
THE SHIELD.

THE old man said, "Take thou this shield, my son,
Long tried in battle, and long tried by age,
Guarded by this thy fathers did engage,
Trusting to this the victory they have won."

Forth from the tower Hope and Desire had built,
In youth's bright morn I gazed upon the plain, —
There struggled countless hosts, while many a stain
Marked where the blood of brave men had been spilt.

With spirit strong I buckled to the fight,
What sudden chill rushes through every vein?
Those fatal arms oppress me — all in vain
My fainting limbs seek their accustomed might.

Forged were those arms for men of other mould,
Our hands they fetter, cramp our spirits free,
I throw them on the ground and suddenly
Comes back my strength — returns my spirit bold.

I stand alone, unarmed, — yet not alone,
Who heeds no law but what within he finds,
Trusts his own vision, not to other minds,
He fights with thee — Father, aid thou thy son.

J.