

DEATH OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (A.D. 1586).

A spectacle¹ to heaven and earth, to men's and angels' eyes,
 Triumphant² in the midst of pain, 'tis thus a martyr³ dies ;
 And like a loved and welcome friend the King of Terror⁴ comes
 To quiet souls that pine away in quiet village homes.
 But can the warrior's latest hours be calm and pure as this,
 And fresh from scenes of bloodshed can he pass to realms of bliss ?
 And can the holy fruit of peace on field of battle grow,
 Where human passions wildly rage, still working human woe ?
 —O come with me to Zutphen's plain across the Northern sea,
 There Sidney falls, the fairest flower of England's chivalry :⁵
 He quits the fatal battle-field, struck by a mortal wound,—
 See how his friends and followers come, in pity gathering round !
 His fevered lips are parched with thirst, his sight grows faint and dim,
 One drop of water were a boon⁶ beyond all price to him.
 No flower exposed to noonday heat upon some scorched-up plain,
 E'er longed so much for dewy night or grateful summer rain ;
 No traveller on Arabian sands⁷ amid the wilderness,
 E'er yearned to reach some desert spring with greater eagerness.
 See ! see it comes ! his languid head upon your shoulders prop,
 And let him drink the precious draught, refreshed by every drop.
 Why stays he thus ? he will not taste, and with averted eye,
 Points to a fellow-soldier stretched upon the ground hard by ;
 " Take this and drink, O wounded man, thou needst it more than I ?"
 Then from th' untasted flask his lips the suffering hero moves,
 And on the soldier at his side bestows the draught he loves ;
 Rejoicing, in the midst of pain and weakness, that he can
 To other's sorrows bring relief, and cheer his fellow-man.
 O victor in a nobler strife than those of shield and spear,
Sidney, thy hardest struggle and thy highest praise is here !
 A conquest o'er the love of self more worthy of renown
 Than his who takes by force or guile⁸ a long beleaguered⁹ town.
 True manly valour shines most clear in love's celestial light,
 And charity with courage leagued¹⁰ makes up the perfect knight.

¹ *Spectacle*, sight.

² *Triumphant*, rejoicing, as one who had won a victory.

³ *Martyr*, one who dies for his faith, or in some noble cause.

⁴ *King of Terror*, death.

⁵ *Flower of England's chivalry*, the best of the English knights or warriors.

⁶ *Boon*, a favour or gift.

⁷ *Arabian sands*, the deserts of Arabia, in Asia.

⁸ *Guile*, deceit, treachery. ⁹ *Beleaguered*, besieged. ¹⁰ *Leagued*, joined.