

## FOUR SONS

Upon the lofty, snow-tipped, mountain crests,  
 And o'er the forest's black and deep expanse,  
 Athwart the crumbling castle's feudal walls  
 Set on the mountain side, and lower down  
 Where sloping vine-clad hillside creeps to meet  
 The river's deep and shadowed edge,—the moon  
 Pours calmly down her silv'ry beams. So still  
 The German river flows along, scarce could  
 You tell the moon's reflected image from  
 Herself. Some steps above the river bank  
 A cottage stands, its one faint window light  
 A fairy glow of phosphorescent flame.  
 Beneath that thatched cottage roof—within  
 Its shelt'ring walls—a mother sits by the fire.  
 The flickering fire-light falls on the soft, gray hair  
 Of the aged German mother dreaming there.  
 To her the past returns; again she sees  
 Her four brave sons go forth from the field to war.  
 The Fatherland had called and they'd replied  
 As needs must be. The widowed mother watched  
 In vain for their return—Verdun! the Somme!  
 At Festubert! And Sigmund then, her last,  
 Her youngest, Sigmund, Siegfried called, had fall'n  
 And slept near Reims; what changes Time has shown,  
 Ye old cathedral towers of Cologne!  
 But now the dreaming mother sees not war  
 Nor glories past when German minstrel sang  
 Of war, Valkyries, Volsungs, Odin, Thor.  
 She dreams her sons have come to her. ('Tis true  
 The time's but short till she will go to them).  
 Their happy childhood days she lives again.  
 Again their boyish laughter echoes clear,  
 And dreaming thus she smiles to know them near.

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Deep down in mermaid caverns moon-beams shine  
 Beneath the ancient and majestic Rhine.

—W.A.R.