

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

BY WALT. A. RATCLIFFE, LISTOWEL.

OFT sadly say we, "Thus and thus it might have been!"
 While standing dazed with weary hands and listless,
 With streaming eyes, and hearts all crushed and bleeding,
 We watch our god, Ambition, fast receding
 Before the hands unseen, unknown, resistless,
 That thrust him from the shrine our hands had builded,
 And crushed the fairy fane our fancy gilded.

Oh, woeful, woeful scene!

We scan the wreck and sigh, "Oh, woeful, woeful scene!"
 Till sunlight dies, dark shadows only leaving;
 Fair flowers fade beside the way we're treading;
 We drown their life in salt tears we are shedding,
 And point each thorn with vain and selfish grieving;
 We mourn that aught our perfect plan should alter;
 We loathe our lot, in childish accents falter—
 "It might, it might have been!"

As outbound ships where not a beacon star is seen,
 Or through a cloud, that, weary of its soaring,
 Has sunk to rest upon the billows heaving,
 The seen and unseen, all behind us leaving,
 We drift adown life's current onward pouring,
 But are not tossed by every gale that bloweth:
 The log we bear is not a log that showeth
 All ills that might have been.

'Twere well to smile, nor moan, "Oh, woeful, woeful scene!"
 When vane and tow'r and painted window crumble.
 The past is gone. Why sadness from her borrow?
 If foiled to-day, we'll victors be to-morrow,
 Or learn from failure to be wise and humble.
 'Twere better far to spend our days in trying,
 Though worsted always, than in idly sighing,
 "It might, it might have been!"

