

POEMS WRITTEN IN BARRACKS

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Poems Written in Barracks by Alexander Hume Butler

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BY

ALEXANDER HUME BUTLER



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NOTE.—*Some of the Poems in this Volume have been published in 'The Quiver,' 'Belgravia,' 'Chambers's Journal,' and other serials.*

POEMS

The White Violet.

Why with such strange control
 Dost thou affect my soul?
 Behold I kneel
 Amid the scene,
 And almost feel
 His touch serene,
 Whose voice that loves to teach
 Through things terrene
 Is speaking in thy speech.

Ah! if this tainted earth
 Can to such things give birth,
 Oh say! Oh say!
 How wondrous fair
 Those far-away
 Sky islands where,
 Fanned by each angel wing,
 The raptured air
 Breathes one eternal spring!

THE SWALLOW.

Oh! that I were a swallow,
 With arrowy wing unfurled,
 My only care to follow
 The summer round the world;
 To cool within the river
 The fever of my breast,
 Or cling where the willows quiver
 Till they rocked my heart to rest;
 To watch by that violet's bower,
 That with the twilight dies,
 And bear the soul of the flower
 To its home in the purple skies.

The Swallow.

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But when the storm came wailing
Down from the pine-clad height,
And I found my bright wings failing
In the frosty dews of night—

Drop a plume for the rose's sorrow,
Kiss the lily mouth to mouth,
Bid the cruel winds good morrow,
And away for the balmy south.

Oh ! happy, happy swallow !
These joys to thee belong ;
But I can only follow
The summer in my song !

THE WATER LILY.

It is night upon the river,
And the river's lily bride,
Floating where the willows quiver,
Sleeps upon the silent tide.
Lily, lily, stainless maiden,
Oh, that I could sleep as thou,
With no other burden laden
Than the moonbeam on my brow !

Round thy bed the river lingers,
And each feature seems to trace,
Moving, like a blind man's fingers,
O'er the beauties of thy face.
Lily, lily, radiant flower,
I can hear his stolen kiss ;
Oh ! to share thy fate an hour—
With thee surely love is bliss.

The Water Lily.

But, oh, hark ! the winds are rising !
 See, they sweep the swollen streams,
 And the lovely flowers surprising,
 Scatter death upon their dreams.
 Lily, lily, in thy sorrow,
 Still I envy half thy fate ;
 Thou wilt never know the morrow
 That beholds thee desolate.

THE VILLAGE CHURCHYARD.

In the churchyard this peaceful Sabbath ev'ning,
 While the low notes of organ-swell are shed,
 Like a sweet lullaby of hushful meaning
 Around the mossy cradles of the dead ;
 Reclining where the leafy summer fountains
 Rustle in concert with the soft wind's sigh,
 I watch the sun-glow fading on the mountains,
 Whose purpling summits slumber in the sky.

Silently tread the gray-cloaked shadows, stealing
 Into the precincts of the holy ground ;
 Silently weeps the gentle mourner, kneeling
 Beside affection's consecrated mound :
 Only the hymn-strains from the old church portals
 In faint and fitful music hover near,
 As if the songs of the far-off immortals
 Had wandered in melodious murmurs here.

The dim light from the painted windows shining,
 The vesper star pale through the ev'ning dews,
 The sweetbriar's whisp'ring breath around me twining,
 All tempt the pensive measure of the Muse ;