

The truer charm that blessed my early days—
Clara ! true lode-star of my soul and life !
And though long silence oft has tried you sore,
'Twas not that I forgot you. Always home
And you were the twin stars that marked my goal ;
And what were home without its household light ?
Now, having told you all I had to tell,
And kept naught back from you, I fain would ask
If you could trust your future life with mine,
So long your friend and brother,—lover now,
In love's true sense,—as I would dare to hope !
Could you, dear Clara, after these lost years
Of fruitless roving,—could you overlook
With love forgiving,—all the waywardness,
The seeming carelessness of the old ties,
The wandering fancy, and the misplaced love,
That wrought its own sore punishment ? Can you
Forgive me,—trust me,—lay your hand in mine
With the old faith of childhood's happy years ?

CLARA.

Naught have I to forgive ! I had no claim
Save that—I think—I loved you from the day
My father brought you, orphaned, to our home.
Your boyish daring charmed me, won my heart ;
I sought your aid in all my childish needs,
And no one wiser, save my father, deemed.
I need not tell you what bewilderment
Your growing unbelief awoke in me,
Shaking my faith for many a troubled year,
Perchance to find it stronger in the end !
Your life with mine has been so closely twined,
That scarce in thought I could divide them now,
Nor more could break the bond knit by the years,
Than kindred ties that linked our lives at first !
Whate'er you do, your lot seems part of mine ;
Where'er you go, my heart still goes with you.
But are you sure you know yourself aright,
And that in future years no newer love
Might yet again be more than mine to you ?