LITTLE SEAL-SKIN: AND OTHER POEMS

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

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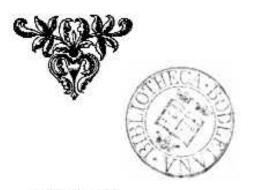


LITTLE SEAL-SKIN

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY E. KEARY,

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



LONDON:

GEORGE BELL AND SONS, YORK STREET,
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TO

MY SISTERS

I INSCRIBE THIS BOOK.



CONTENTS.

KK SEITT	LE :	Seal-	skin	20	2	ı.	82		Page I
STATE OF			of The	rs.				4:	11
Sun	bean	ns in	the Se	a	e:	**	×	36	15
The Goose-Girl.	Α	Talc	of the	Year	2099			•	17
Asdisa. An Icel	andi	c Le	gend	•				20	23
The Mill Stream	5 <u>1</u> 9	20	¥3	98	20	•	*3		29
Discuchanted	•	49	93	53	9	•		550	32
Renunciation	•	70	¥3	•		•: •:	*	*	34
Through the Wo	od	20	¥3		Ţ		¥2		35
Presentiments	100	10	20	9 2	20	•33	*	20	38
Theodora .	, ()	3 66	#2	£	88	•	12	•0	39
Two	•	27		3		0			43
A Mother's Call	tii	±2	50	*0	95	an M	.00	*3	45
Mavourneen .	£ 6	30	*	**		v		¥3	47
Kathleen .		Đ,	÷			•	20	200	49
Snowbell. A Lo	gend	of s	Samme	T	*	•	•0	٠	51
Days		20	40	ş:	85	10		0	86

Contents.

Dawn, or t	be T	wilig	ht Ch	orus	10	•	*	*	٠	Page 93
Old Age	ŧ	•	5.0	*	•		•0	*0	*	95
A Flower t	o the	e Mo	on.		0646	43	•	•00		96
A Sketch					(0.5)	830		•	21	98
A Portrait			•		(*)		•	•3	*	100
Lucy .		3		4			10.00	23		101
Agnes .	•	68*86	: <u>*</u> :		•	20	-	50	70	103
Doctor Em	ily			300		10		6 5		108
Sleep .			•		4	•		-		114
Death .			89 9 88						•	116
Homeless	54		300				28	28		118
Incomplete	—Co	mple	te		•	•	•	0.50		119
A Saint	ie i		13.0					1100		120
Christine a	nd M	lary.	A C	orresp	pond	ence		•		123
A Farewell	. т	o Sis	ter M	ary of	the	Bless	ed T	inity		184





LITTLE SEALSKIN.

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,