

MARGARET BROWN.

PART I.

Hard by the brook, beyond the town,
Where stands the leafless chestnut tree,
There is a cottage, old and brown,
Which rearward looks upon the town,
But faces to the sea.

The walks with grass are overgrown,
And weeds fill up the garden bed;
The moss clings to the stepping-stone,
And from the tree the birds have flown—
Now that the tree is dead.

'Mid all these dreary signs without,
And scarce a sound of life within,
The passer stops and looks about,
As half in fear, and half in doubt,
Of what may here have been.

Ah! 'tis a simple tale and rare,
Of life the stranger cannot know—
There is a presence in the air,
As if of angels watching there,
Or passing to and fro.

Here Margaret lives—"Old Margaret Brown,"
Thus doth the clerk her name record,
On dole supplied her by the town,
And deems each present sent her down
A present from the Lord.

Here she was born and here was well,
Here grew her children by her side,
Till one by one they from her fled;
And there they laid her husband dead.
Brought shoreward by the tide.

Thus blessings came, thus from her went,
God's love by sun and shadow shown;
You say a heart so torn and rent,
With all its loving forces spent,
Might harden into stone?

Ah! years did follow, all unblessed,
How bleak was all the world, how dark?
Her wandering soul in search of rest,
Only the gloom and wave possess'd
Nor found the only ark.

O faithless soul that would not know
Jesus who watched and went before,
And sought in all those waves of woe,
By all their flood and overflow,
To give thee peace once more.

PART II.

O happy day, but all too brief,
And night more precious still than day,
When she obtained the dear relief,
That left her still the sense of grief,
But stole the sting away!

She sat in silence with her dead,
When Jesus came and called her name;
One answering word, and fear and dread
Went out, and unto her, instead,
A holy quiet came.

O change, that did her soul astound!
The Lord had come and talked with her,
And all her grief with comfort crowned;
She had once more the Master found
Beside the sepulchre.

Long years have passed—poor, blind, and old,
She waits until God's will is done;
And yet her closed eyes behold:
That world of glories manifold,
And Jesus as the sun.

What if the sea roar up the beach?
The leafless tree the sound prolong?
Her soul its resting-place can reach,
Still tune the common words of speech
Into a thankful song.

What if the stone no more be pressed
By steps that woke a welcome sound?
Her loving heart is full of rest,
With her abides a heavenly guest,
The Lord whom she has found.

And if the birds have spread the wing,
The walk with grass be overgrown,
She seems to hear the downward ring
Of songs, such as the angels sing,
Where sorrow is unknown!

O world, with all thy pomp and pride,
So poor, so full of doubt and fear;
Lo! Christ, with gifts to thee denied,
Has every longing satisfied,
And built his temple here! *Anon.*

“WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE
CHASTENETH.”

“God's children are like stars, that look most bright
When foes pursue them through the darkest night:
Like riches beat, they more resplendent shine:
Like grapes when pressed, they yield luxurious
wine;
Like spices pounded, are to smell most sweet;
Like trees when shook, that wave but not retreat:
Like vines, that for the bleeding better grow;
Like gold, that burning makes the brighter show;
Like glow-worms, that shine best in dark attire;
Like cedar leaves, whose odors gain by fire;
Like the palm tree, whose humors force removed;
Like chamomile, which treading on improves;
Like everything that can withstand the test,
Are those God loves, and who loves God the best.”
—From the Baptist Martyre.