

SONGS FROM "THE PRINCESS."

The Princess, the long poem which Tennyson chose to call "a medley" has been called by one of his critics "a beautiful serio-comic love-story." The theme is that of a girl, rebellious against the old order of submission and subjection for women, revolting and founding a college where she and her disciples may live apart, study and work out their ideals. These ideals being extravagant and impracticable, bring failure upon the whole scheme. The Princess, but not before she has seen terrible battle and havoc in her beautiful gardens, lowers her flag of defiance, accepts and responds to the love of her prince and returns to the recognized sphere of her sex—not however to subjection, but to the measure of equality which an enlightened man is willing to give her.

The poem is artistically beautiful. Tennyson has lavished upon it exquisite descriptions, and set forth his charming pictures in lovely phrases. He has enriched it also with songs which, with their lyric measures, vary the unrhymed metre of the piece. A few of these songs have been selected for inclusion here. The first one serves as an interlude between Parts II and III of the poem. It is a lullaby as Mr. Brooke says, "writes its own music."

The Bugle Song, which introduced Part IV, is a wonderful piece of sound, and at the same time a thing full of suggestiveness. "It sings, in its short compass, of four worlds, of ancient chivalry, of wild nature, of romance where the horns of Elfland blow, and of the greater future of mankind. And in singing the last, it touches the main subject of love, love not of person to person, but of each life to all the lives that follow it." (E. Brooke.)

The third song is the interlude between Parts V and VI, and expresses very simply the well-recognized truth, that a helpless child makes sometimes a more powerful appeal than any that conscious wisdom or experience can suggest.

The last song, *Tears, Idle Tears*, is found in the body of the poem, being sung by one of the characters. Form and thought are so delicately fused in this that it stands out even among Tennyson's marvellous workmanship, as something singular and unmatched. The arrangement of words is so musical, that, as Tennyson himself pointed out, few people observe that it is an unrhymed lyric. The recurrent cadence of the last line of each stanza helps the effect, and nothing seems lacking. Here, as in *Break, Break, Break*, the familiar