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THE LAST WORD.

By EBEN B. REXFORD.

He kissed her lips and sailed away,
And as his ship went down the bay,
He turned with one last look to say,
"Good-bye, sweetheart, for many a day."

His ship sailed east, to isles of balm,
And westward, over waters calm,
And north and south, in far-off seas,
Her white sails fluttered in the breeze.

One night he paced the deck alone,
Still as a grave the air had grown.
The sea seemed listening. Not a breath
Broke silence deep as that of death.

Low, like a sound of winds that play
On pipes of summer, far away,
A voice across the silence came,—
His sweetheart's voice, and called his name.

From far beyond the blue sea's rim
Across the world she called to him,
And yet, so still the great world lay,
She seemed but a hand's-breadth away.

He listened, awe-struck, half in fear,
The world of God seemed strangely near.
But only once the low voice came,—
His sweetheart's voice that called his name.

At anchor in the land-locked bay
At last the good ship "Wanderer" lay,
And eagerly he sought the shore,
Glad that his voyaging was o'er.

He reached the gate. Across the sill
The grass had wandered at its will.
He passed the door. "Sweetheart," cried he,
"Is this your welcome home to me?"

Here lay a book that she had read—
Her sewing, with a broken thread.
The dust was thick upon the floor,
And the wind sang, "She comes no more!"

"She died ere summer's flowers had fled,
And called you at the last, they said.
And then he knew that he had heard,
Across the world, love's last word.

