

THE TEAR-CUP.

A GERMAN LEGEND.

The sweet warm sunlight of an Autumn day
 Had with the changeful hours dreamed away
 And died ; and when the tender twilight came
 The sun-begotten and imprisoned flame
 Of ruddy fruit burned softer, and the trees
 Whispered and kissed together, as the breeze ;
 Amorous odours full of subtle thought
 From the dew-cherished sleepy flowers brought,
 And fair became all things that had not been
 So fair beneath the yellow mid-day sheen.

Ev'n then a woman leaned against a stile,
 Waking yet sighing with sad dreams the while,
 For she had verily the right to mourn—
 Her little girl was dead, her only-born,
 A wavelet on the shore of time-to-be
 Had rippled back into eternity,
 Leaving the mother but the hurtful sweet
 That lurks in weeping o'er a winding sheet.

Her tears fell fast as to her vision rose
 Dim pictures of the world-consenting woes
 That childless widowhood alone must bear :
 She knew that she no more upon the stair
 Would heed the pattering of tiny shoes,
 No pout would vex, no ready laugh amuse ;
 Nor morning kiss, nor baby-like " Good-night "
 Would ever make her heavy burthen light ;
 And as she thought of these her eyes again
 Gave misty outlines of the things most plain.

But in the gloaming suddenly there seemed,
 Soft-shadowed midst uncertain haze that gleamed,
 Like close-drawn clouds around the full-faced moon,
 A pale still image of the child, and soon,
 Startling the mother, as a trembling doe
 Crouching and listening for an unseen foe
 Is startled at the lightest leaflet fall,
 A murmuring voice came gently : " Weep not all
 These tears for me, dear mother, for behold
 Within my hand this cup of chasen gold—
 Wonderously wrought with carved pictures—see,
 'Tis full of tears which thou hast wept for me,
 And if thou weepest more 'twill overflow
 Adown the perfect side, and sadly show
 Stains on the brightness, and the powerful peace
 Which now is mine will then for ever cease ;
 So shall I have no rest by day or night,
 Nor any longer dwelling in delight."

Thus spake the child, and as the songlike words
 Died in the evening twittering of birds
 And love-calls to their mates, the mother stood
 A moment silently as though she would
 Pass to the vision and therewith be one,
 And fade away like vapour in the sun—
 Then stayed her sorrow, drove away her fears,
 And for her child's sweet sake, kept back her tears.

H. M. G.