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with
Incidental Music
by

## LUCILLE MERLE.



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## "AVE MARIA."

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LUCILLE MERLE.

Recitativo.


In the age of faith, before the day When men were too


There stood in a red-roofed Bretou town,
Suugly nestled 'twixt deep and down,
A chapel for simple souls to meet
Nightly and siag with voices sweet:-


There was an idiot, palsied, bleared, With unkempt locks and a matted beard; Hunched from the cradle, vacant-eyed, And whose head kept rolling from side to side, Yet who, when the sunset glow grew dim,
Joined with the rest in the twilight hymn:-


But when they upgot and wended home, These to the hillside, those to the foam, He hobbled along in the narrowing dusk, Like a thing that is ouly hull and husk;
On as he hobbled, chanting still, Now to himself, now loud and shrill.

Ave Maria, etc.

## When morning smiled on the smiling deep, And the fisherman woke from his


dreamless sleep, And rau up his sail and trimmed his craft, While his little ones leaped in the


Quicker.
sands and laughed,And the seuseless cripple would stand and stare, Then suddenly holloa his

wouted prayer:- Ave Maria!


Ave Maria!

Others might follow aud reap aud sow,

Delve in the sunshine, spin in the suow,


Make sweet love in a shelter sweet Or trundle their dead in a winding sheet.


But he through rapture, pain, and wrong, Kept singing his one monotonous song:-

ravelled rack, And ocean to welkin bellowed back, And the lightning sprang fronn its

cloudy sheath, And tore through the forest withjagged teeth,Then leaped and langhed at the havoc wreakid,


Children mocked and mimicked his feet,
As he slouched and sidled along the street;
Maidens shrank as he passed them by,
And timid women eschewed his eye,
Though half in pity, half in scorn;
The folk christened him from the words he spoke, "Ave Maria."

One year, when the harvest feasts were done,And the mending of tatterd nets had begun And the

ashes between the dogs,
And warmed his hands by the blazing logs
Chafed the puckered and bloodless skin,
And strove to quiet the chatteriug chin.

But ebbing with unreturning tide, He kept on murmuring till he died:-

W. 5114.


Idiot, soulless brute from birth,
He conld not be buried in sacred earth;
So they laid him afar, apart, alone,
Without a cross, or turf, or stone-
Senseless clay unto senseless clay,
To which none ever came to say,
"Ave Maria."
When the meads grew saffron, the hawthorn white, And the lark bore his music

out of sight, And the swallow outraced the racing wave, Up from the lonely outcast grave

W. 5114

stately stem Was crowned with a snow-white diadem. One pure lily round which, behold,Was


Over the lily they built a shrine,
Where are mingled the mystic bread and wine;
Shrine you may see in the little town,
That is suugly nestled 'twixt deep and down.
Thro' the Breton land it has wondrous fame,
And it bears the outcast idiot's name,
"Ave Maria."
Hunch backed, gibbering, blear-eyed, halt;
From forehead to footstep one foul fault;
Crazy, contorted, mindless-born,

8
The gentle's pity, the cruel's scorn
Who shall bat you the gates of day,

(so)
(if) you have simple faith to say:


Sha - dows thicken, the night has come; Through night and darkness

W. 5114.

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