

All fresh with bloom as flowers in spring ;
 Rare prospects to our vision rise,
 And all is full of rare surprise ;
 But sweetest songs our hearts have known
 Have had a saddening undertone.
 The morning sun that rose so bright,
 Is often hid by storms ere night—
 The flowers that bloom soon fade and die ;
 The bright birds from the tempest fly.
 And so love's joys that round us spring,
 Like birds fly off on rapid wing ;
 My heart was flooded o'er with light,
 But now it seemed like shades of night.
 I questioned eagerly each one.
 They strove to calm with gentle tone
 The fears that did depress my mind,
 But all in vain their efforts kind ;
 For well I knew on each sad face,
 The look of pity I could trace.
 At last my mother thought it best
 To strive to set my heart at rest ;
 She told me, Mary, weak and pale,
 Lay in the cottage in the vale ;
 That fever, like a blasting storm,
 Had left its ravage on her form ;
 That sad and languid there she lay
 In weakness every passing day :
 Sometimes the dread, dark angel's wing,
 Her feeble heart was shadowing ;
 And then again the pulse of life
 Would seem to conquer in the strife.
 My heart was crushed with sorrow deep—
 My soul so sad I could not weep.
 No longer lingering could I stay,
 But quickly sought the pebbled way,
 Where oft my gentle Mary's feet
 Had made my heart with rapture beat.
 I crossed the brook that ran so free,
 Its song was mournful now to me ;
 On through the woods where oft I passed,
 Its branches now a shadow cast ;
 This path, I thought with joy to tread,
 Seemed strewn with fairest hopes now
 dead.

My Mary's home soon came in view ;
 Oh heart of love, so strong and true !
 Soon to the chamber I was led
 With anxious heart and cautious tread,
 And gently o'er her as I wept,
 Still beautiful, she sweetly slept.
 Alas ! that fragile feeble form,
 Like broken lily in the storm ;
 So still, ethereal and white,
 It scarce restrained her spirit's flight ;
 But soon her wearied eyelids raised,
 And o'er her stole a look amazed ;
 A flush rose to her pallid cheek,
 Her feeble lips she moved to speak ;
 The light of love flashed in her eye—
 Oh, love that death and time defy ;
 I bent and gently kissed her brow ;
 That hour I well remember now—
 Then trembling all the love of life,
 Rose conquering o'er the fever strife.

By day, by night I vigil kept.
 I never strayed, I rarely slept.
 I saw the pale cheek brighter glow,
 Life's crimson tide more freely flow ;
 The pallor on her cheek and brow,
 By flush of life succeeded now ;
 The weary eyes, now full and bright,
 Beamed daily with increasing light ;
 And by the summer flowers had blown
 Sweet Mary to full strength had grown.

One eve the sun's declining beam
 Threw crimson light o'er lake and stream ;
 The vales, the fields, the forest high
 The sunset's glow did glorify—
 The western heaven's like-molten fire—
 The flame of red touched pane and spire ;
 Like snowy mountains tinged with light,
 The golden clouds were to the sight.
 Here silver lakes with golden streams,
 And shores that caught the amber gleams
 Of light, that softly died away
 As closed the gates of parting day.
 And, as the fading light grew dim,
 We sang sweet praises unto Him
 Who gave us life, who gave us light,
 And brought us health, and strength, and
 sight.

I drew sweet Mary to my side,
 I asked her now to be my bride.
 Her parted lips spake love's consent,
 And all the flood of sweet content,
 Of rarest bliss, of joy complete,
 Thrilled thro' my soul like music sweet.

Again the autumn swiftly came
 To tinge the fading woods with flame ;
 The ripened fruitage gathered in—
 The golden grain is in the bin.
 From month to month time quickly fled
 To bring the day that we would wed ;
 O'er all the hills, and through the dells,
 Rang forth the silver Christmas bells.
 The earth, like virgin, pure and bright,
 Was dressed in snowy robes of white—
 With crystal gems adorned fair,
 In beauty glorified and rare.
 This day of all of life to me,
 Would sacred, bright, and happy be,
 My heart beat high with hope and pride,
 For Mary soon would be my bride.
 From village homes at happy day
 The merry-hearted wend their way,
 Down by the brook beyond the mill,
 To where the church stands on the hill.
 Oh ! bells, ring out your music sweet ;
 Beat, happy hearts ; press eager feet ;
 The golden song of love and peace,
 The happy sounding bells release ;
 Float up the vale, sweep o'er the hill,
 O, notes of love, peace, and good will !
 Each joyous heart with rapture swells,
 To rhythmic music of the bells.