

96 AS YOU CROSS THE STREET

Bertha, as you cross the street,
Cross the street with trailing dress,
In your spring-time loveliness,
Tell me, do you sometimes meet,
One whose face with sorrow worn,
Hallow eyes and faded cheek,
Show that life is very bleak
Unto her so woebegone?

II.

Yet her face was once as fair,
And her life as golden sweet,
roses blossomed at her feet —
Bertha, you who see here there,
Can you dream it? She is young,
If we count by days and years,
But the mark of time appears
Plainest when the heart is wrung.

III.

Bertha, do not shrink away
From her touch. Alas, poor child,
Though by sin in truth defiled,
She has wandered quite astray.
Love is pure. Of that she felt,
For her love was so complete,
How could she suspect deceit?
Ah! she loved indeed too well.

IV.

Bertha, gentle, fair and winning,
As you pass the poor child by,
Do not mark with scornful eye
Her. more sinned against than sinning.
God, who marks the sparrow's fall,
Knows her struggles and her tears,
And her weary, wasting years,
And His love is over all.

Source:

New York Saturday Press, July 16, 1859.

Newsboy, November-December, 2009.