Frances Harper: "Going East"

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She came from the East a fair, young bride,
With a light and a bounding heart,
To find in the distant West a home
With her husband to make a start.
He builded his cabin far away,
Where the prairie flower bloomed wild;
Her love made lighter all his toil,
And joy and hope around him smiled.
She plied her hands to life's homely tasks,
And helped to build his fortunes up;
While joy and grief, like bitter and sweet,
Were mingled and mixed in her cup.
He sowed in his fields of golden grain,
All the strength of his manly prime;
Nor music of birds, nor brooks, nor bees,
Was as sweet as the dollar's chime.
She toiled and waited through weary years
For the fortune that came at length;
But toil and care and hope deferred,
Had stolen and wasted her strength.
The cabin changed to a stately home,
Rich carpets were hushing her tread;
But light was fading from her eye,
And the bloom from her cheek had fled.
Her husband was adding field to field,
And new wealth to his golden store;
And little thought the shadow of death
Was entering in at his door.
Slower and heavier grew her step,
While his gold and his gains increased;
But his proud domain had not the charm
Of her humble home in the East.
He had no line to sound the depths
Of her tears repressed and unshed;
Nor dreamed 'mid plenty a human heart
Could be starving, but not for bread.
Within her eye was a restless light,
And a yearning that never ceased,
A longing to see the dear old home
She had left in the distant East.
A longing to clasp her mother's hand,
And nestle close to her heart,
And to feel the heavy cares of life
Like the sun-kissed shadows depart.
The hungry heart was stilled at last;
Its restless, baffled yearning ceased.
A lonely man sat by the bier
Of a corpse that was going East.

Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins. "Going East." A Brighter Coming Day, by Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Feminist Press, 1990, p. 367. Gale Literature: LitFinder,
https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/LTF0000279041WK/LITF?u=cuny_mancc&sid=LITF&xid=a56b2186. Accessed 9 Mar. 2020.