

POEMS

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Poems by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu & Alfred Perceval Graves

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JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU & ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

POEMS



JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU.

THE
POEMS
OF
JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU

EDITED BY
ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES

WITH A PORTRAIT OF J. S. LE FANU.

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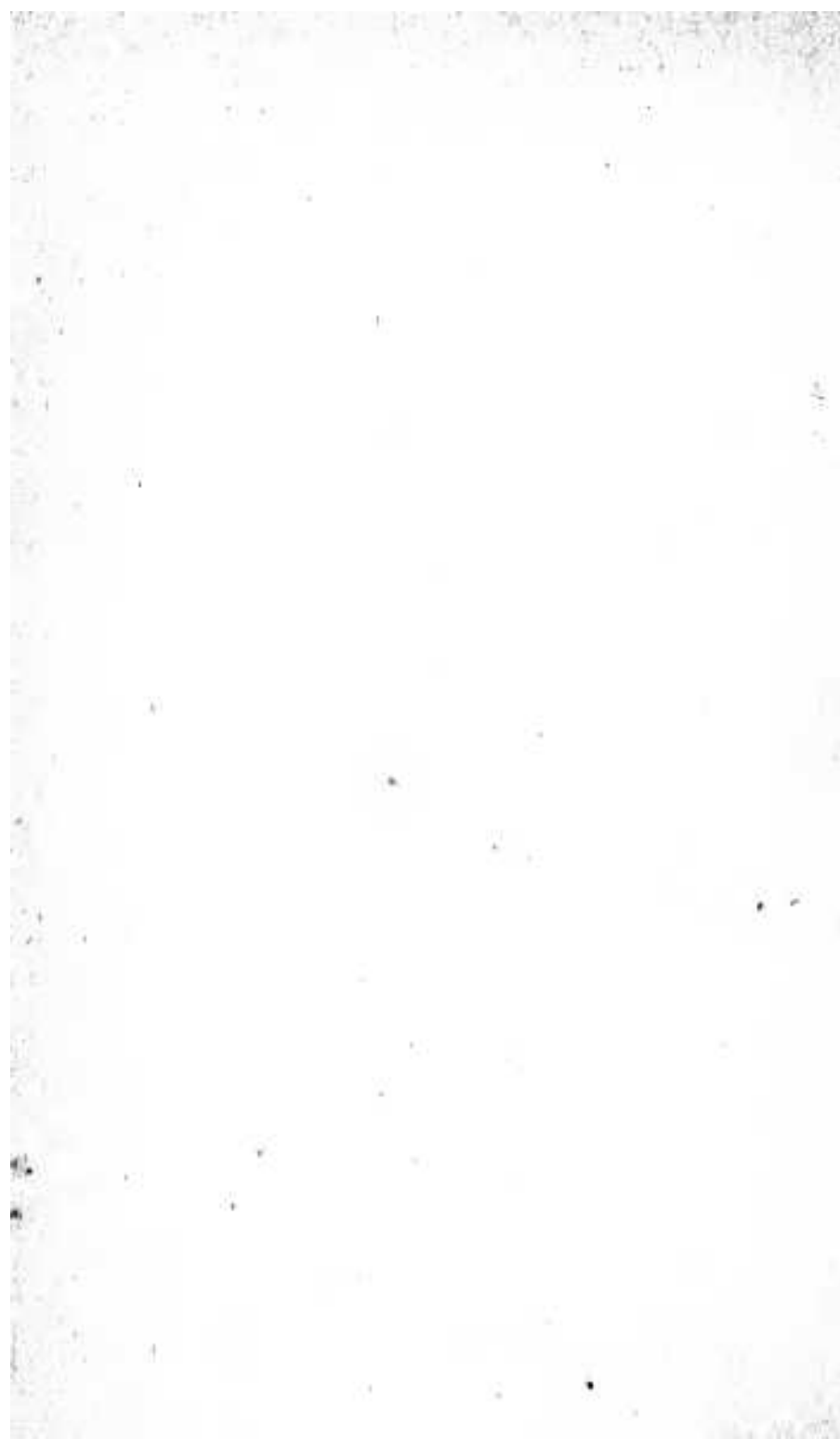
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INTRODUCTION.



WHEN in the year 1880 I wrote a memoir of Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, as a Preface to his "Purcell Papers," published by Bentley and Son, I was not aware that, besides being the author of the Irish poems contained in that collection of Irish stories and of the celebrated "Shamus O'Brien," Le Fanu had anonymously contributed half-a-dozen other poems to the *Dublin University Magazine* between the years 1863 and 1866; two of which, "The Legend of the Glaive," and "Beatrice," exhibit Le Fanu's genius in a new and unexpected light. They show him to have been capable of dramatic and lyrical creation on a distinctly higher plane than he had hitherto reached, although the forms in which the drama and the legend are cast are clearly experimental and not always successful. The same magnetic attributes of superhuman

mystery, grim or ghastly humour and diabolic horror which characterize the finest of his prose fictions meet us again. But these qualities are often conveyed with a finer touch, and at times with a directness of suggestion that is overwhelming. Again, the lurid terror of these narratives is happily relieved by interludes of such haunting beauty of colour and sound, that we cannot but lament the lateness of this discovery of his highest artistic self. Indeed, our literature can ill afford to lose lyrical drama with such a stamp of appalling power as is impressed on "Beatrice," or old-world idylls so full of Gaelic glamour as "The Legend of the Glaive." Their excellence has decided me to undertake the task of collecting and editing Le Fanu's poems. In its prosecution I have been encouraged and aided by Mr. Brinsley Le Fanu, the author's son, and his nephew, Mr. Thomas Le Fanu, and the publication of this volume practically completes the brilliant series of Le Fanu's works. Cordial acknowledgment is moreover due to the publishers, Messrs. Bentley and Edward Arnold, for