

And mothers with child eschewed his eye ;
 And half in pity, half scorn, the folk
 Christened him, from the words he spoke,

' Ave, Maria.'

One year, when the harvest feasts were done,
 And the mending of tattered nets begun,
 And the kittiwake's scream took a weirder key,
 From the wailing wind and the moaning sea,
 He was found at morn, on the fresh strewn snow,
 Frozen and faint and crooning low,

' Ave, Maria.'

They stirred up the ashes between the dogs,
 And warmed his limbs by the blazing logs,
 Chafed his puckered and bloodless skin,
 And stove to quiet his chattering chin ;
 But, ebbing with unreturning tide,
 He kept on murmuring, till he died,

' Ave, Maria.'

Idiot, soulless, brute from birth,
 He could not be buried in sacred earth ;
 So, they laid him afar, apart, alone,
 Without o: a cross, or turf, or stone,
 Senseless clay unto senseless clay,
 To which none ever came nigh, to say,

' Ave, Maria.'

When the meads grew saffron, the hawthorn white,
 And the lark bore his music out of sight,
 And the swallow outraced the racing wave,
 Up from the lonely, outcast grave
 Sprouted a lily, straight and high,
 Such as she bears to whom men cry,

' Ave, Maria.'

None had planted it ; no one knew
 How it had come there, why it grew ;
 Grew up strong, till its stately stem