

“ Lone mother, at the dark grave-door
 She kneeleth, pleading o’er and o’er ;
 But it is shut for evermore.

“ She toileth on,—the mournfulest thing,—
 At the vain task of emptying
 The cistern where the salt tears spring.

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“ The spirit of life may leap above,
 But in that grave her prison’d dove
 Lies cold to th’ warm embrace of love ;

“ And dark, though all the world is bright ;
 And lonely, with a city in sight ;
 And desolate in the rainy night.

“ Ah, God ! when in the glad life-cup
 The face of Death swims darkly up,
 The crowning flower is sure to droop !

“ And so we laid our darling down,
 When summer’s cheek grew ripely brown ;
 And still, tho’ grief has milder grown,
 Unto the stranger’s land we cleave,
 Like some poor birds that grieve and grieve
 Round the robb’d nest, so loth to leave.”

There are one or two obscurities of figure here, that crave a second thought to unlock them ; but nothing can be more sadly tender than the whole, and there is poetry in every stanza. Gerald Massey is still a young man, and much of his time in the past must have been spent in shaking off the stiff soil that clogs round for a time the thoughts and expressions of untutored genius. A man still under thirty, who never attended any school save a penny one for a brief period, and who at eight years of age was sent to toil in a silk manufactory from five o’clock in the morning till half-past six at night, may well be regarded as still but partially developed ; and we are convinced the world has not yet seen his best. He has but to give his intellect as full scope as his fancy and imagination, and to bestow upon his pieces that elaboration