

The Old Wife.

Wind, wind, my swift hand turns the whirring wheel,
And the gray laden spindle grows apace ;
The birch logs flare upon a dream-wrought face,
My fancies hurry with my hurrying reel—
Back to the joy I buried long ago.
Alas ! and I am old, with grief and years,
White-haired, with cheek worn by a weight of tears,
For I have drunk the worm-wood of my woe.
The fire-light flickers in his empty chair,
The winds, along the casement, fret and grasp,
I strain my ears to hear his foot at last,
And yet 'tis but my fancy moving there ;
I murmur to my heart : " 'Twas here he crept
In his first years, to catch my passing gown ;
'Twas over yon, his golden head sunk down,
And fashioned dreams, to please him, as he slept ;
'Twas from this door, his hurrying steps had strayed
To the dark night, the world he did not know "—
Ah God ! ah God ! that he should suffer so,
While I sat here, untold and undismayed !

* * * The black rope swinging in the quiet air,
The noose, great God, I see it all so plain !
The gaping crowd * * * 'tis branded on my brain
Each move, each word that passed. I was not there.
Dreaming of him, and praying, here I sat,
Then came the news, strange, strange and horrible.
I cannot grasp the meaning full and well—
My heart bleeds, but my senses will not act.
* * * His little hands about my face I feel,
I hear his boyhood's step approach the door;
Ah, but he comes not now, or evermore !
My fancies hurry with my hurrying wheel.

BERT MARIE CLEVELAND.