

FRIENDS OLD AND NEW OF LATER YEARS.

TO MY SISTER MARY.

“My sister, my sweet sister, if a name
Dearer and purer were it should thine.”—*Byron.*

So wrote a bard of other days,
And so write I, dear heart, of you,—
Words suited only to the few,—
Words soft and gentle as the dew,
Yet charged with force of fervent praise.

I know not if that other one
Was dark, or fair, or grave, or gay.
I know not if her eyes' soft ray
Gave token of her mind's bright play,
Or if her hair of gold was spun.

I only know he loved her well,
That brother with the titled name,
With poet soul and heart of flame,—
A man to love, whate'er his blame,
To gently judge, howe'er he fell.

I doubt not that his praise was sweet,
Nor that his love met full return,
Howe'er the world at large might spurn,
Or sister's heart in secret mourn
O'er wanderings of a brother's feet.

It may be that his inmost soul
Was held in leash by this pure love.
His heavenly origin to prove,
Howe'er his wilful heart might rove
All heedless of its sweet control.

I may not say, I only know
That love is sweet, and true, and strong,
That love can never sanction wrong,
And must by right to heaven belong,
Whence all its streams of sweetness flow.