

THE
FAIRIES' SPRING
(AN ELFIN LEGEND)

Cantata
for Female Voices

The Libretto by
Clifton Bingham

THE MUSIC BY

FREDERIC H. COWEN.

PRICE 2/6 NETT.

London
ROBERT COCKS & CO
MUSIC PUBLISHERS TO THE QUEEN & H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES
NEW BURLINGTON STREET, W.

Entered according to Act Congress, in the year 1891, by Robert Cocks & Co. in the office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

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FOR FEMALE VOICES.

THE LIBRETTO BY
CLIFTON BINGHAM.

THE MUSIC COMPOSED BY
FREDERIC H. COWEN.

CHARACTERS.

THE QUEEN OF THE ELVES, Soprano.
TWO ATTENDANT ELVES, Mezzo-Soprano and Contralto.
CHORUS OF ELVES AND FAYS.

ARGUMENT.

The story is founded upon a poem by Whyte-Melville, entitled "The Fairy Spring." The Elves having fallen in love with a Child of Earth, steal him away, and bring him to their world below, the beauties and treasures of which they show to him. But, in spite of their care and devotion, the Child pines away, and, to their everlasting sorrow, dies. They bury him in a hidden glen, whence, according to the legend, their tears of remorse and sorrow are welling up to earth in a fairy spring for ever.

CLIFTON BINGHAM.

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Should it be desired to perform the Cantata in character with costume and scenic accessories, the following few suggestions may prove useful. The dresses, of any white, airy material, may be left somewhat to discretion; but the three principal performers should be costumed on a more elaborate scale than the Chorus, and the Queen of the Elves should wear a crown or coronet and carry a sceptre, while the other two might each bear a star on the brow. The scene should represent a woodland glade with trees in the background, and the mouth or entrance to a cave at one side of the stage if possible.

THE
FAIRIES' SPRING,

(An Elfin Legend.)

No. 1.—“WE ARE THE ELVES.”

INTRODUCTION, CHORUS, AND DUET—MEZZO-
SOPRANO AND CONTRALTO.

We are the elves that dance
All in a moonlit ring,
With dainty feet
To music sweet,
When Philomel doth sing !
We are the sprites that dwell
Down in the elfin glen ;
O sweet our life,
Afar from strife,
And noisy haunts of men !

DUET.

CHILD of Earth, with golden hair,
Come unto our elfin lair ;
Fairy silk shall be thy dress,
Fairy crown thy brow shall press ;
Moss shall be thy couch at night,
Stars shall lend thy slumbers light ;
We will give thee fairy wings,
Show to thee our wondrous things !
Thou shalt reign, and unto thee
One and all shall bow the knee ;
Thou shalt find of joy no dearth,
We will love thee, Child of Earth !

No. 2.—“FROM ELFINLAND.”

SOLO—SOPRANO.

FROM Elfinland, from Elfinland
I wandered forth one night ;
I took him gently by the hand,
A Child of Earth so bright.

I led him home across the wild,
And home beneath the moon ;
For we had watched and loved the child,
And he will love us soon.

O he shall learn our elfin lore,
And ride a snow-white steed ;
And every fairy haunt explore,
By glen, and dale, and mead.
He shall forget, by us beguiled,
His home on earth above ;
It shall be thine to learn, O Child,
Like mortals, we can love.

No. 3.—“O SING HIM A SONG.”

CHORUS.

O SING him a song of the fairy clime,
And lull him to rest with a fairy rhyme ;
A melody fashioned at eventime,
Soft and slow.

We'll lay on his bosom a ferny strand,
And clasp a green leaf in his folded hand ;
O sweet will he slumber in Elfinland,
Slumber low !

We'll bring him a ray from the last pale star
That dies in the daylight o'er yonder bar,
When opens the gate where the sunbeams are,
O'er the plain ;

We'll chant him a murmurous elfin air,
The breeze shall come kissing his golden hair ;
O sweet shall he waken at morning fair,
Wake again !

No. 4.— { “COME AND BEHOLD.”
“WE HAVE ROAMED.”

RECIT. AND SOLO—CONTRALTO.

Recit.

COME and behold,
O pretty child, our treasure,
Our fairy gold,
Our hidden precious store,
Our jewels bright ;
Who hath on earth like measure ?
Did fairer sight
E'er greet thy gaze before ?

Solo.

1.

We have roamed thro' the wood
Where the great trees stood ;
We have climbed to the crest of the hill ;
We have dived in the deep
Where the coral fays sleep,
And the thunderous waves are still !
We have dug in the gloom
Of the miner's tomb ;
We have sailed to the isles of the South ;
And the treasures of all,
At our fairy call,
Are there—within yon dark mouth !

2.

For our fairy hoard
We have safely stored
In the depths of our cavern below ;
And the fears grim and gaunt
That would mortal haunt,
No elfin heart can know.
There are none upon earth
Know our treasure's worth,
Some have searched, but in vain, we are told ;
But of mortal kind
There are none can find
Where the fairies hide their gold.

No. 5.—“WE PRETTY FAYS.”

TRIO—SOPRANO, MEZZO-SOPRANO, AND
CONTRALTO.

We pretty fays, for your delight
Will trip it softly all the night ;
To charm your heart from thought of woe,
We'll move to music to and fro ;
To win your eyes from tears by day,
We'll dance a measure bright and gay.

We pretty fays, at your command
Will tune to mirth our merry band ;
Or should you call to us for song,
With melody the grove shall throng ;
Come dainty day or gentle night,
Our only care is your delight.

No. 6.—“SAD, O SAD OF HEART.

CHORUS.

SAD, O sad of heart are we fairies,
Child of Earth, when thou would'st roam ;
Well thou knowest how fond our care is ;
Stay with us in our elfin home.
Child of Earth, our hearts were lonely
Ere thou camest to make them glad ;
Now they're heavy with one grief only,
Thou art sighing, and thou art sad.
We would twine thee in our keeping,
One with ours we would make thy lot ;
Hear our pleading, list our weeping,
Stay, O little one, leave us not !

No. 7.—SCENA—SOLI AND CHORUS.

Recit.—Soprano.

SHED not thy tears, O little one,
Weep not for earth ;
See, how in shadow and in sun,
Join we in mirth.

Chorus.

“We are the elves that dance,” &c.

Soprano Solo.

Sigh not to fly elsewhere and live,
While we caress ;
Mighty are we, can we not give
Thee happiness ?

Chorus.

“We are the sprites that dwell,” &c.

Soprano Solo.

Earth cannot show a gayer band,
Or fairer spot ;
Happy are we in Elfinland—
Why art thou not ?

Chorus.

“Thou shalt reign and unto thee,” &c.

Soli and Chorus.

“We pretty fays,” &c.

Recit.—Contralto.

Sisters, 'tis vain to weep. He may not stay ;
This is not sleep, but death. He must away !

No. 8.—FINALE—SOLI AND CHORUS.

Chorus.

WOE and farewell,
So falls the faded leaf ;
O deeper is our grief
Than tears can tell.

Still is the sleep
That hath him in its thrall,
He cannot hear us call,
Or know we weep.
Gladness is dead ;
O deep, deep shall he rest,
With flow'rs upon his breast,
And moss his bed.

Duet—Soprano and Contralto.

Lay him to earth asleep,
Sing him a lullaby ;
Deep in the shadow deep,
Calm at rest shall he lie.
He will not hear, he will not know,
Our fairy tears, our elfin woe.

Solo—Soprano and Chorus.

In the elfin cave,
Down below the wave,
Far away from earth we lay him ;
Where no ray is shed
On his mossen bed,
Where no footfall shall dismay him.
O we weep, we weep
In our Elfland deep,
But the world shall claim him never ;
And our tears shall rise
Unto earth's bright skies,
In a Fairy spring for ever.

FINE.