

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF A WOULD-BE POET

(Dedicated to my Professors)

MARY A. BERESFORD

You ask for *Rhyme and Reason!* Oh, my dears,  
When e'er were Rhyme and Reason seen together?  
Not surely since the time when blue snow fell  
In summer weather.

For Rhyme and Reason quarrelled in their youth,  
And Rhyme, the mystic—charming Fancy married,  
Nor have these lovers since that time been found  
Where Reason tarried.

For Rhyme and Fancy and their daughter Song  
Live gay and free, and love the open air,  
And for the towers and towns that Reason builds  
They do not care.

And Reason in her cities walled and strong  
Despises them and will not hear their name,  
Nor would she let them cross her portals, if  
By chance they came.

Queen Reason is a maiden most austere,  
Flat-footed, resolute on fact and figure,  
Knows always what is right and what is wrong—  
She acts with vigour.

She knows the size and number of the stars,  
Their distance and their orbits; and she knows  
Why mice have tails and elephants have trunks,  
Why green grass grows.

She has a mighty kingdom rich and wide,  
And castles great and fleets that cross the sea,  
And every comfort which the world affords,  
O happy she!

Poor Rhyme and Fancy have a different lot,  
They own no land, they have no thought of gain,  
And all the castles that they ever build  
Are built in Spain.

Their house is oft a hut, their clothes but rags,  
Their bed is hard, from earthen cups they drink,  
And often when the bread and meal are scarce,  
They feed on ink.

But Fancy smiles: the hut a palace grows,  
Their rags are dainty laces, silks and satins,  
Their ink is very nectar, and their cups  
Are golden patens.

They never learnt to count—this pretty pair,  
They cannot tell how many beans make five;  
But nathless they live happy and are glad  
To be alive.

They know the stars, but not to count or weigh,  
They know them spirits in the vault of Heaven,  
To whom by angels, when the night draws dark,  
A lamp is given.

They watch the sun rise glorious in the East,  
They see him sink into the golden West,  
They love each other and their daughter Song,  
And so are blest.

And Mirth is with them at the evening-tide,  
And Love, who laughs at Reason, dwells close by.  
And Fear, who ever is at Reason's side,  
Comes never nigh.

So more than Reason's is their kingdom great,  
Who having nothing, yet have more than all—  
So high they cannot higher go, so low  
They cannot fall.