

**CLOUD-SHADOWS;
ATCHERLEY; AND,
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS**

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Cloud-Shadows; Atcherley; And, Miscellaneous Poems by John William Fletcher

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JOHN WILLIAM FLETCHER

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ATCHERLEY; AND,
MISCELLANEOUS POEMS**

CLOUD-SHADOWS;
ATCHERLEY; AND MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS.

BY

JOHN WILLIAM FLETCHER,

AUTHOR OF "THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA;" "TRYPHENA
AND OTHER POEMS;" ETC.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS,
AND ROBERTS.

1867.

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TO
MY FATHER
THIS
VOLUME IS INSCRIBED.

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CLOUD-SHADOWS.

THE sun comes forth in silence from the east,
And like a ship of heaven, across the skies
Pursues his pathway, and along his track
Leaves streaks of cloud-foam, then in silence sets
Below the red horizon ; silently
The stars stream out, those watchfires set to guide
The soul through space to God ; and silently
The moon looks down as she has looked since light
First loomed upon her, and with promise heaved
Her crescent bosom. Still the great round world
Along its orbit rolls. The mountains rear
Their rugged heights and catch the trailing clouds
To crown themselves withal ; the forests bow
Their branches to the blast which o'er them sweeps
With a deep spirit-utterance, as though
It told them secret tidings ; plains and fields
And valleys in the golden sunlight lie
And blossom, and turn bleak beneath the storm ;
The clouds distil in dew, and fall in rain,
And burst in lightning ; and the ocean shakes

His shaggy mane, and thunders to the heavens
His everlasting voice, as he collects
The tributes of a thousand streams and feeds
The founts of water. But in silence all
Discharge their several missions ; none may tell
The secret of existence, or reveal
The mystery of life and death and things
Unseen ; a higher power has drawn the threads
Of darkness, and on all his creatures stamped
Eternal silence. Yet we may discern
Somewhat if we observe with careful eye
The aspects of mankind, the powers that rule
Like stars, the passions that contend like storms,
The holy loves and heavenward hopes that rest
Like rainbows, on the broad, deep human sea.

There was a youth who, o'er the tide of time,
Was swept and drifted like a flake of foam—
A lonely fragile being—yet his soul
Reflected like a sea-born bubble all
The radiance of the rainbow. Many mocked
The aspirations of his heart, and deemed
His dearest hopes delusions ; yet a ray
Of heaven-born sunshine fell upon his path,
And bade him hope and suffer to the end.

With nature he had held long communings,
For nature was to him a chosen friend