

The hand that wore his wedding ring
Looked such a tiny, fragile thing,
He gently raised it to his lips,
And softly pressed the finger-tips:
"Good-by," he sighed, below his breath;
The parting was far worse than death.

As he arose the maid awoke,
And o'er her senses wonder broke:
It seemed at first a dream to be—
She scarcely dared to think 'twas he—
In sleep oft in his arms she'd lain,
But waking stole her out again.

She half arose his side to seek,
But virgin shame suffused her cheek,
She turned her head, and held it so,
Lest he should see the tell-tale glow:
This action he mistook for fear,
And anger at his presence here.

"To-night," he said, "I go away,
I shall be far ere dawn of day;
The servants with you will remain
Until you reach your sire's domain."
"My lord, my love," she softly sighed,
"I thought you'd come to claim your bride."

Fiercely he drew her to his breast,
Scarcely believing he possessed;
His lips met hers in mutual bliss—
Thus gave and took the nuptial kiss.
And now the tale has come to end—
The veil is drawn, let no hand rend.