



THE IMPENDING CHECK-MATE.

My little love, do you remember,
Ere we were grown so sadly wise,
Those evenings in the bleak December,
Curtained warm from the snowy weather,
When you and I played chess together,
Check-mated by each other's eyes?

Ah! still I see your soft white hand
Hovering warm o'er Queen and Knight.
Brave Pawns in vallant battle stand:
The double Castles guard the wings:
The Bishop, bent on distant things,
Moves, sidling, through the fight.

Our fingers touch; our glances meet,
And flutter; falls your golden hair
Against my cheek; your bosom sweet
Is heaving. Down the field your Queen

Rides slow her soldiery all between,
And checks me unaware.

Ah me! the little battle's done,
Dispersed is all its chivalry;
Full many a move since then have we
'Mid Life's perplexing chequers made,
And many a game with Fortune played—
What is it we have won?

This, this at least—if this alone:
That never, never, never more,
As in those old, still nights of yore
(Ere we were grown so sadly wise)
Can you and I shut out the skies,
Shut out the world and wintry weather,
And, eyes exchanging warmth with eyes,
Play chess, as then we played, together!