

THE CASTLES WE BUILT IN AIR.

There were builders strong on the earth of old,
To-day there are planners rare ;
But never was temple, home, nor hold
Like the castles we built in air.
We piled them high through the long lone hours,
By a chill hearth's flickering brands,
Through the twilights heavy with wintry showers
That found us in stranger lands.

The store was small and the friends were few
We own'd in those building days ;
But stately and fair the fabrics grew
That no gold of earth could raise :
For time was conquered and fortune moved,
Our wishes were builders there,
And, oh ! but there gather'd guests beloved
To the castles we built in air.

No place was left for the bonds and fears,
For the lore so sagely small,
Of this gaining world that wears our years
Away in its thankless thrall.
Once more we stood in the lights that crossed
Our souls on their morning track,
And, oh ! that we had not loved or lost,
But ever the dream comes back !

It was joy to pause by the pleasant homes
That our wand'ring steps have pass'd,
Yet weary looks through the woodbine blooms
Or the wreathing vines were cast.
But there fell no age and there rose no strife,
And there never was room for care,
Where grew the flowers of our dreaming life
By the homes that we built in air.

Oh ! dark and lone have the bright hearths grown
Where our fond and gay hearts met,
For many have changed, and some are gone,
For we build the blithe homes yet.
As men have built in the date tree's shade
Ere Egypt raised her fanes—
Ere a star was named, or a brick was laid
On the old Chaldean plains.