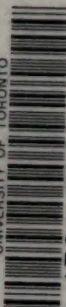


ARMENIAN · POEMS ·


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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ARMENIAN POEMS



RAPHAEL PATKANIAN.

ARMENIAN POEMS

Rendered into English Verse

BY

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL

Ես մինչ ի մահ, կախաղամ,
Միմչև ամարզ մահու սիւն,
Պիտի գոռամ պլտ կրկնեմ
Անդադար Ազատութիւն:

BOSTON

ROBERTS BROTHERS

1896

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P R E F A C E.



WO considerations have led to the publication of these fugitive translations in book form.

The first was the conviction that the sympathy already felt for the Armenians in their martyrdom at the hands of the Turks would be deepened by an acquaintance with the temper and genius of the people, as shown in their poetry.

The second was the fact that Armenian poetic literature, while well worthy to be known, was practically inaccessible to English-speaking readers. Of the sixty poems in this book, only two, so far as I can learn, have ever been put into English verse. The majority have never been translated, either in verse or prose.

No attempt has been made to imitate the Armenian metres. The aim has been to reproduce the meaning of the original as accurately as possible, in the simplest English forms.

This effort has been beset with difficulties. My knowledge of the Armenian language does not extend much beyond the alphabet. Each of these translations

in verse has been made from a literal translation in prose, furnished to me in French or English by my Armenian friends. Thanks for this help are due to Mr. Ohannes Chatschumian, of Leipsic University; to Prof. Minas Tcheraz, of King's College, London, editor of "L'Arménie" (Armenia); to Messrs. S. B. Avedis, O. H. Ateshian, G. H. Papazian, Bedros A. Keljik, and Arsen Damgagian, of Boston; and to Mr. D. K. Varzhabedian, of Washington, D. C. Some of those who thus lent their assistance were hampered by an imperfect knowledge of English, and also (in the case of Alishan's poems, which are written in the ancient or classical Armenian) by an imperfect knowledge of the classical tongue. It is therefore probable that the work contains many errors.

As the beauty of an Armenian girl is often conspicuous even in rags, so it is hoped that the beauty of some of these Armenian poems may be visible even through the poverty of their English dress.

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL.

DORCHESTER, MASS.



INTRODUCTION.



ARMENIAN poetry is so full of allusions to Vartan, Avarair, Haig, and Thorkom or Togarmah, as well as to the Garden of Eden, that a few preliminary notes are necessary by way of explanation.

Armenia is a mountainous region of Western Asia, lying around Mount Ararat, and containing the sources of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Araxes rivers. It is south of the Caucasus Mountains, between the Black, Caspian, and Mediterranean seas. According to tradition, it was the site of the Garden of Eden.

Armenia was the seat of one of the most ancient civilizations of the globe. Its people were contemporary with the Assyrians and Babylonians. They are of Aryan race, and of pure Caucasian blood.

Their origin is lost in the mists of antiquity. According to their own tradition, they are the descendants of Thorkom, or Togarmah, a grandson of Japhet, who settled in Armenia after the Ark rested on Ararat. They call themselves Haik, and their country Haiasdan, after Haig, the son of Togarmah, one of their greatest kings. In the earliest days of recorded his-

tory, we find them occupying their present home. They are referred to by Herodotus. Xenophon describes their manners and customs much as they still exist. In the Bible it is mentioned that the sons of Sennacherib escaped "into the land of Armenia." Ezekiel also refers to Armenia, under the name of Togarmah, as furnishing Tyre with horses and mules, animals for which it is still famous; and "the Kingdom of Ararat" is one of the nations summoned by Jeremiah to aid in the destruction of Babylon.

Tradition relates that Christianity was preached in Armenia early in the first century, by the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew. It is historic fact that in A. D. 276 the king and the whole nation became Christian, under the preaching of Saint Gregory, called "the Illuminator." The Armenian Church is thus the oldest national Christian church in the world.

As a Christian nation whose lot has been cast beyond the frontiers of Christendom, the Armenians have had to suffer constant persecution, — in early times from the Persian fire-worshippers, in later centuries from the Mohammedans. Since the withdrawal of the Crusaders, to whom they alone of Asiatic nations gave aid and co-operation, the Armenians have been at the mercy of the surrounding heathen peoples. Their country has been invaded successively by the Caliphs of Bagdad, the Sultans of Egypt, the Khans of Tartary, the Shahs of Persia, and the Ottoman Turks. All these invasions were accompanied by fierce persecutions and great barbarities; but the Armenians have held tenaciously to their faith for more than fifteen hundred years.

In the middle of the fifth century Armenia had already lost its national independence. It was ruled by feudal chiefs and princes who were subject to the King of Persia. The Persians at this time were aiming at the conquest and conversion of the world. In A. D. 450 the Persian King sent a letter to the Armenian princes, setting forth the excellence of fire-worship and the foolishness of Christianity, and formally summoning Armenia to embrace fire-worship. A great council was called, in which bishops and laymen sat together, and a reply of unanimous refusal was drawn up. Eghiché, an Armenian historian of the fifth century, one of the bishops who signed the refusal, has preserved in his history the text of this remarkable document. First they answered at considerable length the arguments of the Persian King against Christianity. In conclusion they said : —

“ From this faith no one can move us, — neither angels nor men ; neither sword, nor fire, nor water, nor any deadly punishment. If you leave us our faith, we will accept no other lord in place of you ; but we will accept no God in place of Jesus Christ : there is no other God beside him. If, after this great confession, you ask anything more of us, lo, we are before you, and our lives are in your power. From you, torments ; from us, submission ; your sword, our necks. We are not better than those who have gone before us, who gave up their goods and their lives for this testimony.”

The King of Persia was as much amazed as enraged by the boldness of this reply ; for Armenia was a small country, and stood alone, without allies, against the vast power of Persia. A Persian army of 200,000 men was

sent into Armenia. The battle was fought on the plain of Avarair, under Mount Ararat. The much smaller force of the Armenians was defeated, and their leader, Vartan, was killed. But the obstinate resistance offered by rich and poor — men, women, and children — convinced the King of Persia that he could never make fire-worshippers of the Armenians. As the old historian quaintly expresses it, “The swords of the slayers grew dull, but their necks were not weary.” Even the high-priest of fire saw that the Persians had undertaken an impossibility, and said to the Persian King : —

“These people have put on Christianity, not like a garment, but like their flesh and blood. Men who do not dread fetters, nor fear torments, nor care for their property, and, what is worst of all, who choose death rather than life, — who can stand against them?”

This battle was the Armenian Marathon, and the national songs are full of allusions to it. To-day, after fifteen hundred years, the mountaineers of the Caucasus, at their festivals, still drink the health of Vartan next after that of the Catholicos, or head of their church. From time immemorial it has been the custom in Armenian schools to celebrate the anniversary of the battle with songs and recitations, and to wreath the picture of Vartan with red flowers. Of late years this celebration has been forbidden by the Russian and Turkish governments.

In the minds of the common people, all sorts of picturesque superstitions still cluster around that battle-field. A particular kind of red flowers grow there, that are found nowhere else, and it is believed that they sprang from the blood of the Christian army. A

species of antelope, with a pouch on its breast secreting a fragrant musk, is supposed to have acquired this peculiarity by browsing on grass wet with the same blood. It is also believed that at Avarair the nightingales all sing, "Vartan, Vartan!"

The Armenians, according to their own histories and traditions, enjoyed four periods of national independence, under four different dynasties, extending over about 3,000 years. The ruins of Ani and other great cities still testify to their former power and splendor. It is now many centuries, however, since they lost their political independence; and their country has been little more than a battle-ground for rival invaders. Armenia, an Asiatic Poland, is now divided between Russia, Persia, and Turkey, the largest portion being under Turkish rule; and the Armenian race, once very numerous, had been reduced, even before the recent massacres, to about 3,000,000. Within the last few months at least 50,000 have been slaughtered.

Prof. James Bryce, who has travelled in Armenia, and has for many years taken a special interest in the Armenians, thus describes them:—

"They are a strong race, not only with vigorous nerves and sinews, physically active and energetic, but also of conspicuous brain power. Thus they have held a very important place among the inhabitants of Western Asia ever since the sixth century. If you look into the annals of the East Roman or Byzantine Empire, you will find that most of the men who rose to eminence in its service as generals or statesmen during the early middle ages were of Armenian stock.

So was it also after the establishment of the Turkish dominion in Europe. Many of the ablest men in the Turkish service have been Armenian by birth or extraction. The same is true with regard to the Russian service. Among all those who dwell in Western Asia, they stand first, with a capacity for intellectual and moral progress, as well as with a natural tenacity of will and purpose, beyond that of all their neighbors, not merely of Turks, Tartars, Kurds, and Persians, but also of Russians."

For a fuller account of the Armenians, and a history of their sufferings under the Turkish government, the reader is referred to the following works: "Armenia, the Armenians, and the Treaties," by M. G. Rolin-Jaequemyns, President of the Belgian Institute of International Law; "The Armenian Crisis in Turkey," by Frederick D. Greene; "The Armenians, or the People of Ararat," by Dr. M. C. Gabrielian; and "England's Responsibility towards Armenia," by Canon Malcolm McColl.

A specimen of the prose poetry of the Armenians, dating from the fifth century, will be found in the Appendix.



TABLE OF CONTENTS.



BEDROS TOURIAN.

	PAGE
LITTLE LAKE	13
WISHES FOR ARMENIA	16
TO LOVE	19
NEW DARK DAYS	22
WHAT ARE YOU, LOVE?	25
I HAVE LOVED THEE	28
IN MEMORIAM OF VARTAN LUTFIAN	30
SHE	32
LITTLE GIFTS	33
MY GRIEF	34
COMPLAINTS	35
REPENTANCE	38

MICHAEL NALBANDIAN.

LIBERTY	39
DAYS OF CHILDHOOD	41

ARCHBISHOP KHORÈNE NAR BEY DE LUSIGNAN.

ARMENIA	43
THE WANDERING ARMENIAN TO THE CLOUD	45
TO MY SISTER	47

	PAGE
GENTLE BREEZE OF ARMENIA	49
LET US LIVE ARMENIANS	52
LET US DIE ARMENIANS	55
THE FIRST GREEN LEAVES	58

MUGURDITCH BESHIKTASHLIAN.

DEATH OF A YOUTH OF ZEITOUN	60
SPRING	62
A BRAVE SON OF ARMENIA	63
WE ARE BROTHERS	64

RAPHAEL PATKANIAN.

CRADLE SONG	66
THE TEARS OF ARAXES	68
THE ARMENIAN GIRL	72
THE NEW GENERATION	74
LULLABY	75
TO MY NIGHTINGALE	77
SHALL WE BE SILENT?	79
IF	82
PRAISE TO THE SULTAN	84
WHAT SHALL WE DO?	85
THE SAD-FACED MOON	86
COMPLAINT TO EUROPE	90
SONG OF THE VAN MOTHER	92
EASTER SONG	94

LEO ALISHAN.

THE VIRGIN'S TEARS	95
EASTER SONG	97
THE EXILES	98
MOON IN THE ARMENIAN CEMETERY	99
THE LILY OF SHAVARSHAN	103
THE NIGHTINGALE OF AVARAIR	107
A SONG OF FATHERLAND	110
WEEP NOT	112

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

xi

MISCELLANEOUS.

	PAGE
THE CHRIST-CHILD	<i>St. Gregory of Narek</i> 115
HYMN	<i>Nerses the Graceful</i> . 116
LOVE SONG	<i>Saïat Nova</i> 119
A GOOD COMRADE	<i>Djivan</i> 121
THE YOUTH AND THE STREAMLET 122
THE LAKE OF VAN	" <i>Raffi</i> " 124
THOU AND I 125
TO MY SWEETHEART	<i>Koutcharian</i> 127
THE CHRAGHAN PALACE	<i>Terzyan</i> 128
THE WANDERING ARMENIAN TO THE SWALLOW	<i>Totochian</i> 130
SONG OF REVOLUTION 132
THE LAMENT OF MOTHER ARMENIA 133
THE SON OF DALVORIG	<i>Damadian</i> 135

APPENDIX.

THE ARMENIAN WOMEN	<i>Eghiche</i> 139
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ARMENIAN POEMS.

LITTLE LAKE.

BEDROS TOURIAN, the son of an Armenian blacksmith of Scutari, was born in 1851. He lived in great poverty, and died of consumption in 1872. He left a number of dramas and poems that enjoy a great popularity among his countrymen.



W^HY dost thou lie in hushed surprise,
Thou little lonely mere?
Did some fair woman wistfully
Gaze in thy mirror clear?

Or are thy waters calm and still
Admiring the blue sky,
Where shining cloudlets, like thy foam,
Are drifting softly by?

Sad little lake, let us be friends!
I too am desolate;
I too would fain, beneath the sky,
In silence meditate.

As many thoughts are in my mind
 As wavelets o'er thee roam ;
 As many wounds are in my heart
 As thou hast flakes of foam.

But if heaven's constellations all
 Should drop into thy breast,
 Thou still wouldst not be like my soul, —
 A flame-sea without rest.

There, when the air and thou are calm,
 The clouds let fall no showers ;
 The stars that rise there do not set,
 And fadeless are the flowers.

Thou art my queen, O little lake !
 For e'en when ripples thrill
 Thy surface, in thy quivering depths
 Thou hold'st me, trembling, still.

Full many have rejected me :
 "What has he but his lyre ?"
 "He trembles, and his face is pale ;
 His life must soon expire !"

None said, "Poor child, why pines he thus ?
 If he beloved should be,
 Haply he might not die, but live, —
 Live, and grow fair to see."

None sought the boy's sad heart to read,
Nor in its depths to look.
They would have found it was a fire,
And not a printed book !

Nay, ashes now ! a memory !
Grow stormy, little mere,
For a despairing man has gazed
Into thy waters clear !



WISHES FOR ARMENIA.



WHEN bright dews fall on leaf and flower,
 And stars light up the skies,
 Then tears and sparks commingled
 Burst forth from my dim eyes.
 Forget thee, O Armenia!
 Nay, rather may I be
 Transformed into a cypress dark,
 And so give shade to thee!

The starry sky no comfort brings:
 To me it seems a veil
 Strewn with the tears that Ararat
 Sheds from his summit pale.
 O graves! O ruins! to my soul
 Your memory is as dear
 As to the lover's thirsting heart
 The maiden's first love-tear.
 And shall my spirit after death
 Oblivious be of you?
 Nay, but become a flood of tears,
 And cover you with dew!

Not sword nor chains, abysses deep
 Nor precipices fell,
 Not thunder's roll, nor lightning's flash,
 Nor funeral torch and knell —

Not all of these, 'neath death's dark stone
Can ever hide from me
The glowing memories of the past,
Our days of liberty.
Forget you? Ne'er will I forget,
O glorious days of yore !
Rather may I be changed to fire
And bring you back once more !

When twinkle pale the stars at dawn,
When dewy buds unclose,
And tenderly the nightingale
Is singing to the rose,
All Nature's harmonies, alas !
Can ne'er give back to me
The sighs that sound where cypress boughs
Are moaning like the sea.
Forget you, black and bitter days?
No, never ! but instead
Rather may I be turned to blood,
And make your darkness red !

Armenia's mountains dark may smile,
Siberia's ice may smoke,
But stern, unbending spirits still
Press on my neck the yoke.
Inflexible and cold are they ;
When feeling surges high,
And I would speak, they stifle down
My free soul's bitter cry.

Forget thee, justice? Never!
But ere my life departs,
Rather may I become a sword,
And make thee pierce men's hearts!

When e'en the rich man and the priest
A patriot's ardor feel,
And when Armenian hearts at length
Are stirred with love and zeal —
When free-souled sons Armenia bears,
These days of coldness past,
And fires of love and brotherhood
Are lighted up at last —
Shall I forget thee then, my lyre?
Ah, no! but when I die
Rather may I become thy voice,
And o'er Armenia sigh!



TO LOVE.



GALAXY of glances bright,
A sweet bouquet of smiles,
A crucible of melting words
Bewitched me with their wiles !

I wished to live retired, to love
The flowers and bosky glades,
The blue sky's lights, the dew of morn,
The evening's mists and shades ;

To scan my destiny's dark page,
In thought my hours employ,
And dwell in meditation deep
And visionary joy.

Then near me stirred a breath that seemed
A waft of Eden's air,
The rustle of a maiden's robe,
A tress of shining hair.

I sought to make a comrade dear
Of the transparent brook.
It holds no trace of memory ;
When in its depths I look,

I find there floating, clear and pale,
My face ! Its waters hold
No other secret in their breast
Than wavelets manifold.

I heard a heart's ethereal throb ;
It whispered tenderly :
" Dost thou desire a heart ? " it said.
" Beloved, come to me ! "

I wished to love the zephyr soft
That breathes o'er fields of bloom ;
It woundeth none, — a gentle soul
Whose secret is perfume.

So sweet it is, it has the power
To nurse a myriad dreams ;
To mournful spirits, like the scent
Of paradise it seems.

Then from a sheaf of glowing flames
To me a whisper stole :
It murmured low, " Dost thou desire
To worship a pure soul ? "

I wished to make the lyre alone
My heart's companion still,
To know it as a loving friend,
And guide its chords at will.

But she drew near me, and I heard
A whisper soft and low :
“ Thy lyre is a cold heart,” she said,
“ Thy love is only woe.”

My spirit recognized her then ;
She beauty was, and fire,
Pure as the brook or as the breeze,
And faithful as the lyre.

My soul, that from the path had erred,
Spread wide its wings to soar,
And bade the life of solitude
Farewell forevermore.

A galaxy of glances bright,
A sweet bouquet of smiles,
A crucible of melting words
Bewitched me with their wiles !



NEW DARK DAYS.



THE centuries of bloodshed
 Are past, those cruel years ;
 But there is still one country
 Whose mountains drip with tears,
 Whose river-banks are blood-stained,
 Whose mourning loads the breeze,—
 A land of dreary ruins,
 Ashes, and cypress-trees.

No more for the Armenian
 A twinkling star appears ;
 His spirit's flowers have faded
 Beneath a rain of tears.
 Ceased are the sounds of harmless mirth,
 The dances hand in hand ;
 Only the weapon of the Koord
 Shines freely through the land.

The bride's soft eyes are tearful,
 Behind her tresses' flow,
 Lest the Koord's shout should interrupt
 Love's whisper, sweet and low.
 Red blood succeeds love's rosy flush ;
 Slain shall the bridegroom be,
 And by the dastard Koords the bride
 Be led to slavery.

The peasant sows, but never reaps ;
 He hungers evermore ;
He eats his bread in bitterness,
 And tastes of anguish sore.
Lo ! tears and blood together
 Drop from his pallid face ;
And these are our own brothers,
 Of our own blood and race !

The forehead pure, the sacred veil
 Of the Armenian maid,
Shall rude hands touch, and hell's hot breath
 Her innocence invade ?
They do it as men crush a flower,
 By no compunction stirred ;
They slaughter an Armenian
 As they would kill a bird.

O roots of vengeance, heroes' bones,
 Who fell of old in fight,
Have ye all crumbled into dust,
 Nor sent one shoot to light ?
Oh, of that eagle nation
 Now trampled by the Koord,
Is nothing left but black-hued crows,
 And moles with eyes obscured ?

Give back our sisters' roses,
 Our brothers who have died,
The crosses of our churches,
 Our nation's peace and pride !

O Sultan, we demand of thee
And with our hearts entreat —
Give us protection from the Koord,
Or arms his arms to meet !¹

¹ The Armenians, being Christians, are not allowed by the Turkish government to bear arms, and are forbidden, under heavy penalties, to possess any weapons.



WHAT ARE YOU, LOVE?



HAT are you, love? A flame from heaven?
A radiant smile are you?
The heaven has not your eyes' bright gleams,
The heaven has not their blue.

The rose has not your snowy breast ;
In the moon's face we seek
In vain the rosy flush that dyes
Your soft and blushing cheek.

By night you smile upon the stars,
And on the amorous moon,
By day upon the waves, the flowers —
Why not on one alone?

But, though I pray to you with tears,
With tears and bitter sighs,
You will not deign me yet one glance
Cast by your shining eyes.

O love, are you a mortal maid,
Or angel formed of light?
The spring rose and the radiant moon
Envy your beauty bright ;

And when your sweet and thrilling voice
Is heard upon the air,
In cypress depths the nightingale
Is silent in despair.

Would I, a zephyr, might caress
Your bright brow's dreams in sleep,
Breathe gently on your lips, and dry
• Your tears, if you should weep !

Or would that in your garden fair
A weeping rose I grew ;
And when you came resplendent there
At morning with the dew,

I'd give fresh color to your cheek
That makes the rose look pale,
Shed on your breast my dew, and there
My latest breath exhale.

Oh, would I were a limpid brook !
If softly you drew nigh,
And smiled into my mirror clear,
My blue waves would run dry.

Oh, would I were a sunbeam bright,
To make you seem more fair,
Touching your face, and dying soon
Amid your fragrant hair !

But, if you love another,
His gravestone may I be!
Then you would linger near me,
Your tears would fall on me ;

Your sighs would wander o'er me,
Sighs for his early doom.
To touch you, O beloved,
I must become a tomb !



I HAVE LOVED THEE.



T was the hour of dew and light ;
 In heaven a conflagration cold
 Of roses burned, instead of clouds ;
 There was a rain of pearls and gold.

Then deep within a flowering grove
 I saw thee, love, reclined at ease,
 And thou wast languishing and pale,
 And sighing like a summer breeze,

Plucking a blossom's leaves apart
 With fingers fair as lilies are ;
 Thine eyes, the temples of love's fire,
 Were fixed upon the heavens afar.

I marvelled that thy fingers soft,
 Wherein the haughty rose was pressed,
 Had power to pluck her leaves away
 And scatter them upon thy breast.

A strange new heaven shone within
 . Thine eyes, so dark and languishing ;
 A heaven where, instead of stars,
 Arrows of fire were glittering.

Ah, thou hast made of me a slave
To one bright glance, one word of thine !
The rays thy soul sheds, cruel maid,
Become as fetters laid on mine.

Oh, leave my heart, from me depart !
I for my queen desire not thee ;
Thy breast is like the rose's leaf,
Thy heart as granite hard to me.

Thou knowest naught, thou fragrant one,
Save wounds in tender hearts to make,
Happy when thine adorer's breast
Bleeds in profusion for thy sake.

When, lonely in a grove's deep shade,
I weep, and all my sad heart grieves,
Lo, thou art there ! Thou findest me,
Thou speakest to me through the leaves.

When in the swift and shining stream
I seek oblivion of thy face,
Thou findest me, and from the waves
Thou smilest up with witching grace.

When to the rocks and mountains steep
To break my heart and lyre I flee,
Thou murmurest ever in the wind
That thou hadst never love for me.

I will embrace the frozen earth,
And hide from thee in dreamless sleep.
The dark grave is a virgin too ;
Is any other heart so deep ?

IN MEMORIAM OF VARTAN LUTFIAN.



OUR two devoted hearts were joined and bound
 By streaming rays, with heaven's own light
 aglow ;
 We read each other's souls like open books,
 Where 'neath each word lay depths of love and woe.

Dost thou remember, on Mount Chamlajà,
 In the dark cypress shade where mourners sigh,
 How we two mused, and watched the Bosphorus,
 Stamboul's blue girdle, and the cloudless sky ?

We sat in silence ; any uttered word
 Would but have marred our souls' infinity.
 There like two flames we burned without a sound,
 And shone upon each other, pale to see.

Like sad black moths that haunt the cypresses,
 Our souls drank in the shadow and the gloom,
 Drank endless sorrow, drank the dark-hued milk
 Of hopelessness and of the silent tomb.

Deeply we drank, and long ; but thou didst drain
 The darksome cup that to thy lips was given,
 Till thou wast drunken with it, and became
 Thenceforth a pale and silent son of heaven.

Thy paleness grieved my soul ; thy last faint look,
Turned on me ere thy spirit did depart,
Has fixed forevermore, O friend beloved,
The memory of thee in my aching heart.

Oh, art thou happy or unhappy there ?
Send me a message by an angel's wing !
Tedious, alas ! and weary is this world,
Mother of griefs and bitter sorrowing.

If in that world there is a shady tree,
And a clear brook that softly murmurs near ;
If there are found affection and pure love,
If the soul breathes a free, fresh atmosphere —

This very day would I put off this life,
This poor soiled garment should to dust return.
Ah, Vartan, answer ! In the unknown land,
Say, hast thou found the things for which I yearn ?



S H E.




WERE not the rose's hue like that which glows
On her soft cheek, who would esteem the
rose?

Were not the tints of heaven like those that lie
In her blue eyes, whose gaze would seek the sky?

Were not the maiden innocent and fair,
How would men learn to turn to God in prayer?




LITTLE GIFTS.

 HE was alone. I brought a gift —
A rose, surpassing fair ;
And when she took it from my hand
She blushed with pleasure there.

Compared with her, how poor and pale
The red rose seemed to be !
My gift was nothing to the kiss
My lady gave to me.



MY GRIEF.

 O thirst with sacred longings,
 And find the springs all dry,
 And in my flower to fade, — not this
 The grief for which I sigh.

Ere yet my cold, pale brow has been
 Warmed by an ardent kiss,
 To rest it on a couch of earth, —
 My sorrow is not this.

Ere I embrace a live bouquet
 Of beauty, smiles and fire,
 The cold grave to embrace, — not this
 Can bitter grief inspire.

Ere a sweet, dreamful sleep has lulled
 My tempest-beaten brain,
 To slumber in an earthy bed, —
 Ah, this is not my pain.

My country is forlorn, a branch
 Withered on life's great tree ;
 To die unknown, ere succoring her, —
 This only grieveth me !

COMPLAINTS.

This poem and the next were written on successive days, a short time before TOURIAN'S death.



FAREWELL to thee, O God, to thee, O sun,
 Ye twain that shine above my soul on high!
 My spirit from the earth must pass away;
 I go to add a star to yonder sky.

What are the stars but curses of sad souls,—
 Souls guiltless, but ill-fated, that take flight
 To burn the brow of heaven? They only serve
 To make more strong the fiery armor bright

Of God, the source of lightnings! But, ah me!
 What words are these I speak? With thunder smite,
 O God, and shatter the presumptuous thoughts
 That fill me, — giant thoughts and infinite,

Thoughts of an atom in thy universe,
 Whose spirit dares defy its mortal bars,
 And seeks to dive into the depth of heaven,
 And climb the endless stairway of the stars!

Hail to thee, God, thou Lord of trembling man,
 Of waves and flowers, of music and of light!
 Thou who hast taken from my brow the rose,
 And from my soul the power of soaring flight;

Thou who hast spread a cloud before mine eyes,
 And given these deathly flutterings to my heart,
 And bidd'st me smile upon thee on the brink
 Of the dark tomb, to which I must depart !

Doubtless thou hast for me a future life
 Of boundless light, of fragrance, prayer, and praise ;
 But, if my last breath here below must end
 Speechless and mute, breathed out in mist and haze —

Ah, then, instead of any heavenly life
 To greet me when my earthly span is o'er,
 May I become a pallid lightning flash,
 Cling to thy name, and thunder evermore !

Let me become a curse, and pierce thy side !
 Yea, let me call thee " God the pitiless ! "
 Ah me, I tremble ! I am pale as death ;
 My heart foams like a hell of bitterness !

I am a sigh that moans among the sad,
 Dark cypresses, — a withered leaf the strife
 Of autumn winds must quickly bear away.
 Ah, give me but one spark, one spark of life !

What ! after this brief, transitory dream
 Must I embrace for aye the grave's cold gloom ?
 O God, how dark a destiny is mine !
 Was it writ out with lees from the black tomb ?

Oh, grant my soul one particle of fire !
 I would still love, would live, and ever live !
 Stars, drop into my soul ! A single spark
 Of life to your ill-fated lover give !

Spring offers not one rose to my pale brow,
The sunbeams lend me not one smile of light.
Night is my bier, the stars my torches are,
The moon weeps ever in the depths of night.

Some men there are with none to weep for them ;
Therefore God made the moon. In shadows dim
Of coming death, man has but two desires, —
First, life ; then some one who shall mourn for him.

In vain for me the stars have written " Love,"
The bulbul taught it me with silver tongue ;
In vain the zephyrs breathed it, and in vain
My image in the clear stream showed me young.

In vain the groves kept silence round about,
The secret leaves forbore to breathe or stir
Lest they should break my reveries divine ;
Ever they suffered me to dream of her.

In vain the flowers, dawn of the spring, breathed forth
Incense to my heart's altar, from the sod.
Alas, they all have mocked me ! All the world
Is nothing but the mockery of God !



REPENTANCE.



ESTERDAY, when in slumber light and chill,
 Drenched in cold sweats, upon my couch
 I lay,

While on my panting cheeks two roses burned
 And on my brow sat mortal pallor gray, —

Then on my soul, athirst for love, there fell
 My mother's sobs, who wept beside my bed.
 When I unclosed my dim and weary eyes,
 I saw her tears of pity o'er me shed.

I felt upon my face my mother's kiss,
 A sacred last remembrance, on death's shore ;
 All her great sorrow in that kiss was breathed —
 And it was I who caused her anguish sore !

Ah, then a tempest rose and shook my soul,
 A storm of bitter grief, that blasts and sears ;
 Then I poured forth that torrent dark. My God,
 Forgive me ! I had seen my mother's tears.



LIBERTY.

MICHAEL GHAZARIAN NALBANDIAN was born in Russian Armenia in 1830; graduated at the University of St. Petersburg with the title of Professor; was active as a teacher, author, and journalist; fell under suspicion for his political opinions, and underwent a rigorous imprisonment of three years, after which he was exiled to the province of Sarakov, and died there in 1866 of lung disease contracted in prison. It is forbidden in Russia to possess a picture of Nalbandian; but portraits of him, with his poem on "Liberty" printed around the margin, are circulated secretly.



WHEN God, who is forever free,
 Breathed life into my earthly frame, —
 From that first day, by His free will
 When I a living soul became, —
 A babe upon my mother's breast,
 Ere power of speech was given to me,
 Even then I stretched my feeble arms
 Forth to embrace thee, Liberty!

Wrapped round with many swaddling bands,
 All night I did not cease to weep,
 And in the cradle, restless still,
 My cries disturbed my mother's sleep.
 "O mother!" in my heart I prayed,
 "Unbind my arms and leave me free!"
 And even from that hour I vowed
 To love thee ever, Liberty!

When first my faltering tongue was freed,
And when my parents' hearts were stirred
With thrilling joy, to hear their son
Pronounce his first clear-spoken word,
"Papa, Mamma," as children use,
Were not the names first said by me ;
The first word on my childish lips
Was thy great name, O Liberty !

"Liberty !" answered from on high
The sovereign voice of Destiny :
"Wilt thou enroll thyself henceforth
A soldier true of Liberty ?
The path is thorny all the way,
And many trials wait for thee ;
Too strait and narrow is this world
For him who loveth Liberty."

"Freedom !" I answered, "on my head
Let fire descend and thunder burst ;
Let foes against my life conspire,
Let all who hate thee do their worst :
I will be true to thee till death ;
Yea, even upon the gallows tree
The last breath of a death of shame
Shall shout thy name, O Liberty !"



DAYS OF CHILDHOOD.



DAYS of my childhood, like a dream
Ye fledted, to return no more.
Ah, happy days and free from care,
Ye brought but joy in passing o'er !

Then Science came, and on the world
He gazed with grave, observant looks ;
All things were analyzed and weighed,
And all my time was given to books.

When to full consciousness I woke,
My country's woes weighed down my heart.
Apollo gave me then his lyre,
To bid my gloomy cares depart.

Alas ! that lyre beneath my touch
Sent forth a grave and tearful voice,
Sad as my soul ; no single chord
Would breathe a note that said " Rejoice ! "

Ah, then at last I felt, I knew,
There never could be joy for me,
While speechless, sad, in alien hands,
My country languished to be free.

Apollo, take thy lyre again,
And let its voice, amid the groves,
Sound for some man who may in peace
Devote his life to her he loves!

To the arena I will go,
But not with lyre and flowery phrase ;
I will protest and cry aloud,
And strive with darkness all my days.

What boots to-day a mournful lyre ?
To-day we need the sword of strife.
Upon the foeman sword and fire, —
Be that the watchword of my life !



ARMENIA.

ARCHBISHOP KHORÈNE NAR BEY DE LUSIGNAN was a descendant of the last dynasty of Armenian kings. His brother, Prince Guy de Lusignan, is still living in Paris. Nar Bey studied at the celebrated convent of the Mechitarists in Venice, but early left the Roman Catholic for the Armenian Church. He became an Archbishop, and was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, but declined to serve. He was an eloquent preacher, and a distinguished poet, author, and linguist. Nar Bey was a friend of Lamartine, whose poems he translated into Armenian. He was one of the Armenian delegates to the Berlin Congress of 1878. He died at Constantinople in 1892, poisoned, it was commonly believed, by the Turkish government, for political reasons.



F a sceptre of diamond, a glittering crown,
 Were mine, at thy feet I would lay them both
 down,
 Queen of queens, O Armenia !

If a mantle of purple were given to me,
 A mantle for kings, I would wrap it round thee,
 Poor Armenia, my mother !

If the fire of my youth and its sinews of steel
 Could return, I would offer its rapture and zeal
 All to thee, my Armenia !

Had a lifetime of ages been granted to me,
I had given it gladly and freely to thee,
O my life, my Armenia !

Were I offered the love of a maid lily-fair,
I would choose thee alone for my joy and my care,
My one love, my Armenia !

Were I given a crown of rich pearls, I should prize,
Far more than their beauty, one tear from thine eyes,
O my weeping Armenia !

If freedom unbounded were proffered to me,
I would choose still to share thy sublime slavery,
O my mother, Armenia !

Were I offered proud Europe, to take or refuse,
Thee alone, with thy griefs on thy head, would I
choose
For my country, Armenia !

Might I choose from the world where my dwelling
should be,
I would say, Still thy ruins are Eden to me,
My beloved Armenia !

Were I given a seraph's celestial lyre,
I would sing with my soul, to its chords of pure fire,
Thy dear name, my Armenia !

THE WANDERING ARMENIAN TO THE
CLOUD.



LOUD, whither dost thou haste away
So swiftly through the air?
Dost thou to some far-distant land
An urgent message bear?

With gloomy aspect, dark and sad,
Thou movest on through space;
Dost thou hide vengeance, or has grief
O'ershadowed thy bright face?

Did a wind come and exile thee
Far from thy heavenly home,
Like me, in homesickness and tears
Across the world to roam?

Like me, who wander now, my griefs
Sole comrades left to me,
While, longing for my fatherland,
I pine on land and sea?

Cloud, when thy heart is full of tears
Thou hast relief in rain;
When indignation brims thy breast,
Fierce lightnings tell thy pain.

Though my heart too is full, my brow
With painful thoughts oppressed,
To whom can I pour forth the griefs
That fill an exile's breast?

O cloud, thou hast no native land!
Far happier thou than I;
To north, to south thou floatest free,
At home in all the sky.

But I, at every step, shed tears,
In sadness and in gloom;
Each step away from fatherland
Is nearer to my tomb!



TO MY SISTER.



FAIN would I be to thee, my sister sweet,
Like the bright cloud beneath Aurora's feet.
A pedestal to help thee mount on high
Into the blessed peace of the blue sky.

The zephyr would I be, to which is given
To waft the rose's fragrance up to heaven,
That thy pure soul, amid life's stress and strain,
Might not exhale its perfume sweet in vain.

Fain would I be to thee as crystal dew
Of morn, that doth the young flower's sap renew,
And with its vapor veils her from the sun,
Lest thy fresh heart be seared ere day is done.

Fain would I be to thee a nightingale,
Telling within thine ear so sweet a tale ;
No meaner strain thine eyes with sleep should dim,
And thou shouldst wake to hear a sacred hymn.

Fain would I be to thee a broad-armed tree
That casts wide shadow on the sultry lea,
And cheers from far the wandering traveller's view :
So would my love shed o'er thee shade and dew.

Fain would I be to thee a refuge sure,
As 'neath the thatch the swallow builds secure.
A humble roof, it yet the rain can ward ;
So I from storms thine innocence would guard.

Ah ! when to thee this world, as yet unknown,
Its barren hopes, its bitterness hath shown,
Fain, fain would I bring comfort in that hour
To thy sad heart. Oh, would I had the power !



GENTLE BREEZE OF ARMENIA.



HERE art thou, sweet and gentle breeze,
Breeze of my fatherland?
The spring has come, and tender flowers
Bud forth on every hand ;
The warm sun smiles upon the world,
The skies are soft and blue ;
Ah, zephyr of Armenia,
Wilt thou not greet us too?

My country's stars I see no more
Beneath these alien skies,
And when the radiant spring returns,
The sad tears fill my eyes.
The sun for exiles has no light,
Though soft it shine and bland.
Where art thou, oh, where art thou,
Breeze of my fatherland?

Where art thou, breeze of Ararat?
Our sad hearts long for thee,
For poplar trees of Armavir
That whisper pleasantly.
Spring in whose bosom shines no flower
Sprung from Armenian earth,
To the Armenian is not spring,
But winter's cold and dearth.

Behold, all Nature calls on us,
With invitation glad,
To celebrate her victory
O'er Winter, dark and sad.
The ice has melted, and the flowers
Awaken and expand ;
Where are you, breezes sweet and soft,
Airs of the fatherland ?

Out of long, gloomy winters,
The winters of the past,
Oh, blow for the Armenians,
And bring us spring at last !
Awake exalted memories
Of glorious deeds and grand !
Alas, hast thou forgotten us,
Breeze of the fatherland ?

Hast thou forgot our tearful eyes,
Our bleeding hearts that ache ?
Wilt thou not mingle in our griefs,
Lamenting for our sake ?
Why should our sad lyre sob in tears,
In bitter tears like these,
And thou not come to thrill its chords,
O soft Armenian breeze ?

Oh, from our country's ruins
Waft to us through the air
Dust of our glorious ancestors,
Whose bones are buried there !

Life-giving breeze, Armenian breeze
From distant Edens blown,
Oh, bring to us our fathers' sighs,
To whisper with our own !

One token bring from home, one drop
From the Araxes' shore !
Let tears and smiles with memories blend —
Thoughts of our sires of yore.
Kiss the Armenian's brow and breast ;
Wake patriot ardor bold !
Where art thou, O life-bringing breeze
Our sires inhaled of old ?

Power to Armenian cymbals give,
And in our souls inspire
The zeal of Coghtn's ancient bards,
Their fervor and their fire !
Imbue Armenian hearts afresh
With courage firm and true ;
Ah, zephyr of Armenia,
Awake our hope anew !



LET US LIVE ARMENIANS.



LIVE as Armenians, brethren, in this world !
 That name to us do history's pages give ;
 The heavens above salute us by that name :
 Then, brethren, as Armenians let us live !

Armenians we ! That hero was our sire
 Who taught mankind for freedom first to strive ;¹
 He gave us for our portion a great name :
 Then, brethren, as Armenians let us live !

Our land is holy ; on its sacred soil
 God walked, what time he Adam forth did drive ;²
 Our language he devised ; he spoke it first :
 Then, brethren, as Armenians let us live !

We have one cradle with the human race ;
 Our land salvation to the world did give ;
 Faith's earliest altar was Mount Ararat :
 Then, brethren, as Armenians let us live !

¹ According to tradition, at the time of the building of the tower of Babel, Haig, the ancestor of the Armenians, rebelled against the tyranny of the Assyrian king, and forsook the work with his tribe. The constellation Orion is called by his name in the Armenian language.

² Tradition locates the Garden of Eden in Armenia, between the Euphrates and Tigris : and the Armenians believe that their language was spoken by Adam and Eve.

Noble our name is ; not on earth alone,
But in the heavens it shines forth gloriously.
The stars of valiant Haig are deathless there :
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

Live as Armenians ! From the past what land
So many ancient glories doth derive ?
What nation has so beautiful a home ?
Then, brethren, as Armenians let us live !

Unto what nation did the King of heaven
Send four apostles as an embassy,¹
And with what monarch did he correspond ?
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

Who can count o'er the names of all our saints ?
One roll of martyrs is our history ;
Our church on earth is like to heaven itself :
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

To us was Christ's first benediction given ;
The champions of the faith for aye were we ;
Armenia's deeds astonished earth and heaven :
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

Our nation, ever following the Lord,
Has borne the cross for many a century ;
No, she will not be a deserter now !
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

¹ The tradition is that Apgar, King of Armenia, sent messengers to Jesus, entreating him to come and cure the king of a painful malady, and offering to become a Christian. Jesus

Yes, sorrowful is life beneath the cross ;
Yes, as Armenians we with pain must strive ;
Yet wears the cross the seal of victory :
Then, brethren, as Armenians let us live !

Our home beloved, our sceptre and our crown,
With clouds are covered in obscurity :
Have hope ! the heavens yet shall give us light :
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

No, not forever shall our fate be sad,
Our lot, to eat and drink of misery ;
A new and happy future waits for us !
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

Live as Armenians, that our sons as well
May boast that they are our posterity ;
Let us do no dishonor to our name !
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

Live as Armenians ! Some day, over death
Armenia yet shall rise in victory.
Soon may that glad day dawn for us, O heaven !
Brethren, Armenians let us ever be !

declined to come, but promised to send some of his apostles after his death who would cure the king. This was done ; and Apgar and many of his subjects embraced Christianity.



LET US DIE ARMENIANS.

BROTHERS, we have no hope from foreigners ;
Gaze not around for aid ! Though with
good-will
The foreigner receive you as a guest,
He is an alien still.

Unmoved he sees your pain ; what matters it
Although to tears of blood your heart be grieved ?
None save Armenians feel Armenia's woes ;
Why are you still deceived ?

Rest not upon the foreigner your hope ;
Show not hard eyes your wounds, your deep distress.
Do you then look for sympathy and help ?
They mock your nakedness !

Heavy your burden is, but do you think
That foreign hands will lift it ? You are wrong.
Nay, leave the foreigner, lend brother's arm
To brother, and be strong !

Fate is your enemy ? Be not dismayed,
But show Armenian hearts, to brave her hate.
Fate cannot vanquish an heroic land
That battles against fate.

Nor swords nor chains could crush the minds and hearts
 Of your great ancestors, those valiant ones.
 Why are your hearts to-day so weak and faint?
 Are you not heroes' sons?

Sons of those matchless heroes who of old
 Upon their country's altar bled and died, —
 Sons of those great Armenians whose lives
 To-day are the world's pride?

Even the mighty nations of the earth
 With envy view our nation's history ;
 Then why, forgetting your past glory, say
 To aliens, "Blest are ye"?

Forward ! Let him who has an earnest heart
 Forsake the stranger, follow his brave sires !
 The life of all Armenians centres round
 Our faith's clear altar-fires.

Armenia's life shall not become extinct ;
 The heavens are full of that life-giving flame.
 While the all-conquering cross of Christ shall reign,
 So long shall live her name.

Why are you fearful? See you not, sublime
 Above your heads, the shadow of the rood?
 Of old your fathers with that sacred sign
 Mingled their sacred blood.

Anchor your hope, too, on the cross ! Have faith
 The light will shine, since you to it are true.
 It was your nation's bulwark ; be it still
 Weapon and flag to you !

A nation that was faithful to the cross
Cannot be lost, though centuries roll past.
While in this world religion shall endure,
Her life shall also last.

In the great names of faith and fatherland,
Clasp hands in love, bid hate and malice flee,
Armenian brothers ! Let the nation's foe
Alone accursèd be.

Let each heart glow with love for fatherland,
Each mind your country's welfare seek alone ;
Let your least brother's pain and tears be felt
As keenly as your own.

Ah ! foreign bread can never nourish us,
And foreign water never quench our thirst ;
Thou art our life, Armenian font, where we
Received baptism first !

For no vain hope let us deny that font,
Our nation's baptistery ! When we yield
Our breath forever, be our place of death
The sacred battlefield !

Let the same earth receive that cradled us ;
Armenians we, when life to us was given ;
Armenians let us live, Armenians die,
Armenians enter heaven !



THE FIRST GREEN LEAVES.



SCARCE are the clouds' black shadows
 Pierced by a gleam of light,
 Scarce have our fields grown dark again,
 Freed from the snow-drifts white,
 When you, with smiles all twinkling,
 Bud forth o'er hill and vale.
 O first-born leaves of spring-time,
 Hail to your beauty, hail !

Not yet to our cold meadows
 Had come Spring's guest, the swallow,
 Not yet the nightingale's sweet voice
 Had echoed from the hollow,
 When you, like joy's bright angels,
 Came swift to hill and dale.
 Fresh-budded leaves of spring-time,
 Hail to your beauty, hail !

Your tender verdant color,
 Thin stems and graceful guise,
 How sweetly do they quench the thirst
 Of eager, longing eyes !
 Afflicted souls at sight of you
 Take comfort and grow gay.
 New-budded leaves of spring-time,
 All hail to you to-day !

Come, in the dark breast of our dales
To shine, the hills between !
Come, o'er our bare and shivering trees
To cast a veil of green !
Come, to give sad-faced Nature
An aspect blithe and new !
O earliest leaves of spring-time,
All hail, all hail to you !

Come to call up, for new-born Spring,
A dawn of roses fair !
Come, and invite the breezes light
To play with your soft hair !
Say to the fragrant blossoms,
"Oh, haste ! Men long for you !"
Hail, earliest leaves of spring-time,
Young leaves so fresh and new !

Come, come, O leaves, and with sweet wings
Of hope from yonder sky
Cover the sad earth of the graves
Wherein our dear ones lie !
Weave o'er the bones so dear to us
A garland wet with dew,
Ye wings of hope's bright angels,
Young leaves so fresh and new !



DEATH OF A YOUTH OF ZEITOUN.

MUGURDITCH BESHIKTASHLIAN, a Roman Catholic Armenian, was born in 1829; was educated at the Mechitarist Convent in Venice, and was for years a professor of the Armenian language in Constantinople. In addition to his original works, he translated into Armenian many poems from other languages. It is not certain whether "A Brave Son of Armenia" is an adaptation from one of Victor Hugo's "Oriental Poems," or whether Hugo, who was an admirer of Armenian poetry, adapted it from the Armenian. Beshiktashlian died in 1868. On his gravestone are carved the lines that form the refrain of one of his most popular songs:—

"What sound, beneath the stars aflame,
So lovely as a brother's name?"



W^HOM dost thou seek, sweet mother?
Come, tremble not, draw near!
Gaze on thy son's blood-streaming wounds
Without a sigh or tear.

Let Turkish mothers rend their hair;
Do thou glad news to Zeitoun bear!

As, by my cradle, thou didst soothe
With tender hand and smile
My childish form to sleep, and sing
With angel voice the while,
Lay me to rest, without a care,
And joyful news to Zeitoun bear!

Red floods are welling from my wounds,
But, mother, look around ;
See how the fierce blood-thirsty Turks
By thousands strew the ground !
Our swords devoured them, scattered there ;
Then joyful news to Zeitoun bear !

They smote us like a dragon,
With sudden roaring deep ;
But Zeitoun shook her rocky head,
And rolled them down the steep.
Red was the stain our rocks did wear ;
Then joyful news to Zeitoun bear !

Our fathers' ghosts applauded ;
Our old fire is not dead !
Our slaughtered kin rejoiced to see
The blood of vengeance shed.
Mount Ararat the joy did share ;
Mother, glad news to Zeitoun bear !

Take my last kiss, my mother,
And bear it to my love ;
A kiss, too, for my native soil,
That now my tomb must prove.
Plant thou a cross above me there,
And joyful news to Zeitoun bear !



SPRING.

HOW cool and sweet, O breeze of morn,
 Thou stirrest in the air,
 Caressing soft the dewy flowers,
 The young girl's clustering hair !
 But not my country's breeze thou art.
 Blow past ! thou canst not touch my heart.

How sweetly and how soulfully
 Thou singest from the grove,
 O bird, while men admire thy voice
 In tender hours of love !
 But not my country's bird thou art.
 Sing elsewhere ! Deaf to thee my heart.

With what a gentle murmur,
 O brook, thy current flows,
 Reflecting in its mirror clear
 The maiden and the rose !
 But not my native stream thou art.
 Flow past ! thou canst not charm my heart.

Though over ruins linger
 Armenia's bird and breeze,
 And though Armenia's turbid stream
 Creeps 'mid the cypress-trees,
 They voice thy sighs, and from my heart,
 My country, they shall not depart !

A BRAVE SON OF ARMENIA.



HERE leaned against a gravestone
Upon a mountain steep,
A fair-haired youth of gallant mien,
Who mused in sorrow deep.

His eyes now sought the heavens,
And now the earth below.
Son of the hills and valleys,
Why dost thou sorrow so?

Dost thou desire, to soothe thee,
A vast and stormy sea,
Whose ranks of wind-stirred billows
Shall sing to comfort thee?

Or heaven's immense and wondrous vault,
Star-strewn, thine eyes to greet?
Or smiles from nature's fairest things,
The flowers, the zephyrs sweet?

Or dost thou yearn for solace
All other joys above, —
A gentle mother's kisses,
A sweetheart's tender love?

To cure thy heart's deep sorrow
What wouldst thou have, oh, what?
" My longing is for powder,
For powder and for shot ! "

WE ARE BROTHERS.

FROM glorious Nature's myriad tongues
 Though songs be breathed by lips of love,
 And though the maiden's fingers fair
 Across the thrilling harp-strings rove,
 Of all earth's sounds, there is no other
 So lovely as the name of brother.

Clasp hands, for we are brothers dear,
 Of old by tempest rent apart ;
 The dark designs of cruel Fate
 Shall fail, when heart is joined to heart..
 What sound, beneath the stars aflame,
 So lovely as a brother's name ?

And when our ancient Mother-Land
 Beholds her children side by side,
 The dews of joyful tears shall heal
 Her heart's sad wounds, so deep and wide.
 What sound, beneath the stars aflame,
 So lovely as a brother's name ?

We wept together in the past ;
 Let us unite in harmony
 And blend again our tears, our joys ;
 So shall our efforts fruitful be.
 What sound, beneath the stars aflame,
 So lovely as a brother's name ?

Together let us work and strive,
Together sow, with toil and pain,
The seed that shall, with harvest blest,
Make bright Armenia's fields again.
What sound, beneath the stars aflame,
So lovely as a brother's name?



CRADLE SONG.

RAPHAEL PATKANIAN, the most popular of Armenian poets, was born in Southern Russia in 1830. He was the son of poor parents, but both his father and grandfather had been distinguished for their poetic gifts. While at the University of Moscow, he organized a literary club among his Armenian fellow-students, and from the initials of their names formed his own pen-name of Kamar Katiba. Many of his poems were written during the Turco-Russian war, when the Russian Armenians cherished high hopes for the deliverance of Turkish Armenia from the Ottoman yoke. Patkanian died in 1892, after forty-two years of continuous activity as a teacher, author, and editor.



NIGHTINGALE, oh, leave our garden,
 Where soft dews the blossoms steep ;
 With thy litanies melodious
 Come and sing my son to sleep !
 Nay, he sleeps not for thy chanting,
 And his weeping hath not ceased.
 Come not, nightingale ! My darling
 Does not wish to be a priest.

O thou thievish, clever jackdaw,
 That in coin findest thy joy,
 With thy tales of gold and profit
 Come and soothe my wailing boy !

Nay, thy chatter does not lull him,
And his crying is not stayed.
Come not, jackdaw ! for my darling
Will not choose the merchant's trade.

Wild dove, leave the fields and pastures
Where thou grievest all day long ;
Come and bring my boy sweet slumber
With thy melancholy song !
Still he weeps. Nay, come not hither,
Plaintive songster, for I see
That he loves not lamentations,
And no mourner will he be.

Leave thy chase, brave-hearted falcon !
Haply he thy song would hear.
And the boy lay hushed, and slumbered,
With the war-notes in his ear.



THE TEARS OF ARAXES.



WALK by Mother Arax
With faltering steps and slow,
And memories of past ages
Seek in the waters' flow.

But they run dark and turbid,
And beat upon the shore
In grief and bitter sorrow,
Lamenting evermore.

“ Araxes ! with the fishes
Why dost not dance in glee ?
The sea is still far distant,
Yet thou art sad, like me.

“ From thy proud eyes, O Mother,
Why do the tears downpour ?
Why dost thou haste so swiftly
Past thy familiar shore ?

“ Make not thy current turbid ;
Flow calm and joyously.
Thy youth is short, fair river ;
Thou soon wilt reach the sea.

“ Let sweet rose-hedges brighten
Thy hospitable shore,
And nightingales among them
Till morn their music pour.

“ Let ever-verdant willows
Lave in thy waves their feet,
And with their bending branches
Refresh the noonday heat.

“ Let shepherds on thy margin
Walk singing, without fear ;
Let lambs and kids seek freely
Thy waters cool and clear.”

Araxes swelled her current,
Tossed high her foaming tide,
And in a voice of thunder
Thus from her depths replied : —

“ Rash, thoughtless youth, why com'st thou
My age-long sleep to break,
And memories of my myriad griefs
Within my breast to wake ?

“ When hast thou seen a widow,
After her true-love died,
From head to foot resplendent
With ornaments of pride ?

“ For whom should I adorn me ?
Whose eyes shall I delight ?
The stranger hordes that tread my banks
Are hateful in my sight.

“ My kindred stream, impetuous Kur,
Is widowed, like to me,
But bows beneath the tyrant’s yoke,
And wears it slavishly.

“ But I, who am Armenian,
My own Armenians know ;
I want no stranger bridegroom ;
A widowed stream I flow.

“ Once I, too, moved in splendor,
Adorned as is a bride
With myriad precious jewels,
My smiling banks beside.

“ My waves were pure and limpid,
And curled in rippling play ;
The morning star within them
Was mirrored till the day.

“ What from that time remaineth ?
All, all has passed away.
Which of my prosperous cities
Stands near my waves to-day ?

“ Mount Ararat doth pour me,
As with a mother’s care,
From out her sacred bosom
Pure water, cool and fair.

“ Shall I her holy bounty
To hated aliens fling ?
Shall strangers’ fields be watered
From good Saint Jacob’s spring ?

“ For filthy Turk or Persian
Shall I my waters pour,
That they may heathen rites perform
Upon my very shore,

“ While my own sons, defenceless,
Are exiled from their home,
And, faint with thirst and hunger,
In distant countries roam?

“ My own Armenian nation
Is banished far away ;
A godless, barbarous people
Dwells on my banks to-day.

“ Shall I my hospitable shores
Adorn in festive guise
For them, or gladden with fair looks
Their wild and evil eyes?

“ Still, while my sons are exiled,
Shall I be sad, as now.
This is my heart's deep utterance,
My true and holy vow.”

No more spake Mother Arax ;
She foamed up mightily,
And, coiling like a serpent,
Wound sorrowing toward the sea.

THE ARMENIAN GIRL.

HAVE you seen the bright moon rising
 In the heavens? Have you seen
 Ruddy apricots that shimmer
 Through the garden's foliage green?

Have you seen the red rose glowing
 Where green leaves about her meet,
 And around her, in a bevy,
 Lilies, pinks, and iris sweet?

Lo, beside Armenia's maiden,
 Dark and dim the bright moon is ;
 Apricots and pinks and iris
 Are not worth a single kiss.

Roses on her cheeks are blooming,
 On her brow a lily fair,
 And of innocence the symbol
 Is the smile her sweet lips wear.

From her friend she takes the zither
 With a blush the heart that wins ;
 Touching it with dainty fingers,
 The lekzinca¹ she begins.

¹ An Oriental dance.

Like a tree her form is slender,
Swaying with a dreamy grace ;
Now she flies with rapid footsteps,
Now returns with gliding pace.

All the young men's hearts are melted
When the maiden they behold,
And the old men curse their fortune
That so early they grew old.



THE NEW GENERATION.



WHEN the mother, with sore travail,
 To the world a man-child gives,
 Let a sharp sword from his father
 Be the first gift he receives.

As he grows, instead of playthings,
 Toys for childish sport and game,
 Let his father give him, rather,
 A good gun, of deadly aim.

When his time is come for schooling,
 Let him to the sword give heed ;
 Teach him first to wield his weapon ;
 After, let him learn to read.

Skill of reading, craft of writing,
 Is a useful thing and good ;
 But at the examinations
 Ask him first, " Canst thou shed blood ? "

Hope ye in no other manner
 Poor Armenia to save.
 Ill the beggar's part beseemeth
 Independent men and brave.

LULLABY.



WAKE, my darling ! Open those bright eyes,
 dark and deep,
 And scatter from thine eyelids the heavy
 shades of sleep.
 Sweet tales the angels long enough in dreams have
 told to thee ;
 Now I will tell thee of the things thou in the world
 shalt see.

CHORUS.

Awake, and ope thy beauteous eyes, my child, my
 little one !
 Thy mother sees therein her life, her glory, and her
 sun.
 Thou shalt grow up, grow tall and strong, as rises in
 the air
 A stately plane-tree ; how I love thy stature tall and
 fair !
 The heroes of Mount Ararat, their ghosts shall
 strengthen thee
 With power and might, that thou as brave as Vartan's
 self mayst be.

A golden girdle for thy waist my fingers deft have
made,
And from it I have hung a sword, — my own hands
ground the blade.

Within our courtyard stands a steed that, champing,
waits for thee.

Awake, and take thy sword! How long wilt thou a
slumberer be?

Thy nation is in misery; in fetters, lo! they weep;
Thy brethren are in slavery, my brave one; wilt thou
sleep?

No, soon my son will waken, will mount his champing
steed,

Will wipe away Armenia's tears, and stanch the hearts
that bleed;

Will bid his nation's mourning cease, and those that
weep shall smile.

Ah, my Armenian brethren, wait but a little while!

Lo, my Aghassi has awaked! He girt himself with
speed,

And from his sword-belt hung the sword, and mounted
on his steed.



TO MY NIGHTINGALE.



WHY didst thou cease, O nightingale, thy sweet,
melodious song,
That to my sad and burning eyes bade floods
of teardrops throng?

Dost thou remember, when in spring the dawn was
breaking clear,
How often to my heart thou hast recalled my country
dear?

Sweet was that memory, as a dream that for a mo-
ment's space
Brings joy into a mourner's heart, and brightens his
sad face.

The weary world forgotten, to thy voice I bent my
ear ;
And I was far away, and saw once more my country
dear.

I know thou too art longing for that vernal land the
while, —
That paradise, afar from which Fate has for us no
smile.

Oh, who will give me a bird's wings, that I may sweep
and soar,
And cleave the clouds, and hie me to Armenia once
more?

If I could breathe her holy and revivifying air,
I know I should be cured at last of all this weight of
care.

But when spring passed away it brought thy music to
a close,
And took from us thy chanted hymn, with the petals
of the rose.

I'll open thy cage door ; thou 'rt free ! Now to Ar-
menia fly !

Dost thou desire the rose, 't is there ; there is a cloud-
less sky ;

'There are cool breezes, o'er the fields that softly,
sweetly blow ;

A sun that shines in splendor, and brooks that mur-
muring flow.

I too, like thee, am longing for a sunny atmosphere ;
The mist and cloud and heavy air have tired my spirit
here.

The North wind blows the dust to heaven, the crows
with harsh notes sail ;

This is the Northern air, and this the Northern
nightingale !

O foolish, poor Armenians, what seek ye in the
North ?

I hate its empty pleasures and its life of little worth.
Give me my country's balmy air, her cloudless sky
o'erhead ;

Give me my country's pastures green, my country's
roses red !

SHALL WE BE SILENT?



HALL we be silent, brothers?
Shall we be silent still?
Our foe has set against our breasts
His sword, that thirsts to kill ;
His ears are deaf to cries and groans.
O brothers, make avow !
What shall we do? What is our part?
Shall we keep silence now?

Our foe has seized our fatherland
By guile and treachery ;
Has blotted out the name of Haig,
And ruined utterly
The house of Thorkom, to the ground ;
Has reft from us, to boot,
Our crown, our arms, our right of speech —
And shall we still be mute ?

Our foe has seized our guardian swords,
Our ploughs that tilled the plain,
And from the ploughshare and the sword
Has welded us a chain.
Alas for us ! for we are slaves,
And fettered hand and foot
With bonds and manacles of iron —
And shall we still be mute ?

Our foeman, holding o'er our heads
His weapon fierce and strong,
Makes us devour our bitter tears,
Our protests against wrong.
So many woes are heaped on us,
To weep our sorrows' sum
We need the broad Euphrates' flood —
And shall we still be dumb?

Our foe, with overweening pride,
Treads justice under foot,
And drives us from our native soil —
And shall we still be mute?
Like strangers in our fatherland,
Pursued o'er plain and hill,
O brothers, where shall we appeal?
Shall we be silent still?

Not yet content with all the ills
That he has made us bear,
His insolent and cursed hand
He stretches forth, to tear
The last bond of our nation's life —
And, if he have his will,
Complete destruction waits for us ;
Shall we be silent still?

Scorning the glory of our land,
Our foe, with malice deep,
Invades our church, and makes the wolf
The shepherd of the sheep.

We have no sacred altars now ;
In valley or on hill
No place of prayer is left to us ;
Shall we be silent still ?

If we keep silence, even now,
When stones have found a voice,
Will not men say that slavery
Is our desert and choice ?
The sons of brave and holy sires,
Sprung from a sacred root,
We know the deeds our fathers did —
How long shall we be mute ?

Mute be the dumb, the paralyzed,
Those that hold slavery dear !
But we, brave hearts, let us march forth
To battle, without fear ;
And, if the worst befall us,
Facing the foe like men,
Win back in death our glory,
And sleep in silence then !



IF.

IF my white hair could once again be black,
 And my old strength return to me at need,
 And if I could become a valiant youth,
 With sword in hand, upon a fiery steed ;

I to the field of Avarair would go,
 Field where Armenian blood rained down like dew.
 O my loved nation, Thorkom's ancient race !
 I would give back your long-lost crown to you.

To the Armenian maidens I would say :
 " Sell now your costly garments beautiful ;
 Put by adornment, luxury, and pearls ;
 Our swords are rusty, and their blades are dull.

" Give us your muslin robes, Armenian maids,
 That we our bleeding wounds may stanch and stay ;
 Weave bandages for us of your thick hair ;
 ' T is thus you need to show your love to-day."

Were I a rich man, in whose coffers deep
 The gold and silver to great heaps had grown,
 I would not be, as many are, alas !
 A patriot in vain words, and words alone.

Not bright champagne, nor Russia's crystal cross,
But store of balls and powder I would buy ;
Against Armenia's foemen I would go
With a great host, freely and fearlessly.

Or if I were a nation's potent king,
I to my army would give strong command
To march with fleet steps toward Armenia,
To help the poor oppressed Armenian land.

But if for one brief day, one little hour,
One moment's space, I were the Lord of all,
What a sharp spear at our blood-thirsty foes
I with strong arm would hurl, and make them fall !

O guileful Russian ! Base and vicious Turk !
O vengeful Persian ! O fanatic Greek,
Armenia's age-long rival ! On your sons
My two-edged sword should righteous vengeance
wreak !



PRAISE TO THE SULTAN.



OUR thanks to you, great Sultan ! You have
 turned
 Armenia to a chaos of hewn stone ;
 Daily by myriads you have slaughtered us ;
 Our thriving hamlets you have overthrown.

Glory and fame unto your Majesty !
 Following the Koran's law, you have not feared
 Our holy Bible's pages to defile ;
 With filth and mire the cross you have besmeared.

Our gratitude to you, great Padishah !
 Gain from our slaughter has accrued to you ;
 Your intimate associates you have made
 Circassians foul, and Koords, a thievish crew.

In noisome dungeons, thousands glorify
 Your Sovereign Majesty with loud acclaims.
 You leave no blank in all the calendar,
 But fill each space with myriad martyrs' names.

Armenia's happy ruins, glorious King,
 Will ne'er forget you ; on our history's page
 Your wondrous deeds and your illustrious name
 Shall blazoned be, to live from age to age.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

“**W**HAT shall we do?” Now, shame on those
who that weak plaint renew !
He that despairs, in deepest shame his
cowardice shall rue.

Armenian brothers, let us ask no more what we shall
do !

What does the man do that has chanced to fall into
the sea?

What does he do that has no bread, and starves in
poverty?

What does he do that has been seized and bound in
slavery?

He that is drowning in the sea struggles with all his
might ;

The hungry man wears out his neighbor's threshold day
and night ;

He that is in captivity seeks ever means of flight.

O rich man, for what purpose hast thou filled thy
chests with gold?

O youth, for what hast thou reserved thy strength, thy
courage bold?

O patriot, wherefore hast thou loved thy country from
of old?

Let us no more the plaint renew,

“ Armenians, say, what shall we do ? ”

THE SAD-FACED MOON.

(From "The Death of Vartan.")



MOON, fair moon, how long wilt thou appear
 So pale, so mournful, in the heavens' height?
 Have the dark storm-clouds filled thee with
 alarm,

Or fiery lightnings, flashing through the night?

There is none like to thee among the stars ;
 The only beauty of the heavens thou art.
 Hast thou grown pale with envy ? Nay, O moon,
 Thou hast some other secret in thy heart.

Why is thy countenance thus changed and sad?
 Speak to me freely ! On the darkest day,
 If we but find a sympathizing friend
 'T is said that half our grief will pass away.

The mourner is the mourner's comforter.
 Where wilt thou find a sadder man than I,
 Forsaken and in sorrow, and, like thee,
 Hiding a secret, without word or cry ?

I pass my days in grief, gay among men,
 Weeping in solitude ; my salt tears flow,
 My sad sighs sound forever, without rest ;
 I have no sympathizer in my woe.

Yet every living creature has a friend ;
Shall I alone lack love and friendship? Nay,
Open thy heart to me ! If thou art sad,
My sympathy will charm thy grief away.

(The moon speaks.)

Hearken ! One night innumerable stars
Filled the blue sky. Among them, like a bride,
I glided softly, with my bright face veiled.
I passed o'er Pontus, bathing in its tide ;

I touched the summits of the Caucasus ;
I saw in Lake Sevan my mirrored face ;
I came to great Lake Van, of fishes full,
And cooled me in its waves a little space.

O'er many mountains, many fields I passed,
Shedding my light ; o'er all reigned silence deep ;
Amid his cattle in the quiet field
The weary farmer lay in peaceful sleep.

Ah, fair Armenia on that night was blest !
The stars of heaven made her more glorious still ;
And I, slow passing o'er her through the skies,
Gazed on that land, and could not gaze my fill.

In one short month, my circuit I renewed.
O'er cities, mountains, lakes, I passed in haste,
Longing to visit the Armenian land.
Night had again her fruitful fields embraced ;

But oh ! where were the bounteous harvests now ?
 Where was the tireless tiller of the soil ?
 Where was his little thick-necked buffalo ?
 Where were the gardens, product of his toil ?

Dark smoke had covered the Armenian sky ;
 Cities and hamlets, burning, crashed and fell ;
 Fierce tongues of flame reached even to the clouds ;
 To see Armenia was to gaze on hell !

Armenia, garden wet with heavenly dew !
 Whence came this mighty woe, at whose behest ?
 Did jealousy possess his evil heart ?
 Had in his soul a serpent made its nest ?

Yes, it was age-long jealousy and hate,
 That, smouldering deep, consume man's heart away,
 Until at last, with fierce and thundering sound,
 The hidden fires break forth, to scorch and slay ;

Like to a mountain, still and calm without,
 On which the smooth snow all unmelted sleeps ;
 Suddenly, lightnings from its breast are born,
 And o'er whole cities fiery ruin sweeps.

O fair Armenian land ! Armenian race !
 O happy places, ruined now and void !
 Hamlets and cornfields, cloisters, teeming towns !
 Where are you ? Why were you so soon destroyed ?

.

The moon was silent. And the dark clouds came
And hid the sky ; she passed behind a cloud ;
And I was left alone and sorrowful,
Musing with folded arms and forehead bowed.

And ever since that time, when evening comes,
I wait the pale moon's rising, calm and slow ;
And as I gaze upon her mournful face,
I think upon my nation and its woe.



COMPLAINT TO EUROPE.

MY hands, my feet, the chain of slavery ties,
 Yet Europe says, "Why do you not arise?
 Justice nor freedom shall your portion be;
 Bear to the end the doom of slavery!"

Six centuries, drop by drop, the tyrant drains
 The last remaining life-blood from our veins;
 Yet Europe says, "No strength, no power have they,"
 And turns from us her scornful face away.

A needle is not left to us to-day,
 And yet, "You ought to draw the sword!" they say.
 To powder and to shot could we give heed,
 While we sought bread our starving ones to feed?

Have you forgotten, Europe, how the dart
 Of the fierce Persian pointed at your heart,
 Until, on that dread field of Avarair,
 Armenian blood quenched his fanatic fire?¹

¹ Geographically, Armenia is the bridge between Europe and Asia. In the early centuries the Armenians acted the part of Horatius and "kept the bridge," defending the gate of Europe against the uncivilized hordes of Asia, — first against the Persian fire-worshippers, whose advance toward Europe the Armenians checked at the battle of Avarair in A. D. 451, and later against successive invasions of the Mohammedans.

Have you forgot the fell and crushing blow
Prepared for you by Islam long ago?
We would not see your desolation then,
Burning of cities, massacre of men.

Two hundred years Armenia, bathed in blood,
Withstood that great invasion's mighty flood.
Europe was safe, our living wall behind,
Until the enemy's huge strength declined.

Have you forgotten, Europe, how of yore
Your heroes in the desert hungered sore?
What then could strength or force of arms avail,
Had we not fed your hosts, with famine pale?¹

Ungrateful Europe, heed our woes, we pray;
Remember poor Armenia to-day!

¹ The Armenians acted as guides to the Crusaders in Asia; and when they were about to raise the siege of Antioch for want of food, the Armenians of Cilicia supplied them with provisions and enabled them to take the city.



SONG OF THE VAN MOTHER.



WILL not rock you, little boy, that sleep your
soul may bind ;

Your brothers have arisen ; you only stay
behind.

Awake from sleep, my darling ! From the West hath
shone the sun.

Awake ! The happy fortune of Armenia has begun.

Lo, it is fallen, dashed to bits, the Sultan's golden
throne !

From under it the liberty of many lands hath shone.

Now he who speedily shall rise shall find his liberty :

Will my fair son alone remain fast bound in slavery ?

We have implored the Sultan with mourning and with
cries ;

We washed his hands, we washed his feet, with salt
tears from our eyes.

He would not heed our piteous prayers, our sad, be-
seeching words ;

Now let us see if he will heed the clashing of our
swords !

My darling, let me from thine arms unbind the swad-
dling band,

And lay a sword of steel within that weak and tender
hand !

Go to the bloody battlefield, O slave, and come back
freed !

O Lord, our God, wilt thou one day unto our prayer
give heed?



EASTER SONG.

This Easter song is sung by the children. In Turkey and Russia the last verse is forbidden.



UNDERNEATH the south wind's breathing,
 From the fields the snow has fled ;
 All the children are rejoicing —
 Christ is risen from the dead !

Brooks with happy voices murmur,
 Boughs are budding overhead,
 All the air is full of bird-songs —
 Christ is risen from the dead !


Boys and girls wear festal raiment,
 As in May the rose so red ;
 Hatred from man's heart is banished —
 Christ is risen from the dead !

Christ is risen, all Nature tells us ;
 When, ah ! when shall it be said
 Of thee also, O my country !
 Thou art risen from the dead ?



THE VIRGIN'S TEARS.

LEO ALISHAN, born at Erzeroum, in the heart of Armenia, early in this century, is a Roman Catholic Armenian, a monk of the Mechitarist Convent at Venice, and a distinguished antiquarian, scientist, linguist, and historian, as well as a poet. He is the author of many important works in these different fields, and has translated into Armenian a number of poems by Longfellow and other American writers. Alishan is loved and revered by his countrymen, not only for his erudition and patriotism, but for his gentle and unassuming disposition.

ORTH welling from the breast of sapphire
lakes,
Oh, tell my jocund heart why from their shore
Of emerald do those pairs of wandering pearls
Like rain upon the rosy plains downpour?

Less pure, less tender, are the twilight dews,
At eve descending on the crimson rose
And on the lily's petals, fine and frail,
Than those twin drops in which thy sorrow flows.

Speak, why do founts of shining tears descend,
Mary, from thy love-dropping virgin eyes
To thy cheek's edge, and there hang tremulous,
As the stars twinkle in the evening skies?

As the heart-piercing pupil of the eye,
So sensitive each tear-drop seems to be ;
Like the unwinking pupil of the eye,
Charming my soul, the bright drops look at me.

The heart throbs hard, the gazer holds his breath. —
Ah, now I know the truth ! Oh, woe is me !
For me those tears have risen to thine eyes,
To heal my spirit's wounds eternally.

But still of my unconsecrated heart
Distrustful, they half-fallen linger there,
And do not dare to drop and moisten me.
No, Mary ! No, O Virgin Mother fair !

I am a land uncultured, rough and wild ;
But, underneath those tender tears of thine,
Let rose and saffron bloom there ! With thy love
Water and cheer this sorrowing heart of mine !



EASTER SONG.



FATHER of light, we praise thee !
Thy Son is risen again.
Spirit of love, we praise thee !
He shares thy glorious reign.

Good tidings, Virgin Princess !
Thy Son is risen this morn.
Good tidings to all mortals,
The born and the unborn !

Good news to you, bright Heavens !
For Christ, who dwelt in you,
Is risen ; good tidings, lowly Earth !
Thy Saviour lives anew.

Good news to you, all worlds and orbs
That circle overhead !
Good news ! Your great Establisher
Is risen from the dead !

Good news, ye light and darkness !
A new sun rises high.
Good news to you, all creatures !
Christ lives ; you shall not die.

Good news to you, ye dead folk !
For you shall be set free.
Good tidings to all beings
That are, or are to be !

THE EXILES.



LAS, ye poor Armenians !
 In undeserved distress
 Ye wander forth to slavery,
 In want and wretchedness.

A myriad woes ye suffered,
 Nor left your own dear home ;
 But now ye leave your fathers' graves,
 In distant lands to roam.

These waters sweet, these smiling fields,
 Where cities fair are set,
 To strangers ye abandon them,
 But how can ye forget ?

Nay, while you live, remember ;
 Be to your country true :
 Your children and descendants,
 Bid them remember too.

The holy name of Ararat
 And many a sacred fane,
 Till the last judgment wakes the world,
 Shall in their hearts remain.

Alas for thee, my country !
 Alas for thee, for us !
 I would that death had sealed mine eyes
 Ere I beheld thee thus !

MOON IN THE ARMENIAN CEMETERY.



MOON, fair lamp divinely lit !
God set you in the sky
To lead night's hosts, for darkness blind
And for my heart an eye.

When o'er my head you swing, your lamp
A glittering chain doth hold ;
Your string of heavenly silver is,
Your wick of burning gold ;

And, as a diamond flashes light,
You shed your rays abroad.
How bright you were, that second night,
Fresh from the hand of God !

How bright you were when first was heard
The heavenly nightingale !
The wind, that seemed like you alive,
Played soft from vale to vale ;

With that calm breeze, the limpid brook
Plashed in an undertone ;
There was no human ear to hear,
The angels heard alone.

The angels swung you in their hands,
And silently and slow
You traversed heaven's cloudless arch,
And sank the waves below,

What time the sun with feet of fire
Was soon to mount the blue,
While o'er the silent world were spread
Twilight and hoary dew.

Stay, stay, O sun ! awhile delay ;
Rise not in the blue sky,
But let the little moon still walk
The cloudless realm on high !

Stay, little moon ! Oh, linger yet
Upon the heights and hills ;
Pass slowly, calmly, where your light
The sleeping valleys fills !

For I have words to utter yet,
To you I would complain.
Oh, many are my bitter griefs,
My heart is cleft in twain.

Bright moon, haste not away because
You hear a mourner's cry !
As comforter of broken hearts
You shine there in the sky.

You come to Eden's land, but not
As on that far first night,
When man was happy, knowing naught
Save life and love's delight.

Then your white radiance was warm
To waves and flowerets fair,
And wheresoe'er your soft light fell,
Immortal life bloomed there.

Turn and look down on me, O moon !
Gaze at our mountains' foot,
And see the ruined temples there,
And tombs so sad and mute, —

Tombs of Armenians who long since
From earth have passed away.
There sleep the ashes of our sires,
In darkness and decay.

Armenians they, the earliest born
Of all the human race,
Who had their home within the land
Once Adan's dwelling-place.

(Here follows a long list of Armenian kings.)

But you are setting fast, O moon !
Your lustre fades away,
And like a silver plate you sink
In cloud-banks dense and gray.

Stay yet a moment's space, O moon,
Stay for the love of me !
There in the valley is one stone
Unknown to history.

Go, let your last light linger there,
And lift it out of gloom,
For that obscure and nameless stone
Will mark the poet's tomb !



THE LILY OF SHAVARSHAN.

THIS is an extract from a long poem in the classical Armenian, describing the conversion to Christianity by the Apostle Thaddeus, in the first century A. D., of Santoukhd, the daughter of the Armenian King Sanadroog. Both the princess and the apostle were put to death by the king. According to Armenian tradition, Santoukhd was the earliest Christian martyr among women.



ARMENIAN maidens, come and view
In Shavarshan a lily new !

The radiant type of maidenhood,
Crown of Armenia's pride !
From the fair brow beneath her veil
The wind-stirred curls float wide.
With little steps, like turtle dove,
She walks the dew-bright plain ;
Her lips drop honey, and her eyes
Effulgent glances rain.

The beauty of Armenia,
A sun-like mirror clear,
Our Northern star is bright Santoukhd,
The king's fair daughter dear.

She has come forth, the graceful bride
On whom the East and West
Desire to look, while fires of love
Consume the gazer's breast.

Less fair the bright and morning star,
'Mid cloudlets small and fine ;
Less fair the fruit whose rosy tints
'Mid apple leaves outshine ;
Araxes' hyacinthine flower
That chains of dew doth wear,
All are less beautiful than she,
With gracious mien and air.

At sight of her, the snowy peaks
Melt and are flushed with rose ;
Trees, flowers bud forth ; the nightingales
All sing where'er she goes.
The bell-flowers open myriad eyes
When she comes through the bowers ;
Beneath her breath, the vales and hills
Alike are clad in flowers.

Before her have been bent to earth
Foreheads with diadems ;
The valley has become a hill
Of scattered gold and gems.
Where passes by with humble grace
Armenia's virgin sweet,
Fine sands of pearls come longingly
To spread beneath her feet.

Full many a monarch's valiant son
Has left his palace home
In Persia or Albania,
In India or in Rome.
Admiringly they gaze on her,
Exclaiming, "Happy he
Who wins the fair Armenian maid
His bride beloved to be!"

But palace worthy of Santoukhd
The earth can nowhere show,
And for the arches of her brows
This world is all too low.
The Sky says, "Let her on my throne
Reign queen o'er every land."
The Ocean says, "My purple waves
Shall bow to her command."

There is one greater than the earth,
More wide than sea-waves run,
Higher and vaster than the heavens,
And brighter than the sun.
There is a formidable King
Whose power no bound has known ;
The royal maid Santoukhd shall be
For him, and him alone.
Her halls of light are all prepared,
And for a footstool meet
The azure sky adorned with stars
Awaits her dove-like feet.

.

The sharp sword glitters in the air,
And swift the red blood flows ;
Santoukhd, who was a lily fair,
Falls to the earth, a rose.
The sword flashed once, and aspects three
Were in Santoukhd descried ;
Her heart dropped blood, and roses red
Sprang up on every side ;
Her eyes were violet chalices,
Sweet e'en while they expire ;
Her face, like lilies half unclosed,
But on her lips what fire !

The heaven and earth shine white and red ;
Come forth and gather, maids,
The rose and lily joined in one,
This peerless flower that fades !
Lay in the tomb that youthful corpse,
With Thaddeus, good and brave.
Sweet maiden of Armenia,
Her sweet soil be thy grave !
Armenian maids, a lily new
Is brought to Shavarshan for you !



THE NIGHTINGALE OF AVARAIR.



HENCE dost thou come, O moon, so calmly
and softly,
Spreading o'er mountain, valley, and plain
thy light,
And over me the Patriarch, wandering sadly,
With wandering thoughts, in Avarair to-night?

Here where our matchless, brave Armenian fathers
Fell as giants, as angels to rise anew,
Com'st thou to spread o'er the bones of the saints a
cover
Of golden thread, from thy cloud of snowy hue?

Or dost thou think, though thy brow be bright already,
Adornment of heroes' blood would become it well?
Or dost thou still, in silence and secret, wonder
To think how the great and terrible Vartan fell,

Giving his enemies' lives to the shades of darkness,
And giving his spirit into the hands of God?
And thou, O River Deghmoud, thou flowest lamenting
Amid thy reeds, sad river bestained with blood.

And thou, O wind from Manguran's upland blowing,
Or Ararat's sacred summit, gray-haired and hoar,
Thou, too, like me, uncertain and trembling movest,
On faint wings passing the mountains and valleys o'er.

From forest to forest, from leaf to leaf, lamenting,
Thou comest upon the plains, in pale moonshine,
To carry unto Armenian hearts the echo
Of the last sighs of this worn heart of mine.

Nightingale, voice of the night, little soul of the roses,
Friend of all mournful hearts that with sorrow are
sighing !
Sing, little nightingale, sing me a song from that
hillock,
Sing with my soul of Armenia's heroes undying !

'Thy voice in the cloister of Thaddeus reached me and
thrilled me ;
My heart, that was close to the cross, in a reverie
grave,
Suddenly bounded and throbbed ; from the cross I
hastened to seek thee —
Came forth and found thee here, on the field of
Vartan the brave.

Nightingale, this is the tale that of thee our fathers
have told us :
That Avarair's nightingale, singing so sweetly at
daylight's dim close,

Is not a bird, but a soul, — the sweet-voiced soul of
Eghiche,¹

Who sees the image of Vartan for aye in the red-
blooming rose.

In winter he walks alone, and mourns in the midst of
the desert ;

In spring comes to Avarair, to the brae with roses
aflake,

To sing and to call aloud, with the voice of Eghiche,
on Vartan,

To see if haply yet Vartan may answer when called
by his name.

If like the voice of a nightingale faint and weary,

Sons of Togarmah, my voice shall reach your ears, —

Sons of the great, whose valiant and virtuous fathers

Filled plains, books, and the heavens, in former
years, —

If one small drop of blood from Armenia's fountain,

The fount of Bahlav, flow into your bosoms' sea, —

If you would that your country's glories for you be
written,

Come forth to Ardaz with your Patriarch, come
with me !

¹ An Armenian historian of the fifth century, a contemporary of Vartan. In his history of the Persian invasion he compares Vartan, drenched in his blood, to the red rose.

A SONG OF FATHERLAND.



WE are the sons of valiant men, Armenians great
 and free ;
 Our grandsires were descended from a hero-
 ancestry ;
 Our fathers brave on Ararat were strong to draw the
 bow ;
 Our Haig, the son of Japhet, laid haughty Nimrod low.
 From mountains high, from giants proud, this race of
 warriors starts.
 Then, ardent brothers, let us possess Armenian hearts !

Lift up your eyes unto the heights that pierce the
 heavens vast,
 The land that was the cradle of all nations in the past.
 God on free Ararat abides, and raises in the air,
 To give us hope, a temple built of seven colors fair.
 The hearts of the Armenians with courage to inspire,
 He spans the heavens with a wide and wondrous arch
 of fire.

No nation can survive unless it glows with patriot flame ;
 No son of the Armenian race is worthy of his name
 Unless to all the virtues of his fathers he aspires.
 Then let us, brothers, emulous of our exalted sires,

Now gird ourselves for usefulness, to serve in word and deed.

To the vain words of foreigners no more let us give heed,

But let the spirit bright of Haig sway all our inward powers.

Then, brothers, ardent brothers, Armenian souls be ours !

Brothers, let hand to hand be pressed, and heart to heart, in love,

And toward one common object together let us move ;

And let the touch of fiery lips unite our minds in one,

While in all hearts a common pulse shall beat in unison !

Let us from tombs and monuments decipher and unfold

The glorious deeds achieved by our immortal sires of old,

To show to all the nations round our ancestors of fame,

And show our ancestors, in us, sons worthy of their name !

To the arena, patriots, go forth and cry, " Behold,

We are the children of those great Armenians of old !

Through us a new Armenia in splendor shall arise,

And cast away the sombre veil that hid her from men's eyes.

Armenia, sit no longer mute and hidden in the shade !

Through us among the nations shall thy name be glorious made.

Loyal until our deaths, for thee we 'll strive with heart and hand."

Then, brothers, ardent brothers, long live our native land !

WEEP NOT.



WHY art thou troubled, wandering heart?
 Why dost thou sigh with pain?
 From whom do all thy sufferings come?
 Of whom dost thou complain?

Is there no cure for wounds, no friend
 To lend a pitying ear?
 Why art thou troubled, wandering heart?
 Weep not! See Jesus near!

Sorrow and hardship are for all,
 Though differing forms they wear.
 The path he gave us teems with thorns,
 The feet must suffer there.

What life, though but a day's brief span,
 Is free from pain and woe?
 'T is not for mortals born in grief
 To live at ease below.

Not for the transient joys of earth
 Thy heart to thee was given,
 But for an instrument of grief,
 To raise thy life toward heaven.

If joys be few, if pains abound,
If balms bring slow relief,
If wounds be sore and nature weak,
Thy earthly life is brief.

This is the vale of death and pain,
Ordained for ancient sin ;
Except through anguish, Eden's gate
No soul shall enter in.

Justice ordained it ; mercy then
Made it more light to bear.
Unasked by thee, Christ sweetened it,
His love infusing there.

From heaven's height he hastened down,
Pitying thy trouble sore ;
With thee a servant he became,
Himself thy wounds he bore.

He filled his cup celestial
Full of thy tears and pain,
And tremblingly, yet freely,
He dared the dregs to drain.

Remembering this, wilt thou not drink
Thy cup of tears and care ?
'T is proffered by thy Saviour's hand,
His love is mingled there.

He feels and pities all thy woes,
He wipes away each tear ;
Love he distils into thy griefs ;
Weep not, for he is near !



MISCELLANEOUS.

THE CHRIST-CHILD.

BY SAINT GREGORY OF NAREK (BORN 951 ; DIED 1011).



HE lips of the Christ-child are like to twin
leaves ;

They let roses fall when he smiles tenderly.
The tears of the Christ-child are pearls when he
grieves ;

The eyes of the Christ-child are deep as the sea.
Like pomegranate grains are the dimples he hath,
And clustering lilies spring up in his path.



HYMN.

BY NERSES THE GRACEFUL (BORN 1102; DIED 1172).



DAY-SPRING, Sun of righteousness, shine
 forth with light for me !
 Treasure of mercy, let my soul thy hidden
 riches see !

'Thou before whom the thoughts of men lie open in
 thy sight,
 Unto my soul, now dark and dim, grant thoughts that
 shine with light !

O Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Almighty One in
 Three,
 Care-taker of all creatures, have pity upon me !

Awake, O Lord, awake to help, with grace and power
 divine ;
 Awaken those who slumber now, like heaven's host to
 shine !

O Lord and Saviour, life-giver, unto the dead give
 life,
 And raise up those that have grown weak and stumbled
 in the strife !

O skilful Pilot! Lamp of light, that burnest bright and
clear!

Strength and assurance grant to me, now hid away in
fear!

O thou that makest old things new, renew me and
adorn;

Rejoice me with salvation, Lord, for which I inly
mourn.

Giver of good, unto my sins be thy forgiveness given!
Lead thy disciples, heavenly King, unto the flocks of
heaven!

Defeat the evil husbandman that soweth tares and
weeds;

Wither and kill in me the fruits of all his evil seeds!

O Lord, grant water to my eyes, that they may shed
warm tears

To cleanse and wash away the sin that in my soul
appears!

On me now hid in shadow deep, shine forth, O glory
bright!

Sweet juice, quench thou my soul's keen thirst! Show
me the path of light!

Jesus, whose name is love, with love crush thou my
stony heart;

Bedew my spirit with thy blood, and bid my griefs
depart!

O thou that even in fancy art so sweet, Lord Jesus
Christ,
Grant that with thy reality my soul may be sufficed !

When thou shalt come again to earth, and all thy glory
see,
Upon that dread and awful day, O Christ, remember
me !

Thou that redeemest men from sin, O Saviour, I
implore,
Redeem him who now praises thee, to praise thee
evermore !



LOVE SONG.

BY SAÏAT NOVA (BORN 1712; DIED 1795).



SIGH not, while thou art my soul! Fair one,
thou art to me

A golden cup, with water filled of immor-
tality.

I sit me down, that over me may fall thy shadow,
sweet;

Thou art a gold-embroidered tent to shield me from
the heat.

First hear my fault, and, if thou wilt, then slay this
erring man;

Thou hast all power; to me thou art the Sultan and
the Khan.

Thy waist is like a cypress-tree, sugar thy tongue, in
sooth;

Thy lip is candy, and thy skin like Frankish satin
smooth.

Thy teeth are pearls and diamonds, the gates of dulcet
tones;

Thine eyes are gold-enamelled cups adorned with
precious stones.

Thou art a rare and priceless gem, most wonderful to
see;

A ruby rich of Mt. Bedakhsh, my love, thou art to me.

How can I bear this misery, unless my heart were stone?
My tears are blood because of thee, my reason is
o'erthrown.

A young vine in the garden fresh thou art to me, my
fair,
Enshrined in greenness, and set round with roses
everywhere.

I, like the love-lorn nightingale, would hover over thee.
A landscape of delight and love, my queen, thou art to
me!

Lo, I am drunken with thy love! I wake, but my
heart sleeps.

The world is sated with the world; my heart its hun-
ger keeps.

What shall I praise thee by, when naught is left on
earth save thee?

Thou art a deer, a Pegasus sprung from the fiery sea!

Speak but one word, to say thou art Saïat Nova's¹ love,
And then what matters aught to me, in earth or
heaven above?

Thy rays have filled the world; thou art a shield that
fronts the sun.

Thou dost exhale the perfume sweet of clove and
cinnamon,

Of violet, rose, and marjoram; to me, with love grown
pale,

Thou art a red flower of the field, a lily of the vale!

¹ An Armenian minstrel often weaves his name into the last stanza of his song, in order that he may be known as its composer. The same peculiarity appears in the next poem.

A GOOD COMRADE.



GOOD comrade, beautiful and virtuous,
Lights man's face up, like a bright sun-ray.
When a man has with him a true comrade,
Dark night passes like a sunny day.

Sacrifice is nothing ; a kind comrade
Is the spirit's lamp of light and fire.
A good friend, a true, God-fearing comrade,
Leads man ever upward, high and higher.

When our enemies attack us fiercely,
A brave comrade is a sword in fight.
Whoso has a true friend, singer Djivan,
Never shall one hair of his turn white.



THE YOUTH AND THE STREAMLET.

DOWN from yon distant mountain
 The streamlet finds its way,
 And through the quiet village
 It flows in eddying play.

A dark youth left his doorway,
 And sought the water-side,
 And, laving there his hands and brow,
 "O streamlet sweet!" he cried,

"Say, from what mountain com'st thou?"
 "From yonder mountain cold
 Where snow on snow lies sleeping,
 The new snow on the old."

"Unto what river, tell me,
 Fair streamlet, dost thou flow?"
 "I flow unto that river
 Where clustering violets grow."

"Sweet streamlet, to what vineyard,
 Say, dost thou take thy way?"
 "The vineyard where the vine-dresser
 Is at his work to-day."

“What plant there wilt thou water?”

“The plant upon whose roots
The lambs feed, where the wind-flower blooms,
And orchards bear sweet fruits.”

“What garden wilt thou visit,
O water cool and fleet?”

“The garden where the nightingale
Sings tenderly and sweet.”

“Into what fountain flow'st thou?”

“The fountain to whose brink
Thy love comes down at morn and eve,
And bends her face to drink.

“There shall I meet the maiden

Who is to be thy bride,
And kiss her chin, and with her love
My soul be satisfied.”



THE LAKE OF VAN.

BY "RAFFI" (MELIK HAGOPIAN).



SPEAK, O lake ! why are thy waters silent ?
 Wilt thou not lament with luckless me ?
 Move, ye zephyrs, move the rippling wavelets !
 With this lake my tears shall mingled be.

Tell me, lake, — for thou hast been a witness
 Of our history from the earliest day, —
 Shall Armenia, that was once a garden,
 Always be à thorny desert gray ?

Shall our hapless fatherland forever
 By a foreign master be down-trod ?
 Are the Armenians and their sons unworthy,
 Judged before the righteous throne of God ?

Is a glad day coming, when a banner
 Shall on Ararat its folds expand,
 And from every side Armenian pilgrims
 Hasten to their beauteous fatherland ?



THOU AND I.



WOULD I were the lake, so blue and calm,
 And thou, fair maiden, with reluctant pride,
 Wouldst see thy picture, delicate and faint,
 Thy sacred image, in my depths abide.

Or would that on the shore a willow grew,
 And thou mightst lean on it, and the frail tree
 Might let thee fall into the lake, and there
 Sway with its waters everlastingly !

I would I were the forest, dark and vast,
 And that thou there mightst come to muse alone,
 And, ere I knew it, I might overhear
 What thy lips murmur in an undertone.

Or would that thou mightst sit beneath a tree,
 Singing a pure, sweet song ; and leaf and bough,
 With admiration trembling, would descend
 And form a coronal to wreathe thy brow.

I would I were the face of the dark sky,
 That so from heaven I might shake down on thee
 A multitude of stars, as 't were my tears ;
 Ah, do not tread upon them scornfully !

Would I the writer were, and thou the theme !
Would thou affection wert, and I the heart !
I the bouquet, and thou its silken string ;
When thou art loosed, the flowers will fall apart.

Oh, would I were a lover of sweet song,
And thou my lyre, angel for whom I pine !
And that thy chords beneath my unskilled hands
Might vibrate till thy heart responds to mine !



TO MY SWEETHEART.

BY KRIKOR KOUTCHARIAN.



WHEN my glance wanders to the far-off deeps,
 Beauteous and infinite, of the blue skies,
 Behind transparent cloud-veils, fold on fold,—
 Then I recall your melancholy eyes.

When from the delicate light clouds descends
 The fresh, cool dew of morning, and appears,
Like a bright veil, upon the red-cheeked rose,
 I think of your deep eyes, those lakes of tears.

When the fair rainbow with its splendid hues
 Has in its arch the height of heaven embraced,
I wish I were its owner and its lord,
 That I might gird with it your dainty waist.

When the stars, bright and dazzling, glow like fire,
 And with their gems the midnight heaven deck,
My heart's pangs are more numerous than they,
 That they should not adorn your breast and neck.

My tender love, my sweetheart fair to see,
 Now parted from my arms forevermore,
She is my hapless fair Armenia,
 Whom I have loved, and ever shall adore.

THE CHRAGHAN PALACE.

BY T. TERZIAN.



HAVE you ever seen that wondrous building,
 Whose white shadows in the blue wave
 sleep?

There Carrara sent vast mounds of marble,
 And Propontis, beauty of the deep.

From the tombs of centuries awaking,
 Souls of every clime and every land
 Have poured forth their rarest gifts and treasures
 Where those shining halls in glory stand.

Ships that pass before that stately palace,
 Gliding by with open sails a gleam,
 In its shadow pause and gaze, astonished,
 Thinking it some Oriental dream.

New its form, more wondrous than the Gothic,
 Than the Doric or Ionic fair;
 At command of an Armenian genius ¹
 Did the master builder rear it there.

¹ The late Hagop Bey Balian.

By the windows, rich with twisted scroll-work,
Rising upward, marble columns shine,
And the sunbeams lose their way there, wandering
Where a myriad ornaments entwine.

An immortal smile, its bright reflection
In the water of the blue sea lies,
And it shames Granada's famed Alhambra,
O'er whose beauty wondering bend the skies.

Oft at midnight, in the pale, faint starlight,
When its airy outline, clear and fair,
On the far horizon is depicted,
With its trees and groves around it there,

You can fancy that those stones grow living,
And, amid the darkness of the night,
Change to lovely songs, to which the spirit,
Dreaming, listens with a vague delight.

Have you ever seen that wondrous building
Whose white shadows in the blue wave sleep?
There Marmora sent vast mounds of marble,
And Propontis, beauty of the deep.

It is not a mass of earthly matter,
Not a work from clay or marble wrought ;
From the mind of an Armenian genius
Stands embodied there a noble thought.

THE WANDERING ARMENIAN TO THE
SWALLOW.

BY C. A. TOTOCHIAN.



SWALLOW, gentle swallow,
Thou lovely bird of spring!
Say, whither art thou flying
So swift on gleaming wing?

Fly to my birthplace, Ashdarag,
The spot I love the best ;
Beneath my father's roof-tree,
O swallow, build thy nest.

There dwells afar my father,
A mournful man and gray,
Who for his only son's return
Waits vainly, day by day.

If thou shouldst chance to see him,
Greet him with love from me ;
Bid him sit down and mourn with tears
His son's sad destiny.

In poverty and loneliness,
Tell him, my days are passed :
My life is only half a life,
My tears are falling fast.


To me, amid bright daylight,
The sun is dark at noon ;
To my wet eyes at midnight
Sleep comes not, late or soon.

Tell him that, like a beauteous flower
Smit by a cruel doom,
Uprooted from my native soil,
I wither ere my bloom.

Fly on swift wing, dear swallow,
Across the quickening earth,
And seek in fair Armenia
The village of my birth !



SONG OF REVOLUTION.

 F on the ocean tempest-tossed
My shattered bark be wrecked and lost,
Amid the wild and raging sea
All hope shall not depart from me.

With all my power, with steadfast will,
I'll wage a swimmer's battle still,
And, cleaving mighty waves that roar,
I'll urge my pathway toward the shore.

And if in this unequal strife
My powers succumb, and fails my life, —
If whirling waves that foam and hiss
Shall overwhelm me in the deep abyss, —

One great, sweet thought shall serve to fill
My heart with consolation still :
That hero-like my spirit passed,
Contending bravely to the last.



THE LAMENT OF MOTHER ARMENIA.

IN alien lands they roam, my children dear ;
Where shall I make appeal, with none to
hear?

Where shall I find them? Far away from me
My sons serve others, thralls in slavery.

CHORUS.

Oh, come, my children, back to me !
Come home, your motherland to see !

Ages have passed, no news of them I hear ;
Dead, dead are they, my sons that knew not fear.
I weep, the blood is frozen in my veins ;
No one will cure my sorrows and my pains.

My blood is failing and my heart outworn,
My face forever mournful and forlorn ;
'To my dark grave with grief I shall descend,
Longing to see my children to the end.

O wandering shepherd, you whose mournful song
Rings through the valleys as you pass along !
Come, let us both, with many a bitter tear,
Weep for the sad death of our children dear !

Crane of the fatherland, fly far away,
Fly out of sight, beyond the setting day ;
My last sad greetings to my children bear,
For my life's hope has died into despair !



THE SON OF DALVORIG.

BY MIHRAN DAMADIAN.



BRAVE son of Dalvorig, Dalvorig's son am I ;
Son am I of the mountain, son am I of
the rock.

Not like the timid dwellers in city walls am I ;

I am the remnant of the old, the brave Armenian
stock.

The brave son of Dalvorig, Dalvorig's son am I,

And in the presence of the Turk I do not cringe or
bow ;

The free son of the rocky hills, the rugged heights, am I ;

My eyes have never looked upon the plough-haft or
the plough.

CHORUS.

Ho, my Armenian brothers, Dalvorig's son am I ;

Oh, come to me, come hither, for the love of liberty !

When on the world I ope'd my eyes I saw our moun-
tains high,

Our rocks and cliffs ; our mountains, our rocks and
cliffs were free.

Until I close my eyes upon the darkness when I die,
Ne'er shall the feet of foreigners tread here trium-
phantly.

My mother gave me birth in a narrow, rocky gorge,
The strong branch of a walnut tree my cradle-bed
became ;

So plain and simple was my birth, so plainly I was
reared.

My portion in this earthly life is conflict, fire, and
flame.

My feet are bare, my chest exposed ; but what for that
care I,

If only my young sister may grow up free like me?
To me the sunshine and the cold and mist are all the
same,

So long as here the Turk and Koord have no
authority.

My life is hard, my life is rough ; I never have been
used

To dwell at ease in luxury and feed on dainty fare.
I do not live in palace halls, my dwelling is the rock,
The tempest and the earthquake are my compan-
ions there.

Let other men inhabit the valleys and the plains,
And with the base and ruthless Turk on terms of
friendship be ;

I will remain unvanquished forever and a day,
Even if twenty squadrons should come to vanquish
me.

Instead of tender wheaten bread, the millet is my food ;

I forge the red-hot iron day and night, incessantly ;
I make cross-irons for griddles, and spades to till the soil ;

Men look upon my lot in life as hard, but I am free.

High genius and the homage of the mind are not for me ;

Enough for me it is to have my dagger and my sword ;

Enough for me it is to know that while the mountains stand

No foreigner shall ever be my master and my lord.
My arms my only playthings are ; comfort I hate, and ease ;

A quiet and a placid life upon me soon would pall.

I love the chase, I love the fight, I love the fight's reward,

And I am ever ready when comes the signal call.

When the alarm is given, then fearless I start forth ;

The mountains of Sassoun breathe a sigh and cry aloud —

They cry aloud, and over them there spreads a crimson stain ;

The red stain on the mountains, it is their heroes' blood.

The hero's heart, the hero's hand! What does the
hero care

Although a thousand wounds and one should pierce
him, blow on blow ?

For every blow men deal him, a thousand he returns ;
He strews the earth with corpses, a banquet for the
crow.

I leap upon the mountains as leaps the mountain
deer ;

The thunder of my angry voice the lion's roar is
like ;

I foam as foams the ocean, fierce beating on the
shore ;

And when I smite the foeman, as a thunderbolt I
strike.

The stormy field of battle is my portion in this life ;

There either the red sunset light shall see, in even-
ing's breath,


My banner wave in victory, and give it greeting fair,

Or it shall see my silent face set pale and cold in
death.



APPENDIX.

THE ARMENIAN WOMEN.

HE following extract from an Armenian classic will give some idea of the poetical prose of the Armenians. Eghiche, an Armenian bishop and historian of the fifth century, writing nine hundred years before Chaucer, gives a graphic account of the Persian invasion of 451 A. D., of which he was an eye-witness. In the eighth chapter he speaks as follows of the fortitude shown by the Armenian women after the princes and nobles had been killed or carried away into captivity, and the country reduced almost to a desert:—

“But I cannot enumerate all the wives of the heroes, both of those who were in fetters, and those who had fallen in battle; for there are more whom I do not know than those whom I know. I know by name and by sight about five hundred: not only those who were the highest in rank, but many of low degree. All of them together, being kindled by a holy emulation, put on the same virtue of fidelity. They forgot even the name of the luxury belonging to their hereditary freedom, and became like men who have suffered from the beginning after the manner of peasants, and who have passed their lives in

this world amid hardships. The elder ones took upon themselves the greater endurance. They were comforted by the invisible force of the eternal hope, and accepted the heavy burden of bodily pain. For although each of them had had hereditary servants, there was now nothing to distinguish between mistress and maid. All wore the same dress, and all alike slept on the ground. Neither one made the other's bed. There was no distinction even in their food. All the mattresses were of the same dark color, and all the pillows were alike black. They had no special makers of spiced dishes, nor bread-makers set apart for service at table, but everything was in common. None poured water on the other's hands, neither did the younger ones offer towels to the elder. The delicate women had no soap, nor was oil offered to them for rejoicing. No costly platter was set before them, neither were cup-holders found at their festivals. For none of them did an usher stand at the door, neither were the nobles called by them.

"The bridal chambers of the young brides became dusty and dim, and spiders' webs were spun in their sleeping-rooms. The high seats of their palaces were destroyed, and the vessels of their table service were in disorder. Their palaces fell, and the fortresses of their refuge crashed down in ruin; their flower-gardens dried up and withered, and the wine-bearing vines of their vineyards were torn up. With their eyes they saw the spoiling of their goods, and with their ears they heard of the sufferings of their dear ones. Their treasures were confiscated, and nothing at all was left of the ornaments of their faces.

"The delicately reared women of the land of Armenia, who had been brought up in luxury and petted in costly clothing and on soft couches, went untiringly to the houses of prayer, on foot and bare-footed, asking with vows that they might be enabled to endure their great

affliction. Those who from childhood had been reared on oxen's brains and the choicest pieces of deer, now were glad to eat vegetable food, like savages. The skins of their bodies, blackening, became dark, because by day they were sun-burned, and all night they slept on the ground. The everlasting psalms were the murmurs of their lips, and their complete comfort was in the reading of the prophets.

"The women paired off two by two, like the animals, as equal and harmonious, drawing straight the furrow of the kingdom, that they might reach the harbor of peace without fail. They forgot their womanly weakness, and became brave males in the spiritual warfare. Doing battle, they fought against the cardinal sins; they pulled up and threw away their deadly roots. With simplicity they conquered guilefulness, and with sacred love they washed away the dark coloring of envy. They cut off the roots of avarice, and the death-bearing fruits of its branches dried up. With humility they trampled upon arrogance, and with the same humility they reached the heavenly height. With prayers they opened the closed doors of heaven, and with holy petitions caused the angels of redemption to descend. They heard the good tidings from afar, and glorified God in the highest.

"The widows among them became again as virtuous brides, and put away from them the reproach of widowhood. And the wives of those who were in fetters willingly restrained the physical appetites, and became partakers of the sufferings of the imprisoned saints. In their lives they resembled the brave martyrs in their deaths, and from a distance they became teachers of consolation to the prisoners. With their fingers they worked and were fed, and the pensions granted them by the court they sent year by year to their husbands, for their comfort. They became like the bloodless cricket, which lives without food, by the sweetness of its song.

“The snows of many winters melted, the spring arrived, the new birds came, life-loving men saw and rejoiced; but they could never see those for whom they longed. The spring flowers reminded them of their loving husbands, and their eyes longed in vain to see the desirable beauty of their faces. Their hounds died, and their hunting excursions were ended. No yearly festivals brought them from afar. The women looked on their dining-places and wept; and they remembered them in all their assemblies. Many monuments were raised to them, and the names of each inscribed thereon.

“But while thus upon all sides their minds were storm-beaten, the women did not retreat, nor weaken in heavenly virtue. To outsiders they appeared mourning and sorrowful widows, but in their own souls they were adorned with heavenly love. They ceased to ask any one who had come from a distance, “When shall we see our dear ones?” The desires of their prayers to God were only that they might finish their course with courage, filled with heavenly love, even as they had begun.

“And may we and they inherit together the Mother City of goodness (the heavenly Jerusalem) and those things which are promised to the beloved of God in Christ Jesus Our Lord! Amen.”



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