

**THE LOVE-SONG  
OF BARBARA**

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The Love-Song of Barbara by Charles Joseph Whitby

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**CHARLES JOSEPH WHITBY**

**THE LOVE-SONG  
OF BARBARA**



THE  
LOVE-SONG OF BARBARA.

BY  
CHARLES JOSEPH WHITBY.

'Some take a lover, some take drama, or prayers,  
Some mind their household, others dissipation,  
Some run away, and but exchange their cares.'

LORD BYRON.

LONDON:  
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1890.

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APL 2502

To

MY FATHER,

IN LOVE AND GRATITUDE,

I DEDICATE THIS POEM.

C. J. W.

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### GOD SPEED.

DEAR Child, by toil conceived, of reverie,  
Go forth at last, and be it well with thee!  
Go, tell the world how midnight travail wove  
A dream of joy and passion, hope and love,  
Of human fate and all which fate withstands,  
Of human souls, of human hearts and hands:  
Hands that could snatch the sceptre, wrest the  
crown,  
Hands that could falter at a woman's frown,  
Frail human hearts, yet strong to do and dare,  
Strong hearts, yet crushed by anguish and despair,  
Souls that were conquered, yet as victors hailed,  
Souls that in death's despite o'er death prevailed.

Go, tell the world how patiently I wrought,  
Weaving the threads of fine laborious thought,  
And choosing here the purple, here the gold,  
Now sombre hues, now glories manifold.

Tell how I loved these creatures of my brain,  
Wept for their visionary grief and pain,  
Yet loved and wept in vain !  
For ah, there is a fate beyond our will,  
Which, when we tempt creation, rules us still ;  
We hold the pen but at our elbow stand  
Life, Death, Joy, Sorrow—they must guide our  
    hand,  
And he who sins against their high control  
Will never touch the heart or move the soul.



Barbara by the river doth await  
The welcome harbingers of unknown fate.

---

CANTO I.

THE tuneful story of my love I tell,  
That those to whom love's mysteries are dear  
May read and understand. I purpose well  
To put aside all bashfulness and fear,  
So that my utterance may be as clear  
And simple as a child's. If thence my name  
Provoke fastidious folly to a sneer,  
I care not; fools confer no lasting fame,  
Nor understand aright the shamelessness of  
shame.

But you, whose goal is truth, who look to find  
Sunlight and shadow in the lives of men  
And women, knowing somewhat of mankind,  
You will not hold me worthless though my pen  
Reveal a woman's weakness now and then.

No ; at your hands at least I look for grace,  
Which you will grant me freely, until when  
I stoop to baseness which is merely base  
To win the shouts of them that throng the market-  
place.

Oh, reader, there are hours when Nature wears  
The tender beauty of a maiden's dream,  
When heaven bursts on our vision unawares,  
And floods with glory hill and vale and stream,  
When life and love in perfect union seem.  
And on such hours as these in after-years,  
By light of memory's consecrating beam,  
With softened hearts and eyes bedimmed with  
tears,  
We fondly gaze and rest from worldly hopes and  
fears.

At such an hour as this, poor Marguerite  
With her fond lover in the garden strayed,  
And throbb'd with anguish so divinely sweet,  
Her heart was half enchanted, half dismayed ;  
She burn'd with love, yet doubts would still  
invade  
Her swelling breast, and whisper : ' Maiden,  
flee !  
Too dear, alas ! the price which must be paid  
For joys like this. Ah ! canst thou fail to see  
The demon lurking in that smile of mockery ?'

And such a magic hour is fleeting now,  
Here on this stage which I would call to view,  
Would but this halting muse of mine endow  
My lips with melody as clear and true  
As to this earthly Paradise is due.  
Words, idle words ! how shall you e'er convey  
The charm which dwells in every blending hue,  
The glory of the setting sun, whose ray  
Sheds golden splendour o'er the death-bed of the  
day.

Mile after mile beneath the crimson sky  
The winding river fades into the west,  
The trembling shadows on its bosom lie  
Like babes upon a sleeping mother's breast ;  
The rustling willows, tenderly caressed  
By the soft kisses of the balmy air,  
Sigh forth the gladness of a love confessed :  
A holy stillness lingers everywhere,  
And cradles earth and heaven in slumber sweet  
and fair.

Yes, all is quiet here ; no footfall comes  
To mar the sanctity of day's decease ;  
Night stoops, and with her opiate kiss benumbs  
The waning light, and whispers, 'Rest in peace !'  
And so the sunset glory by degrees,  
Before the gathering gloom, is put to flight,  
And—save the gentle rustling of the trees,