

**THE QUEEN OF THE
FAIRIES: (A
VILLAGE STORY),
AND OTHER POEMS**

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The Queen of the Fairies: (a Village Story), and Other Poems by Violet Fane

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THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.

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QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES

(A VILLAGE STORY)

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AND OTHER POEMS

BY

VIOLET FANE

AUTHOR OF "DENZIL PLACE," ETC.

(Mrs. Mary M. King, etc.)

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THE QUEEN OF THE FAIRIES.

“ A little cottage girl,
She was eight years old she said,
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That cluster'd round her head.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ For now, being always with her, the first love
I had—the father's, brother's love, was changed,
I think, in somewise—”

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

I.

POOR little Nelly in her spotted frock
Used to sit sobbing in our village school,
Biting her short fore-finger, whilst her slate,
All blotted with her tears, hung round her neck
And seem'd a halter. From the narrow form
Her mottled baby legs hung sadly down ;

One little foot, as tho' in agony,
 Press'd tightly o'er the other, or both strove
 With downward-pointed toes to reach the ground.
 Low at the neck, her lilac pinafore
 Was drawn down sideways thro' perplexity,
 Wherefrom her little round right shoulder pcep'd,
 Hunch'd ear-wards from the burden of her slate.

'Twas not that little Nelly's curly head
 Held duller brains than children's of her age,
 Yet two and two would seem to make it ache.
 It may have been that we, her teachers, tried
 The two and two too soon ; but thus she sat,
 Careworn and sad tho' only eight years old,
 Some years ago upon that very form
 In this our village school.

Our clergyman

Was then a good, kind, venerable man
 Of nigh three-score and ten, which Holy Writ
 Hath said to be the age when we of earth
 Strain at our tether, which wears ragged and thin
 And therefore seems to stretch, but in the main
 Gains poor advantage, losing strength in length.
 I was his curate ;—I had seen the world,

And haunted crowds, and fled in solitudes
The din of cities. Pleasure is not good,
And leads to greater evils ;—this I knew,
But ere I knew, or had I never known,
I had loved Pleasure ;—as it was, I strove
To love the *Right*,—'tis often very hard !

What matter if it was my poverty,
Or the long purse of some one of my kin,
Led me to make my home amongst the poor,
I doubly poor, from having once seem'd rich ?
Here in this village, where the clergyman
Was three-score years and ten, I waited on
(I sometimes thought I waited for his death).

Then little Nelly, like a stragg'ling lamb
Long erring from the fold, was brought to school
By me, the shepherd's dog. I long had watch'd,
Outside her cottage door, this lovely child
Of lawless parents ; often driven there
Rated by a resentful stepmother,
Biting her bread-and-butter into shapes
Of men and animals, or sharing it