

**THE QUEEN'S
INNOCENT,
WITH OTHER POEMS**

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The queen's innocent, with other poems by Elise Cooper

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ELISE COOPER

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BY

ELISE COOPER

LONDON

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THE QUEEN'S INNOCENT.

Dramatis Personæ.

GLADYS, The Queen.

AON, The Prince, husband of the Queen.

CLEODORA, The Princess, sister of the Prince.

SHYLL
VERONICA } Ladies in attendance on the Princess.

PIRAMOND, Count of Ghyll, Cousin of the Queen and
Pretender to the Throne.

WITHOLD, Cousin of the Pretender.

TIMOTHY, a Tinker.

MORRA, a deformed girl, daughter of Timothy.

A Minister of State ; A Gentleman of the household ;
Courtiers ; Officers ; A Priest ; Village folk.

BEN EPHRAIM, The Queen's Physician.

NARDI, THE QUEEN'S INNOCENT.

Scene :

*Partly in and about a Country Palace among the hills,
and partly in the Fortress of Sars.*

THE QUEEN'S INNOCENT.



ACT I.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

Enter on one side the QUEEN and the PRINCE, dressed for riding; on the other a MINISTER OF STATE.

MIN. Good morning to my Sovereign and her spouse.

“How does your Majesty?” I need not ask.

Your cheeks are ruddy with the rose of health,

And happy lights are dancing in your eyes.

QUEEN. And where, my Lord, should ruddier roses
bloom,

And where be seen to sparkle happier lights,

Than in the face of one who grew a wife

But three days since?

PRINCE. His lordship's eye is grave.

I hope he brings us no chill news to nip

Your roses.

MIX. Gravest looks may well reflect
 The import of such tidings as I bear.
 That insurrection, which we thought was quelled
 Nine months ago, has broken forth afresh.
 Madam, the base Pretender, with a force
 Small but compact, has flung himself once more
 Across the frontier, this time in the east ;
 And, gathering augmentations by the way,—
 For all the villages along his route
 Declared for him at once—has marched to Sars,
 Where, treachery having entered in advance,
 After the merest semblance of a siege
 The garrison has surrendered to him.

QUEEN. Sars !
 Why, one day's march, and he is quartered here,
 Here in the Palace !

MIX. He has done his worst
 And utmost for the present. Not the less
 It is to be desired the court should move
 Back to the capital without delay.
 The public mind will be disquieted
 Unless the Royal safety is secure.

QUEEN. *We fly before the face of Pharamond ?—*
 Not were he standing at our Palace gate !
 This is to be a genuine honeymoon.

It's honey will not taste less sweet to me
For being gathered upon danger's brink.
Will it to you? (*turning to the PRINCE*).

PRINCE. My queen-bee, no. Yet pause,
Were it not well to be advised? Reflect——

QUEEN. You fear these rebels then?

PRINCE. I fear them? No.

QUEEN. Then let our cousin menace as he may,
Here we abide. I like the neighbourhood
Of peril—not that this is truly such—
I will have up more troops, and make a wall
Of solid soldiery 'twixt Sars and us,
Behind whose cover we will walk and drive,
Hunt in the forest, paddle on the lake,
Enjoy our country pastimes just the same
As if Prince Pharamond were an honest man
And loyal subject.

MIN. Madam, you are young.

PRINCE. But were there none their progress to oppose?
How was this fortress garrisoned? You spoke
Of treachery——

QUEEN. Yes, keep nothing back, my lord.
I thought that General Morios was at Sars?

MIN. He is there still.

QUEEN. A prisoner?

MIN. No.
QUEEN. How then,
Traitor? . . .

(*To the PRINCE.*) We owe a woman thanks for this,
Morios, grey-haired long since and past his prime,
Has taken to himself of late a wife,
Lovely, but of ignoble origin
And infamous repute. She, not content
With leading thus in lawful life long chains
The greatest soldier of the state and time,
Aspired to flaunt her beauty at the Court ;
And he, presuming on his services,
Required (infatuate !) she should be received,
And chafed beneath my "No" — his first defeat.

MIN. His single loss outweighs for us the entire
Defection of an army.

QUEEN. It was pricked—
His loyalty ; it would not else collapse
Thus at the first slight pressure. Let him go.
My lord, I think our council meets at three ;
Till then, adieu. (*Exit MINISTER.*)

PRINCE. How long is it ago
Since Pharamond sought your love ?

QUEEN. My hand, you mean.
You know that when the duke, my father, died,