

PHANTOM SEA-BIRDS.

Sirs, though ocean's gapless bound
Ever-same do gird us round,
Fix the eye on glowing haze
Which the sun's late-lingering rays
Crimson like anemones
That butterflies in woodland kiss :—
With the East-wind at our back,
Ere the tilting blue turn black,
Though the prow duck to the dips,
And abrupt waves slap the ship's
Bellied bows whose timber thrills,
We may see the popped hills,
Safe in ward of magic, steer,
Summer-sweet, o'er surges drear,
With the rambling palace, rich
Home of Circe, island-witch,
Daughter of the misled Sun,
Whom false Persa lured and won,
Long held fast and kissed and kissed,
Having couched her like a mist,
Where the salt, waste, marshy fens
Find sea-monsters brackish dens :
Helios lay there on the rushes
Which the booming storm-wind crushes,
Blushing gorgeously for shame—
Lay for hours all the same.—
Hark, perhaps a Siren sings,
Viewless talons, tail and wings ;
Deadly, deadly now their charm
With no outward show of harm.
Listen, listen, back the ear
With the hollow hand, to hear.

“ The air is alive, yet fear no ill ;
Let the helm loose, and trust our skill ;
Free the tugging sail with a jerk,
For we can do all manner of work.
Safe as a bubble on milk new drawn,
Drift like a curled moon before the dawn :—
Dreams that merge in a dream more vast,
Your lives shall merge in life at last,
Where death shall loom no more, but frame the past,
As frames a park an open palace-door,
Where leaves blown in ne'er reach across the floor
To kings whose minds hark back, but their wounds grow
not sore.

Fear, there, seems childish passion, known no longer ;
Each sense has leisure ; memory, though stronger,
Yet veils what else might tempt the fond heart to deplore.
A queen shall fill the crystal up with wine,
To bathe your lips still smarting from the brine ;
And you shall tread,
Bare-foot, on petals shed ;
And you shall lie in jasmine-trellised bed,
Dream, meet with any friend alive or dead ;
Obedient sleep,
Prolonged for rapture deep,
Shall let each soul her chosen comrade keep
And to the full in boon communion steep.—
Turn once to hear,
True lips will brush your ear,
Our bodies in your arms be real and dear—
One whom you loved in vain, at last, drawn near.

“ Woe! woe!
Let honey flow,
Let the sharp blush come and go,
Draw thick drops from the breast's too passive snow!
O talons, let
A warm red rainfall wet
The unmoved faces, dew the stiff beard's jet!
Ere it be vain,
Choke down this sobbing pain!
Sing, with the lips where many found great gain,
The whole of love,
The births and deaths thereof,
Timed to the wings of some spray-drenched dove,
Whose pink feet dip
In the long wave's eager lip,
While faintness numb invades each frail plume-tip!—
Love, in our arms
We nurse and lull thy qualms,
Yet never felt or feel thy sovereign charms.
Our hearts are cold ;
Love, a new tale, was told
In our young ears—now has the tale grown old,
Love still unknown,
Whose praise, and that alone,
Has mocked our ears : our hearts are still our own.
Those who praised him,
Knit with us limb in limb,
Died blind with bliss while yet our eyes were dim.

Still would we try,
Before our sweetness fly,
With you to capture Love, share Love, and die."

Turn, turn with a welling tear
And a pleasure-cozened ear :—
See, the huge black canvas bars
Half the fully-wakened stars,
While the tackle's tarry smell
Faintly from the hold doth tell.
Ah! the bleak mid-ocean plain,
Sad Persephone's cold field,
Heaves with no rich golden grain,
But salt tears and sleep its yield.—
Queen, now on these furrows rocked,
May our brains from dreams be locked.

T. STURGE MOORE.