled toy, bestowed by Royal hand,
And by their side on softest velvet lay
Two tiny rosebuds, shrivelled, lifeless things—
“ What mean these trophies, Flamen, and whence came
They to this place, and thus to be enshrined ? ”
A maiden asked as thro' the halls she strayed
And viewed the many wonders there contained,
To whom the Artist made reply and said :—

A woman loved me once who wore those shoes,
With love beyond the love which poets sing :
With love which only lives within our dreams,
And living in my heart as sweeter than
The sweetest mem'ry that the years may bring.
The flower may wither and the plant may die,
Still leave behind a fragrance pure and sweet
As halo, o'er its mem'ry thro' long years.
Anon the maid, “ Ah, tell me, Flamen, tell
More of those wooden shoes, for I would learn
Of love which fades not with the fading years.”
Then Flamen, smiling on the maiden, spoke :
Their history is bathed in tears, yet shene
Within the garden of this world ne'er bloomed
A fairer flower, or more immaculate,
Your wish, I grant, though with an aching heart :

Long years gone by, when little more than boy,
I dwelt in sunny France, and loved to roam
At pleasure thro' the rural glades, and sought
To catch the freedom and the grace of lily
Which dwells among the peasants : till I grew
In love with nature and in sympathy

To test her further, said, “ But what are s
Unless the feet in stockings too are clad ? ”
Perplexed, she paused ere answering, said
Could buy them, if indeed I get them not
By prayer : for when my rose was cut too
I prayed all day, and in the Autumn-time
It blossomed forth again and all as fair
As it had been in the warm sunny June.”
And then to please her youthful fancy, I
Of fairies spoke . . . for thus she seemed to
More of the airy realm of fairyland
Than of this barren world of toil and pain
“ Might not the fairies from their treasure
Such things to one whom they must surely
Then half believing, half in doubt, and st
The more expectant of some unknown aid
She left me, and when next she came then
Found on her chair, beneath the awning—
Since she could walk, her flowers she sold
A scanty living by her daily toil—
A box, and in the box some silken hose,
Placed there by me, which she, in simple
Connected with the fairies or her prayers
And when she pressed me as to whence th
And from no man would take them as a g
I told her, and her inborn pride forlode
Acceptance,

And from the
When day was merging towards the shad
And talked of fairies and of “ Rubens ” la
(For thus it was she named the Flemish R
And in some mystic way there ever dwell
Within the chambers of her mind, a link
between the great in art and of the world
Beyond her ken, a people, clear, distinct
And hailing from the land where Rubens
And reigned as king among a nobler race
So more and more her thirst for knowl
As more the soul within her woke to life
And consciousness was born of wisdom g
And oft till late, we conversed of the life
To her still strangely mingled with the s
And angels—void, still in a tangled mass
Which clearer grew, and yet the more co
To me a pretty pastime, but to her
The waking dawn of womanhood and life

The summer waned, and autumn-glory
The trembling leaves with multi-colored
And, fearing, leaves no fear had dwelt
I left her, and as yet had left her pure,
Save in our parting in one long embrace
I kissed her, and in that one kiss her soul