



THE CHILD OF BRABANT.

FOUNDED IN PART ON OUIDA'S STORY.

Further, said, "But what are shoes
set in stockings too are clad?"
He paused ere answering, said, "And I
am, if indeed I get them not
or when my rose was cut too soon,
day, and in the Autumn-time
forth again and all as fair
-en in the warm sunny June."
Please her youthful fancy, I
oke . . . for thus she seemed to me
airy realm of fairyland
barren world of toil and pain . . .
he fairies from their treasures bring
to one whom they must surely love!"
Believing, half in doubt, and still
pectant of some unknown aid,
and when next she came thereto
r chair, beneath the awning—where
old walk, her flowers she sold and gained
ng by her daily toil—
i the box some silken hose,
by me, which she, in simple faith,
with the fairies or her prayers,
he pressed me as to whence they came:
man would take them as a gift,
and her inborn pride forbade

And from thence we oft times met
is merging towards the shades of eve,
of fairies and of "Rubens" land
as she named the Flemish Knight):
mystic way there ever dwelt
members of her mind, a link
great in art and of the world
ten, a people, clear, distinct
from the land where Rubens lived
as kingly among a nobler race,
d more her thirst for knowledge grew
soul within her woke to life:
business was born of wisdom gained,
ate, we conversed of the life
strangely mingled with the saints
void, still in a tangled mass,
er grew, and yet the more confused—
tly pastime, but to her
lawn of womanhood and life,
er waned, and autumn-glory crowned
ng leaves with multi-colored hues,
where no fear had dwelt before,
d as yet had left her pure,
parting in one long embrace,
and is that one lies her soul

The length of *Ages* and the lives of Saints,
Culled from his slender store of musty books,
Could little teach the child who lived among
The tender off-spring of fair Flora's realm.
And so she wandered at her own sweet will
Amid the lovely flowers, and knew them each
By name, and spoke to them, and they to her.
Or so she thought, for flowers and saints to her
Were both alike, and loved her, each the same.
And when her little limbs were strong to walk
Old Antoine took her with him to the town
To sell the flowers, and soon his trade increased,
For all were quickly bought when sold by one
Who looked herself but as a larger flower—
An elder sister to the tiny buds.
And then old Antoine blessed the saints, indeed,
Who looked with such great favor on his toil.
And ever more the child in beauty grew,
From morn till eve exposed to rain and sun:
Content with life, and taking as her lot
The daily share of work, and scanty food:
And loved her little hut, pink as a shell,
Built as the Netherlander loves to build,
Most hid by roses and by creeping plants.
Till when nigh fourteen summer suns had past
Since first old Antoine brought her to his home,
The old man sickened and then slowly sank,
Worn out by age, and left his all to her,
The little hut, and some few silver crowns,
And said: "Live in it, pretty one, and take
No soul within to worry or to scold;
And feed the birds, and tend the flowers," and then
Past as a breath into the sleep of Death.
Then Bébé, sobbing followed to the grave
The rough old man, who to her in the stead
Had been of father, country, king and law:
Knowing no other will, nor caring aught
If so she pleased him in his simple wants.
"Live in it, pretty one" these were his words,
Words which henceforth must always sacred be,
So when the few old folks who lived near by
Came round the child, and offered their advice
As meet to guide her in the coming years,
And made this offer, and then that, the child,
Tho' doubting not these trusty friends, still heard
The voice of Antoine, "Take no soul within."
Replied, "No doubt that what you say is good,
But he himself told me to stay and tend
The flowers and feed the birds, and so I stay."
And then in place of suasion followed words
Of anger from the women who had hoped
To profit by old Antoine's well-tilled ground