

**THE QUEEN OF THE
FAIRIES (A VILLAGE
STORY); AND OTHER
POEMS, PP. 1-150**

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The Queen of the Fairies (a Village Story); And Other Poems, pp. 1-150 by Violet Fane

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VIOLET FANE

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POEMS, PP. 1-150**

THE
QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES

(A VILLAGE STORY)

5-3183

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

VIOLET FANE

AUTHOR OF "DENZIL PLACE," ETC.

(Mrs. Mary M. King, etc.)

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THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.

“ A little cottage girl,
She was eight years old she said,
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That cluster'd round her head.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ For now, being always with her, the first love
I had—the father's, brother's love, was changed,
I think, in somewise—”

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

I.

POOR little Nelly in her spotted frock
Used to sit sobbing in our village school,
Biting her short fore-finger, whilst her slate,
All blotted with her tears, hung round her neck
And seem'd a halter. From the narrow form
Her mottled baby legs hung sadly down ;

One little foot, as tho' in agony,
 Press'd tightly o'er the other, or both strove
 With downward-pointed toes to reach the ground.
 Low at the neck, her lilac pinafore
 Was drawn down sideways thro' perplexity,
 Wherefrom her little round right shoulder pcep'd,
 Hunch'd ear-wards from the burden of her slate.

'Twas not that little Nelly's curly head
 Held duller brains than children's of her age,
 Yet two and two would seem to make it ache.
 It may have been that we, her teachers, tried
 The two and two too soon ; but thus she sat,
 Careworn and sad tho' only eight years old,
 Some years ago upon that very form
 In this our village school.

Our clergyman

Was then a good, kind, venerable man
 Of nigh three-score and ten, which Holy Writ
 Hath said to be the age when we of earth
 Strain at our tether, which wears ragged and thin
 And therefore seems to stretch, but in the main
 Gains poor advantage, losing strength in length.
 I was his curate ;—I had seen the world,

And haunted crowds, and fled in solitudes
The din of cities. Pleasure is not good,
And leads to greater evils ;—this I knew,
But ere I knew, or had I never known,
I had loved Pleasure ;—as it was, I strove
To love the *Right*,—'tis often very hard !

What matter if it was my poverty,
Or the long purse of some one of my kin,
Led me to make my home amongst the poor,
I doubly poor, from having once seem'd rich ?
Here in this village, where the clergyman
Was three-score years and ten, I waited on
(I sometimes thought I waited for his death).

Then little Nelly, like a stragg'ling lamb
Long erring from the fold, was brought to school
By me, the shepherd's dog. I long had watch'd,
Outside her cottage door, this lovely child
Of lawless parents ; often driven there
Rated by a resentful stepmother,
Biting her bread-and-butter into shapes
Of men and animals, or sharing it

The Queen of the Fairies.

With Wolf, her father's savage mongrel cur.
(Her father, poacher, drunkard, "ne'er do weel,"
Yet having such a careless, handsome face,
Such girth of chest, and such a merry eye,
That somehow we forgave him for his faults
And said "good-morrow" in a friendly way.)

The mother of my pretty little Nell
Forgave him too, and some ten years ago
Had married him, then died in giving birth
To this one daughter. She was said to be
"A better sort of person," born and bred
Some three good rungs above her husband's head
Upon the social ladder, and from her
It may have been that little Nelly got
Her gentle manner and her gentle look.
Then, being still a man the lasses liked,
Her father married, not a day too soon,
His second wife, a slattern and a shrew,
Who bore to him a shaggy-headed brood
Of squalid babies; twins and twins again
Year after year, and then a single child—
And thus the star of this poor family
Slowly declined, but surely.