

THE FULL CUP.

BY ERNEST HELFENSTEIN.

'Commit thy way unto the Lord: trust also in him: and he shall bring it to pass.'—DAVID.

HAVE I not knelt in agony and tears!
Oh! have I not, when every light grew faint,
In the soul's darkness smothered my complaint?
Have I not wrestled with that wild despair
That else had crushed me in the lapse of years,
And mute have made the utterance of prayer?

Though in my grasp the blossom drooped and died—
Though music fell in dirge-like tones away—
Though on the fountain cold dim shadows lay,
And gladness with her light and airy feet
Was passing from the vale and green hill side,
Bearing her mirth along in sad retreat—

Though yearnings, strange, unbidden to the heart,
Made all its guests like funeral mourners there—
Though earth became an altar-place of prayer
With nothing of its own, save Grief, to bide—
All else a language learned, 'let us depart,'
As wings receding in the distance glide.

But now, a meekness on my spirit grows—
 I who have felt defrauded in my pride,
 That life's full sense of being was denied,
 Do strangely question why so much is given—
 Forth from my heart a grateful homage flows,
 For they love most, who most with ill have striven.

I had not faltered at thy cup, Oh Life!
 Hadst thou one draught the more of suffering brought.
 Of such, thou hast my very being wrought;
 And I have learned the bitter taste to bear—
 I tremble at thy smile—the cup that's rife
 With blessing, seems for me, for me, too fair.

And now, I shrink from thee, Oh death! from thee—
 I who have wooed thee with a lover's zeal—
 Not now, not now, thy presence would I feel,
 Although thy sable banner doth but hide
 Unseen and fadeless glory; yet from me
 Turn thy pale aspect, claim me not thy bride.

Not now, for a new beauty walks the earth—
 The very stars do wake in gladness now,
 And the white moon in her calm grace doth bow,
 As she of human joyfulness had sense,
 Communing with the soul in its full birth,
 And more serenely tranquil grew from thence.