

SUCH I WAS.



SUCH I was ! sweet Boyhood crieth,
 Gazing, half incredulous,
 Yet in awe, within the cradle
 Where the new-born infant lieth.
 But his angered Self replieth :
 Such *thou* wert ! Go, hide thy chagrin
 In a scorn contemptuous !

Such I was : the stripling sayeth
 With a sense of languid mirth,
 As his hand, already cunning,
 On sweet Boyhood's head he layeth.
 But the Conscience, which betrayeth
 Self and pride and evil, answers :
 Thou hast lost thy boyhood's worth !

Such I was : saith Manhood, smiling
 At the follies of his youth ;
 Half regretting that the morrow
 Cannot bring that fair beguiling
 Natal taste of things defiling.
 But his better self doth whisper :
 Boyhood held the heart of truth !

And the old man, retrospective,
 Musing on the many stages
 Of his wasted years, sad groweth ;
 And in voice of self invective,
 Wrapt in bitter mood reflective,
 Crieth : Such I was ! but boyhood
 Held the treasures of the ages !

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