

## A PARABLE.

[Written for THE QUARTERLY.]

## FIRST VOICE.

A ship sailed out o'er the summer sea,  
Out o'er the sea where the calms abide,  
Found and manned as a ship should be,  
Strong as an angel to cleave the tide.  
All through the years, came the shining sails,  
But *one* that I look for, returns no more,  
Though I watch for her coming till vision fails,  
Where the haze hangs blue on the farther shore.  
Up in my chamber a portrait fair,  
Out o'er the waters a shining trail,  
Deep in my heart a cry of despair,  
"What doth our life unto us avail?"

A sower went out in the fields to sow,  
Stalwart and strong as a sower should be,  
And green grew the fields where he came, and lo!  
E'en flowers in his footprints bloomed fair to see.  
But while yet there lingered the early dew,  
E'er yet the sun in the heavens rode high,  
While yet all eager his work to do,  
Weary the sower lay down to die.  
Up in my chamber a portrait fair,  
In a reft household a bitter wail,  
Deep in my heart a voice of despair,  
"What doth our life unto us avail?"

## SECOND VOICE.

The track that silvers yon ebbing tide,  
Shall guide thy bark o'er its pathless deeps,  
And wind-borne seeds, springing far and wide,  
Shall gladden the years while the sower sleeps.  
Not unavailing such lives, oh soul!  
Fruit ripens apace after blooms are shed,  
Fragments and glimpses are ours, the whole  
He only seeth who keeps our dead.  
Up in my chamber a portrait fair  
Smileth, when ready to faint and fail,  
Deep in my heart still cryeth despair,  
"What doth our life unto us avail?"