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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE'S GHOST ***

SONNETS *of* SHAKESPEARE'S GHOST



SONNETS *of* SHAKESPEARE'S GHOST

The Words procured by GREGORY THORNTON
The Ornaments made by WILLEM BLAEU

Never before Imprinted

At Sydney
By *Angus & Robertson*, and are to be solde
by all booksellers
1920

TO THE ONLIE BEGETTER
OF THESE INSUING SONNETS

F.M.

ALL HAPPINESSE

The Spirit of William Shakespeare,
sore vexed of them who say that in his
Sonnets he writ not from the truth of
his heart but from the toyings of his
brain, and that he devised but a feigned
object to fit a feigned affection, herein
maketh answer, renewing as best a
shadow may that rhyme wherein he
was more excellent in the
living body



I

THE wise world saith I not unlock'd my heart
When I of thee and thy dear love did write,
And would each word of mine to false convert,
Doing my simple sense a double spite.
It saith thou wert but shadow born of nought,

But vain creation of an apish rhyme,
While, Fashion's fool, my strain'd invention sought
To better them who best did please the time.
But wherefore say they so, and do dear wrong
To thee, whose worth was my sole argument,
To me, whose verse 'twas truth alone made strong
By that the breast must feel, not brain invent?
They who this doubt never such beauty knew,
Nor what to poet love alone can do.



II

THEY say a man ne'er bore such love to man,
Or, if he did, 'twere but a cause for shame;
But, speaking so, they their own measure scan,
And blot their censure with self-blaming blame.
For, thou being Beauty's best, the best of me
Worshipp'd but Beauty's self and Beauty's worth;
My fire and air, my spirit, adorèd thee
Unmix'd with gross compounding of my earth.
And thou wert best of Truth, the first in grace
Of all rich gems in Virtue's carcanet;
Then should I not love thee and give thee place
Above all love of sense on woman set?
In love of Beauty, whate'er shape 'tis in,
There's nought of Truth, if it must think of sin.



III

LOOK, when the rose to deep vermilion hue
Adds that sweet odour gracious Nature gives,
When his proud glory gladdens every view,
And no base worm within his beauties lives,
We nothing question of what sex it be,
Nor ask more of it than that it should lend
His lovely gaze for ravish'd eye to see,
And on the blessed air his fragrance spend.
We ask not that the star which lights the heaven
Should be or male or female to our sense,
Suffic'd in this, that it empearls the even,
And happies all our under reverence.
Then might'st not thou, who wert both rose and
star,
Be pure to me as these to others are?



IV

SOME hold it strange that love like thine and mine
'Twixt two in state so sunder'd should be bred,
That he who did all worths in him combine,
Birth, beauty, wit, wealth, me thus honourèd,
Me, the poor motley, maim'd by Fortune's spite,
Sear'd and o'erworn with tyranny of time,
Whose wit was but the wit to learn to write
When thou, my Muse, inspir'dst my pupil rhyme.
Thou wert the wide world's pride, but I his scorn;
His pattern thou, I his poor toy and tool;
Whence therefore should that tender love be born
'Twixt Fortune's minion thee, and me her fool?
O know they not that all such outward things
Hold lowest count in the soul's reckonings?



V

HADST thou been such as, boasting of their birth,
Pass by the humbler-born with proud disdain,
Making self-merit of the antique worth
Whereby some sire that state for them did gain;
Had riches' dross so reign'd in thy respect,
That riches' lack were deem'd by thee disgrace;
Of thy rare parts had 't been the rude effect,
That cruel pride held gentle pity's place;
Then would'st thou ne'er have look'd on lowly me,
To find what merit there thou might'st approve,
Nor would my heart, grown warm for haughty thee,
Dare or desire to clamour for thy love.
But all thy gifts were made more rich, more rare,
By inward sweetness kind beyond compare.



VI

WHY, thou being changeless, changeful did I write,
Trusting thy truth, yet doubting thy defect,
Now all-triumphant, now confounded quite,
Sad-suited all, or proud in purple deck'd?
Did I not write of thy rare constancy,
Wherein was none like thee, thou like to none;
Swear that thy heart within my heart did lie
Past all removal till the world were done?

E'en so; but though, when clouds the region hold,
Masking with envious murk the sun's bright face,
Our o'ergloom'd spirits shudder 'neath the cold,
He merits not the blame of that disgrace:
Himself is still the same, still warm, still bright,
Though clouds between hide both the warmth and
light.



VII

YET, being so chill'd, do we not chide the sun,
And say he wilful hides his face away,
Say 'tis his will makes the world drear and dun,
And takes the golden glory from the day?
The envious rack we rather should reproach,
That comes betwixt us in despite of him,
Rebellious powers, that on his reign encroach,
And, black themselves, his brightness joy to dim.
So when the troubling mischiefs of the time,
Or baser minds, bent upon marring thee,
Stole moments of thy favour, then my rhyme
Slander'd thy love and slurr'd thy constancy.
Yet the sun's self unstain'd and bright remains,
And my heart knew thy stains were not thy stains.



VIII

IF wrongfully I moan'd thy 'pretty wrongs',
When I was 'sometime absent from thy heart',
O none so trusting but to him belongs
Some moody moment of his mortal part!
No man doth Nature make whose trust doth ever
Unveering with all winds point still the same;
None is so whole in health he knows no fever
To shake the firm composure of his frame.
My love so wholly thine, thy worth so dear,
Made each thine absence so distract my breast,
That in his turmoil faith sometime to fear
Converted, doubting most when most 'twas blest.
Because mine own heart lone without thee seem'd,
Me absent from thy heart I falsely deem'd.



IX

I WRIT how once I wander'd from thy side,
Serving the strong suggestions of my blood,
Only to prove from worse things vainly tried
How far more precious grew thy sum of good.
If I so lov'd thee, what is my defence,
That thy dear love fail'd then my steps to stay,
That idle hours were idly given to sense,
And soul forsaken at the call of clay?
O let love grant excuse; my sensual part
Dwelt ever far from pure untainted thee;
It held no conversation with my heart,
Nor, us'd or check'd, could be thine injury.
If once it triumph'd, carrying me away,
It stole but earth; my soul did with thee stay.



X

I F that my sensual deed had stol'n from thee
Aught that were part of thy most precious love,
Or made to swerve the loving soul of me,
That to thy service it should duller prove;
Had't made to me thy grace less gracious seem,
Thy worth less worth, thy love a smaller prize,
Or bated aught of thy most rich esteem,
Which still grew richer in thy servant's eyes;
Then were it fault too foul to find excuse,
And all I writ of thee were vows untrue;
My verse were nought but idle poet's use,
Conceit's worn weeds lac'd o'er with wording new.
But 'twas not so; though true my love before,
'Twas thenceforth purg'd, and priz'd thee all the
more.



XI

WHEREFORE should I mine own heart not unfold,
And his true workings to the world disclose?
Why self-unlocking for unseemly hold,
Which me, as I show'd others, human shows?
If I to Nature held her truthful glass,
And on the stage life's self did strive to set,
Creating thousand shadows that should pass
For very substance when men's eyes they met;
If there I imag'd love, hate, doubt, and trust,
If all the pageant of the mortal heart,
Might not one say: 'This man within him must
Have learn'd from Nature what he shap'd in art'?
All passions' depths he only can reveal
Who doth them all within him living feel.



XII

WHENCE came it that I knew in others' case
How bitter-sweet and tyrant-slave is love,
How quick to jealous doubt it yieldeth place,
If mine own self did ne'er his power prove?
Whence knew I the deep sense that in the soul
Is thrill'd and thrall'd by perfect beauty's sight,
If never beauty did myself control
With all the mastery of sovran might?
Since so my heart laid bare what it contain'd
Of understanding of love's mysteries,
And nought of thine or mine our loving stain'd,
That I should hide it from misprising eyes,
No shame or scruple might my judgement see
To tell of that true love I bore to thee.

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GHOST ***

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