

**THE FLOWER ON  
LOVES GRAVE: A  
POEM, PP. 2-119**

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The Flower on Loves Grave: A Poem, pp. 2-119 by Woodhill Branch

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**WOODHILL BRANCH**

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LOVES GRAVE: A  
POEM, PP. 2-119**



THE FLOWER ON LOVE'S GRAVE:

A Poem.



BY  
WOODHILL BRANCH.

"THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE NEVER DID RUN SMOOTHE."  
Shakespeare.

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—  
1870.

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My limbs at ease, by some white-blossomed thorn  
Or solitary shade of mountain ash,  
To watch the passing clouds, whose rosy dyes  
Grow fainter as the purple twilight fades.

Mine is a life of peace. Three miles or more  
Of broken track, in some parts covered quite  
By the encroaching furze bush, lie between  
Our cottage and the village. There at night  
The ploughmen and mechanics gather round  
The ale-bench, to discuss "the latest news;"  
Sad tales we hear, that oft their noisy mirth  
Turns into quarrelling, and, at times, even ends  
In blows and kicks and bruises. Glad am I  
That fate has cast my lot beyond the reach  
Of all their broils, to tend the quiet sheep—  
Harmless myself and innocent as they.

In yonder lowly cottage thatched with straw,  
Whence curling wreaths of smoke ascend, these eyes  
First opened to behold the light of day.  
In those sweet fields, whose lovely hue of green  
Looks fresh and bright in contrast with the moor  
Around, in childhood's earliest years I learned  
To love the freshness of the mountain breeze;  
And twenty years, which I have spent amid  
The still recesses of these ancient hills,  
Have, in my heart, a strong affection bred  
For lonely quietude, which hopes to rise  
Above my present lot can never change.



Though humble be my home, though its rough walls  
 Of unhewn stone, collected on the moor,  
 No architectural beauty boast; though green  
 And rustic be the door, on which have beat  
 The countless storms of many hundred years;  
 Though paperless the walls and mud the floor,—  
 Still I prefer it to the stately halls  
 Which glittering shine in modern splendour bright.  
 Though the old oaken cupboards found within  
 Contain no golden wealth, nor title-deeds  
 To me securing right of house or lands,  
 Yet, in that cot, from day to day I find  
 A treasure which I value higher far,—  
 Comfort,—which oft forsakes the palaces  
 Of kings, nor nestles in the lordly halls,  
 Where wealth and beauty shine,—retires and hides  
 Her presence, so much coveted, with me,  
 And, smiling, bids me rest and be content.

The rich and noble decorate their high  
 And spacious dwellings with rich ornaments,  
 Shining with glittering gold or precious stones:  
 Here copies hang of nature's fairest scenes,  
 Encased in richly-ornamented frames;  
 There stand the busts of noblest specimens  
 Of man, or images of ancient gods  
 In sculptured marble; yet I envy not,  
 For decorations, free of charge, are brought  
 By nature to our very doors. The rich  
 And varied tints of the wild flowers exceed

The best productions of the skill of man ;  
 The sparkling landscape, when the light of morn  
 Gilds the brown hill-tops, and transparent air  
 With its first rosy hues, as far transcends  
 The artist's choicest efforts, as the sun  
 Exceeds the faint rays of the dimmest star.

Beneath a load of costly dainties bend  
 The tables of the rich. From foreign shores  
 Their luxuries are imported—sparkling wine  
 And fruits, which ask a warmer clime than ours  
 To bring them to perfection. Every meal  
 Of theirs exceeds what I should think a feast ;  
 But, though my humble lot denies to me  
 Indulgences like these, I'll not repine  
 While the brown loaf, with moorland honey spread,  
 And bowl of fragrant milk for me remain,  
 Or even the oatmeal porridge plainer still.  
 Nature requires no more for her support,  
 And these give health and vigour to the frame,  
 To every muscle elasticity ;  
 While the clear waters of the crystal spring,  
 Cloudless and bright, preserve the fount of thought,—  
 Nature's pure beverage, undefiled by man.

'Tis wonderful how few appreciate  
 The pure enjoyments nature doth provide  
 For all who will accept them ; strange to see  
 Man seeking pleasure from his own device,  
 Which ne'er can satisfy, while nature's hand  
 So freely proffers what he seeks in vain !

Seeks he for beauty? Let him turn his eye  
On the flower-spotted robe of green, which Spring  
Throws yearly o'er the fields. No art of man  
E'er formed so fair a fabric. Let him take  
Flower, leaf or bud, and, with inquiring eye,  
Examine well its parts: the graceful shape,  
The colours blended with such harmony,  
The veins so finely ramified, to give  
To every part its due supply of sap;  
Then let him own that nature has prepared  
For all a store of beauty, fair as gems  
From India's richest mines. Does he desire  
Rich tones of melody to drive away  
The mists of care, which gather round the soul,  
As thickening fogs in Autumn veil the hills,  
And hide them from the sun? Let him give heed  
To nature's universal harp, the wind,  
When it breathes soft, a lulling note, through boughs  
Of quivering pine, or when, with louder swell,  
It bends the oaks, and, hoarsely roaring, sweeps  
The grey old rocks that guard the mountain-side,  
And be convinced that neither swelling strain  
From organ pipe, nor chanting choir below,  
Can melt the soul to raptures so profound  
As those we feel when nature's chorus swells.

The highest earthly wish that I indulge  
Is that I ever thus may dwell in peace,  
Beyond the reach of strife. Here I can muse  
In quiet, or, in humble garb attired,