

PHILIP.

My faithful friend, 'my sister, and my love !'  
How the sweet words of that old sacred song  
Fit into all our deepest truest love !  
How doubly strong the old familiar tie,  
Close interwoven in our web of life !  
And yet I wonder not that you should ask,—  
Since I have told you all the bitter past,—  
If I am sure that ne'er again my heart  
Could drift from its safe anchorage in you ?  
Yes ! I *am* sure, because that anchor holds  
Deep in the very bed-rock of my life !  
But now, how shall I ask if you could make  
For me a sacrifice I dare not claim—  
Nay, hardly dare suggest it :—Could you leave  
Your cherished home, so hallowed in your heart  
By memories of your happy childhood life,  
And sacred hours here passed with those we see  
With our dull, earthly vision *here* no more ?  
Yet now, with all the wasted years behind me set,  
One worthy aim before me seems to rise,  
For which my scarce used powers might yet avail.  
You know the old ambitions of my youth,  
O'er-topping all the possible in me.  
Dreams of the morning—they have passed as soon !  
Yet is the vagrant mood still strong in me.  
The old impatience of conventions dull,  
In which my spirit scarce could breathe and live.  
But Ernest's life woke a new world for me,—  
A world of possibilities untold,  
Turning romantic dreams to higher use ;  
A virgin soil to work,—a plastic race  
To mould into a higher, nobler type  
Than this old, outworn one of ours at home ;—  
Such is the work that Ernest has begun ;  
But much he needs a helper, and I think,  
Sharing his aims and, in degree, his faith,  
My hands could strengthen his, *and* carry on  
His work in ways he scarcely dreams of ; yet.