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THE
F O R T N I G H T L Y
R E V I E W .

EDITED BY

JOHN MORLEY.

VOL. V. NEW SERIES.

JANUARY 1 TO JUNE 1, 1869.

(VOL. XI. OLD SERIES.)

LONDON:
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1869.

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ON THE EDGE OF THE WILDERNESS.

PUELLÆ.

Whence comest thou, and whither goest thou?
Abide, abide! longer the shadows grow;
What hopest thou the dark to thee will show?
Abide, abide! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

Why should I name the land across the sea
Wherein I first took hold on misery?
Why should I name the land that flees from me?
Let me depart since ye are happy here.

PUELLÆ.

What wilt thou do within the desert place
Whereto thou turnest now thy careful face?
Stay but a while to tell us of thy case.
Abide, abide! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

What, nigh the journey's end shall I abide,
When in the waste mine own love wanders wide,
When from all men for me she still doth hide?
Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLÆ.

Nay, nay; but rather she forgetteth thee,
To sit upon the shore of some warm sea,
Or in green gardens where sweet fountains be.
Abide, abide! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

Will ye then keep me from the wilderness,
Where I at least, alone with my distress,
The quiet land of changing dreams may bless?

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLE.

Forget the false forgetter, and be wise,
And 'mid these clinging hands and loving eyes,
Dream not in vain thou knowest paradise.

Abide, abide! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

Ah! with your sweet eyes shorten not the day,
Nor let your gentle hands my journey stay!
Perchance love is not wholly cast away.

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLE.

Pluck love away, as thou wouldst pluck a thorn
From out thy flesh; for why shouldst thou be born
To bear a life so wasted and forlorn?

Abide, abide! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

Yea, why then was I born, since hope is pain,
And life a lingering death, and faith but vain,
And love the loss of all I seemed to gain?

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLE.

Dost thou believe that this shall ever be,
That in our land no face thou e'er shalt see,
No voice thou e'er shalt hear to gladden thee?

Abide, abide! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

No longer do I know of good or bad,
I have forgotten that I once was glad ;
I do but chase a dream that I have had.

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLÆ.

Stay ! take one image for thy dreamful night ;
Come look at her, who in the world's despite
Weeps for delaying love and lost delight.

Abide, abide ! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

Mock me not till to-morrow. Mock the dead—
They will not heed it, or turn round the head,
To note who faithless are, and who are wed.

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLÆ.

We mock thee not. Hast thou not heard of those
Whose faithful love the loved heart holds so close,
That death must wait till one word lets it loose.

Abide, abide ! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

I hear you not : the wind from off the waste
Sighs like a song that bids me make good haste
The wave of sweet forgetfulness to taste.

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLÆ.

Come back ! like such a singer is the wind,
As to a sad tune sings fair words and kind,
That he with happy tears all eyes may blind.

Abide, abide ! for we are happy here.

AMANS.

Did I not hear her sweet voice cry from far,
That o'er the lonely waste fair fields there are,
Fair days that know not any change or care?

Let me depart, since ye are happy here.

PUELLÆ.

Oh no, not far thou heardest her, but nigh—
Nigh, 'twixt the waste's edge and the darkling sky.
Turn back again, too soon it is to die.

Abide! a little while be happy here.

AMANS.

How with the lapse of lone years could I strive,
And can I die now that thou biddest live?
What joy this space 'twixt birth and death can give.

Can we depart, who are so happy here?

WILLIAM MORRIS.