

THE MURMUR OF THE SHELLS

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The Murmur of the Shells by Samuel K. Cowan

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SAMUEL K. COWAN

**THE MURMUR
OF THE SHELLS**



The Murmur of the Shells.

BY
SAMUEL K. COWAN,
Author of "POEMS" (Smith, Elder & Co.)



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DEDICATION.



TO
ROBERT YELVERTON TYRRELL,
FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE,
DUBLIN,
EDITOR OF "KOTTABOS,"
AND
PRINCE OF SCHOLARS,
THIS VOLUME
IS
ADMIRINGLY AND GRATEFULLY
INSCRIBED.



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Might have been.

An old man lay on the village green,
Dreaming of things that might have been.

Thorough the trees the sunlight played,
And flecked his forehead with shine and shade.

Under the trees, over the grass,
He saw the light and shadow pass ;

Falling and fading over the green,
Like the spirit of things that might have been.

Lying there, alone, on the grass,
Thinking of nothing that is, or was ;

Only dreaming there, on the green,
Of beautiful things that might have been.

Prayers unanswered ; vows unbreathed ;
Flowers ungathered, and wreaths unwreathed.

Lips unkissed, and loves untold,
And breaking hearts, and grief controlled ;

And unheard footsteps in fairy dells,
And the music of unrung marriage bells ;

And true love-tears that fell unseen,
And buried babes in the churchyard-green.

" Ah, far sky," the old man said,
" Art thou a home of the risen dead ?

There to meet, for evermore,
The friends we loved and lost of yore ?

Nay, ah, nay ; but a lovelier place,
There to meet them, face to face—

The loves on earth that were never seen,
And the beautiful things that might have been."

Out from school the children sped,
And found the old man lying dead.

Deep asleep, in the shadows cool,
And his dead face calm and beautiful.

And the little children had no fear,
But they came from afar, and they stood anear.