

**THE NIGHT BEFORE THE
BRIDAL: A SPANISH TALE.
SAPPHO: A DRAMATIC
SKETCH; AND OTHER POEMS**

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The Night Before the Bridal: A Spanish Tale. Sappho: A Dramatic Sketch; And Other Poems by
Catherine Grace Garnett

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CATHERINE GRACE GARNETT

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THE
NIGHT BEFORE THE BRIDAL,

A
Spanish Tale.

SAPPHO,
A DRAMATIC SKETCH,

AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY CATHARINE GRACE (GARNETT)

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1824.

Y.S.



TO AN ABSENT FRIEND.

To thee, proved faithful, when, estranged and far,
Some whom I loved withheld their sympathy,
And mark'd, unmoved, Fate cloud my early star,
And Sorrow stamp my opening destiny :
To thee, who, midst the elemental war
Of Ocean with the Wind-god raging high,
Still bearest in thy heart the electric chain,
I dedicate this wild unskilful strain.

Enough for thee to know that it hath proved
My pastime and employ through many an hour,
Which else had linger'd heavily. I loved
To yield me to its all engrossing power,
And with my fancy all my mind was moved
With hope that thou, when next my summer bower
Was deck'd with bloom, wouldst kindly list the lay
That wiled my hours on lighter wing away.

All day I sit upon the surge-worn beach,
 My cheek and brow by seaward breezes fann'd,
 Marking the curlew o'er the waters stretch
 Her downy wing, or sea-weed dank expand,
 Or lessening vessel in the horizon's reach ;
 Or watch the small waves ripple to the strand,
 While the vast ether, floating wide above,
 Is sparkling with the azure light of love.

Then evening comes, and eve, like autumn, brings
 Thoughts of departing time, — I think on thee ;
 The sun sinks down, but, ere his parting, flings
 One broad deep flush along the purpling sea,
 Richer than canopy of Asian kings ;
 And the sky glows with its own blazonry ; —
 Then the tint fades on headland and on bay,
 The heavens are sombre all, the ocean grey.

My casement opes upon the moon-lit deep,
 Now while I write ; and all the earth is still,
 Save some faint sounds that o'er the waters creep, —
 The breathing of a flute, or bugle shrill,
 Which, as the landward breeze the ripples sweep,
 Steal from the sheltering cove of yonder hill ;
 Then all is hush'd, and but the ebbing tide
 Murmurs its sweet adieus on either side.

Around my portal waves a grove of balm,
 Myrtle and spray-white jasmine, on whose stem
 The chequered moonlight falls in circles calm ;
 The dew within each leaf, an impearl'd gem,
 Lies shrined in living emerald. One tall palm
 Towers o'er my woodbine wreaths, as shielding them,
 In jealous fondness, from the amorous sigh
 Of the young wanton zephyrs wandering by.

But night has other scenes, — the circling year
 A sterner aspect, — rude the autumnal rain
 Bears on the fading bowers, whose blossoms sere
 Perfume the gale no more. Then heaves the main,
 With voice vibrating in the caverns near ;
 The storm-scathed rocks beat back the waves, — again
 They lash them, and, foam whitening to the shore,
 Each on his fellow rolls, with dread and deafening roar.

Oh ! then my mind, with tenfold terror fraught,
 Most dwells with thee : where — where my friend art
 thou
 On nights like these? Away on winged thought
 My fancy flies : I see the vessel's prow
 Whelm'd in the billows, — sheltering harbour sought —
 'Tis but the stormy Cape ; — what see I now ?
 Ah God ! The fisher's fragile bark comes home
 In safety — so, Heaven guard thee ! thou shalt come.

I send this wild romaunt to meet thine eye,
 Because I know thou lovest the ancient tale
 Of long disused, harp-sung chivalry :
 How gentle maiden pined all passion-pale
 The star-lit night away, — or eloquently,
 How some moon-stricken knight, in deepening vale,
 From love and lady's favour banish'd far,
 Play'd ditties sad upon his sweet guitar.

When last I sang of Spain's romantic clime,
 Thou praisedst the theme to which my harp was
 strung ;
 Albeit by some it might be deem'd a crime,
 That I, when others had such witchery flung
 Over the scene, should, out of tune and time,
 Essay a scene already nobly sung ;
 Or gather sweets within her gorgeous bowers,
 Like wild bee hovering o'er the trelliss'd flowers.

But not for them fratted I that Spanish lay,
 Nor yet for thee, though now my mandolin
 Obeys thy call : and if, when I essay
 To charm thy ear alone, one wreath I win —
 But I'll not think on that, I only pray
 The usual award of mercy on my sin :
 Now to my theme, — thou art no critic stern,
 And if in sought my strain offend thee — burn.

TORQUAY,
 September 10. 1823.