

POEMS WORTH READING

No. 155.

THE BALLAD OF DEAD LADIES.

(Translated from Francois Villon, 1450, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti).

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the famous poet and painter, son of Gabriele Rossetti, the Italian poet, was born in London, England, May 12, 1828, and died in Birchington, England, April 9, 1882. He was educated at King's College School, and about 1846 entered the Royal Academy. He wrote translations from Italian poets (1861), published "Poems" (1870), and "Ballads and Sonnets" (1881), including his series of one hundred sonnets called "The House of Life." He was the brother of Christina Georgina Rossetti, the English poetess. Francois Villon was born in Paris in 1431, and died about 1484. He was one of the earliest of the French poets. Little is known of his life, as he led a wild Bohemian existence.



TELL me now in what hidden way is
Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
Neither of them the fairer woman?
Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
She whose beauty was more than human?
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Heloise, the learned nun,
For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
(From Love he won such dule and teen!)
And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who will'd that Buridan should steer
Sew'd in a sack's mouth down the Seine?
But where are the snows of yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
With a voice like any mermaiden,—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,—
And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—
And that good Joan whom Englishmen
At Rouan doom'd and burn'd her there,—
Mother of God, where are they then?
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Save with thus much for an overword,—
But where are the snows of yester-year?

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