

**LITTLE SEAL-SKIN:
AND OTHER POEMS**

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Little Seal-Skin: And Other Poems by E. Keary

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E. KEARY

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AND OTHER POEMS**

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AND OTHER POEMS.

BY E. KEARY,

AUTHOR OF "HEROES OF ASGARD," "WANDERLIN,"
ETC., ETC.



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TO

MY SISTERS

I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK.



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LITTLE SEAL-SKIN.

HE Fisherman walked up the hill,
His boat lay on the sand,
His net was on his shoulder still,
His home a mile inland.

And as he walked amongst the whin
He saw a little white seal-skin,
Which he took up in his hand.
Then "How," said he, "can this thing be?
A seal-skin, and no seal within?"

Thus pondered he,
Partly in fear,
Till he remembered what he'd heard
Of creatures in the sea,—
Sea-men and women, who are stirred
One day in every year
To drop their seal-skins on the sand,
To leave the sea, and seek the land

For twelve long hours,
Playing about in sweet sunshine
Amongst the cornfields, with corn-flowers,
Wild roses and woodbine :
Till night comes on, and then they flit
Adown the fields, and sit
Upon the shore and put their seal-skins on,
And slip into the sea, and they are gone.

The Fisherman stroked the fur
Of the little white seal-skin,
Soft as silk, and white as snow ;
And he said to himself, " I know
That some little sea-woman lived in
This seal-skin, perhaps not long ago.
I wonder what has become of her !
And why she left this on the whin,
Instead of slipping it on again,
When all the little sea-women and men
Went hurrying down to the sea !
Ah ! well, she never meant
It for me,
That I should take it. But I will,
Home to my house upon the hill,"
Said the Fisherman ; and home he went.

The Fisher dozed before his fire,
The night was cold outside,

The bright full moon was rising higher
Above the swelling tide,
And the wind brought the sound of breakers
nigher,
Even to the hill side ;
When suddenly
Something broke at the cottage-door,
Like the plash
Of a little wave on a pebbly shore ;
And as water frets in the backward drain
Of the wave, seeming to fall in pain,
There came a wailing after the plash.—
The Fisherman woke, and said, " Is it rain ? "
Then he rose from his seat,
And opened his door a little way,
But soon shut it again,
With a kind of awe ;
For the prettiest little sea-woman lay
On the grass at his feet
That you ever saw :
She began to sob and to say,
" Who has stolen my skin from me ?
And who is there will take me in ?
For I have lost my little seal-skin,
And I can't get back to the sea."

The Fisherman stroked the fur
Of the downy white seal-skin,