
THE REFUGEE

SHE stands, a tragic figure, on the beach,
Gazing with sombre eyes across the sea,
And from her pallid lips, all brokenly,
Her suffering soul finds sad relief in speech.

"They tell me I am safe, that England's shore
Is holy ground the Oppressor dare not tread;
They speak me comfort, bid me lift my head
To meet the day, when I may feel once more

"Beneath my feet the soil of my dear land—
O woeful land! Wherefore should I return
To ope afresh the wounds that sting and burn?
Or pluck, to torture me, one blackened brand.

"From that dear spot where I was wont to greet
A father, husband, son? There came a day
The Prussian eagle swooped upon his prey—
And all my world lay shattered at my feet.

"My little son—(his hair twined goldenly
About his face)—shrieked with his latest breath
'O mother!' And I'll hear that sound, till death,
To search for him and find him, makes me free.

"Once I went down to hell, to give him life,
And who so proud as I when first he pressed
His downy head against my happy breast—
And then to lose him in a madman's strife.

"I am not proud now; rather I must go
Quietly all my days with bated breath,
Lest I disturb the sanctity of death—
God! will the warring nations ever know

"That twice ten thousand miles of richest soil
Won by a battle's godless, insane strife
Has not the worth of one poor human life?
How the fiends chuckle o'er the mad turmoil!"