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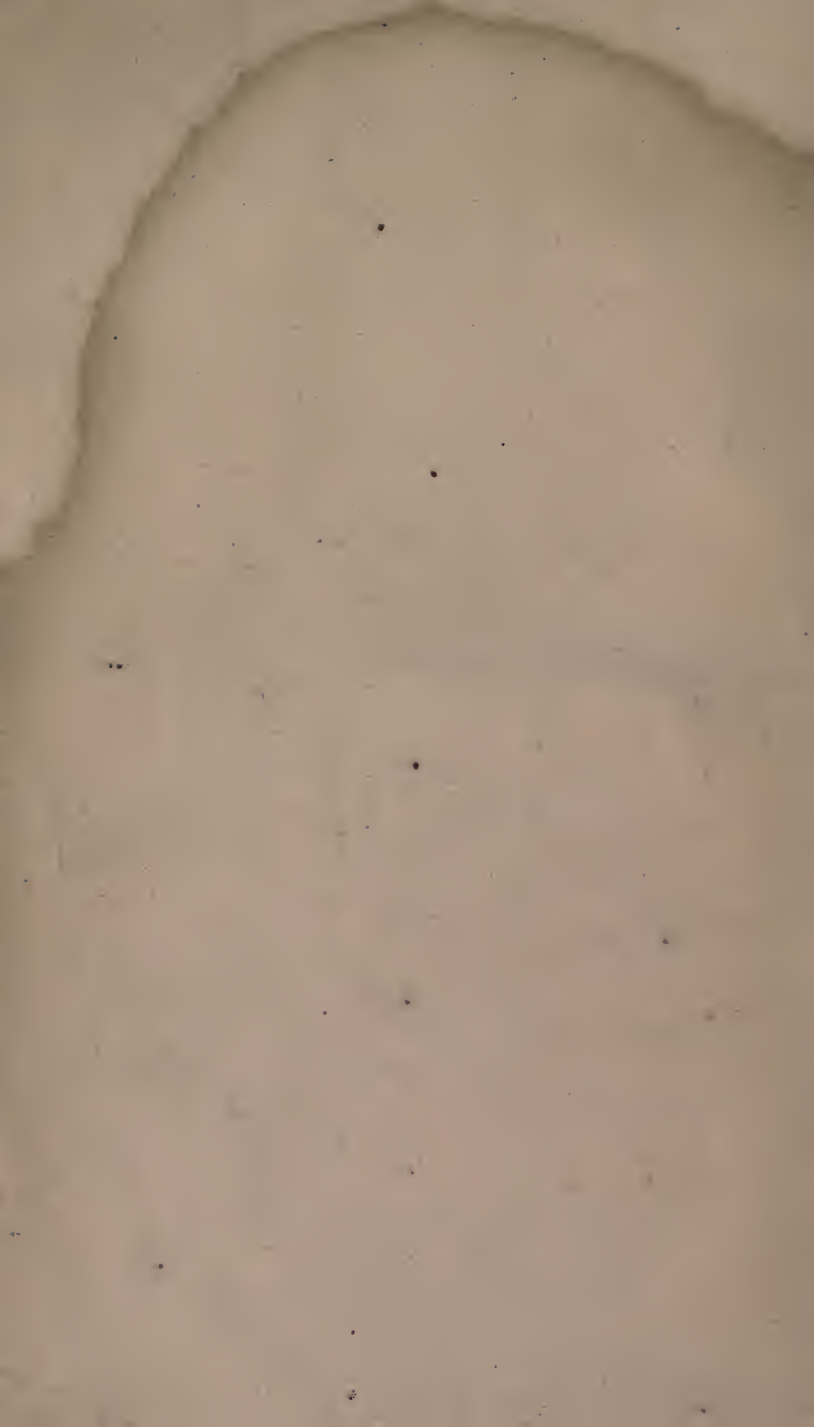
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A BUNDLE
OF
SAINTS AND SINNERS.

BY
HARRY A. CARTWRIGHT.



PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
A. L. BANCROFT AND COMPANY,
SAN FRANCISCO.
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DEDICATION.

To her (how slight the token seems)
Who is the mistress of my dreams.
Not tides to seas, not flowers to spring,
Nor fancied sound of angel's wing
To dying virtue, are more meet,
Than that I here should lowly greet
One who has been, and still must be,
A spell, a power, a charm to me.



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A BUNDLE
OF



SAINTS AND SINNERS.

ARBY ABBEY

THE morning breaks, and splendors fall
On Arby's Abbey, tower and hall.
Defying age, it seems to shine
A thing of earth, yet half divine.
Dower'd with its wealth of untold years,
It scarce the work of man appears,
As storm and sunshine round it play,
And winters lose themselves in May,
And centuries close where centuries meet,
Till like dead leaves they strew its feet.
It stands a history, writ in stone,
Of men and ages past and gone.

Palmer, pilgrim, minstrel here
Have stayed to rest and share its cheer;
And the knight hath bowed his trusted spear,
And the proud king knelt in guilty fear,
As its holy bell,
Like a warning knell,
On heart and ear all solemn fell,
Calling the living souls around,

Within and without its sacred ground,
To the matin song, or the vesper hymn
That ever rose in those twilights dim,
And like incense wafted men's thoughts away
From regions of time and from forms of clay.

Not less to-day, as the fancy may deem,
It smiles or it frowns at the storm or the beam,
With nothing of change in its solid stone
To tell of decay or the years that have flown;
There is little of change in the scene or the place,
But a change has come in the living race.

The monks no more, with feet all bare
And cowl and hood, are seen to pace
From hall to hall, or pause in prayer
In holy niche with saddened face.
And since their time have many been
Called owners of the place and scene;
And in their little day, I ween,
Have glowed with pride and passed away
To sleep in death and mix with clay;
While still these stones so firmly piled
On the next heir have frown'd or smiled.
And still the bell's loud brazen tongue
With varying purpose hath been rung
As death or life or joy or grief
Or victory crowned the reigning chief.

So many have called the place their own
It scarce would yield to each a stone;
And deep life-histories round it grown,
Might serve as morals to human power,
Or while away an idle hour
With profit, if man could profit by aught
Not by his own experience taught.

But few will heed what dead men teach,
And all in vain to youth they preach
From graves where passion buried lies,
And grief that darken'd life's fair skies.
Their heirs with youth's full tide again
Tread the same path to find it vain,
And end themselves, like that first one,
With years all spent and life undone.

But, vain or not, one tale at least
Its archives shall give up to light—
This record blotted, stained and creased,
Tempts wonder to the fullest height.

THE MALE LINE'S LAST HEIR.

I.

A history brief and sad, and all as vain
As the poor moth that falls by its own thirst
For things that glitter, did he leave to stain
The annals of a race who still were first
In valor and in truth, and not the worst
Was his own fall. He came the last male heir,
And in his youth all tenderly was nursed
By one whose child, as true as she was fair,
Would but for sex have filled the high ancestral chair.

Her did he woo and win, and then appeared
To live but in the light of her clear eyes;
And time and knowledge still the more endeared
Her to all hearts who knew her worth to prize.
This daughter of a warrior whom surprise
Or fear or chance could never start or shame;
She was her father's child, in woman's guise;
A noble spirit, free from speck or blame—
Even the roughest tongue was gentle with her name.



And great content among their followers grew
 That they should wed. A wrong to them it seemed
 That she who from their leader lineage drew
 Should all resign to one they scarcely deemed
 Of the same race or name, and fierce eyes gleamed—
 A word had waked resistance to his power.

Of her by day and night they, loving, dreamed,
 She was to their rough minds a sacred flower,
 A beauty and a pride, a kind of heavenly dower.

Worshipped and revered like some holy gift,
 From rose-lipped prattler to her latest teen,
 Her smile, her word, had all the power to lift
 The gloomiest spirit till a smile serene
 Answered her own; and by her gracious mien
 And heart that trusted—never there in vain—
 All still were true as truth. Wherever seen
 Her presence fell like sunshine or soft rain,
 Hope wore its richest hue, and grief relaxed its strain.

And all things prospered. He, their lord, to them
 No longer alien, pledged by such strong bands,
 Saw duty sparkle bright as eastern gem
 In eyes that told of ready hearts and hands
 Well able to defend or house or lands
 In case of war or rapine. For the time
 Was full of danger; armed and lawless bands
 Who counted pillage duty not a crime,
 And neighboring chiefs uprose; might was the magic rhyme

That made or kept the palace and the plain,
 Corn, cattle, wealth safe to its owner's need.
 War was man's pastime, albeit play'd for gain—
 Since lower minds made glory serve their greed—
 And many a raid and many a cruel deed
 Were undertaken from the baser lust

That covets still a brother's fuller meed
Of wine or oil, or worse, that yellow dust
Whose worship damns the soul, corroding like foul rust.

And there was one young lord—their ancient foe
By right of birth (since all his race had waged
Perpetual war with theirs)—who strove to show
A title to their lands, who did engage
Before a silver hair should mark his age
By love or conquest to unite in one
Their baronies. He had flung down the gage,
And jealous eyes with strong impatience shone,
Waiting a leader and the word to set like furies on.

But, though these dangers threatened, Arby's chief,
When newly burst to manhood, took his way
To see the world and sun youth's golden leaf
That dances gaily in the breeze of May.
Then fears arose that he would go astray;
His father's bane had been a pretty face,
The son might learn repentance in his day—
His mother's nature and her easy grace
Lived in his smile—and weakness courts disgrace.

Time passed but he returned not; then there came
A whispered rumor, then a tale confirmed
That lit in every cheek a crimson shame.
For he, no longer true in nature, yearned
To pleasures low, mixing with those who burned
Incense at folly's shrine, content to glide
A gilded speck, life's higher purpose spurned,
A down poor fashion's shallows, with the tide,
Duty, life's rudder, lost, and honor flung aside.

Wild loving eyes grow secretly to watch
Their idol, but no tear or frown reveals
Anger or grief; nor can the quickest catch

A signal to revolt; a bright brave smile conceals
 The pang of her wrecked hope, which each one feels
 As if his own, praying there may arrive
 The chance infallible time ever deals
 To overthrow that mortal who may strive
 Without truth's guiding light on earth to act or live.

It came not then. She, like a graceful leaf
 That holds its place but while the summer sun
 Matures the wealth upbound in autumn's sheaf,
 Prepared to leave, her mother's task was done—
 'T had been to foster that neglected son
 Whom chance of battle summoned to a throne,
 His youth once past, and manhood's race begun,
 He was the lord, and all was still his own,
 She could not sue or bow, and childhood's hope was flown.

Had he been true and brave—but such a blot
 Must if repented still her love estrange;
 His early dream in lower cares forgot,
 Nor would she now accept the poor exchange
 Of heart for heart with one who knew to change.
 He had unworthy proved, although he held
 The place of honor—could his fancies range
 His was a spirit chance could never weld
 On to the race whose truth through all her nature swelled.

And quietly she left her girlhood's shrine,
 And eyes were moist and hearts beat angrily,
 And had her word been less a law divine
 Rebellion had broke loose. Defyingly
 They thought of him, and all too readily
 They waited but the word that should awake to proof
 Their trusted love and inborn fealty;
 "But his their duty, his that honor'd roof,
 Nor must they fail his need or hold from him aloof."

And forth she went, not deeming to return.
 But time and fate bring each their destined end.
 Hearts may forego, or with ambition burn,
 Their goal is fixed, to it all changes tend.
 Virtue and valor to the path may lend
 A glory of their own, but fate is still
 The god of fortune and alone can send
 Or know the chance that leads to good or ill—
 The "must be" comes to pass, in spite of human will.

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II.

It was high festival in Arby's Halls,
 And youth and beauty glittered in the ray
 That ever brighter upon splendor falls,
 As if a kindred feeling made it play
 More brilliantly about the rich and gay
 Than on the wretch whose spirit sunk in gloom
 Seems all at variance with the golden day,
 Longing for twilight or the darkened tomb,
 Feeling hope's blank reverse or sorrow's certain doom.

But little thought of sorrow lived within
 Or friends or bride so splendidly arrayed;
 In corridors once sacred rose the din
 Of laughter and of song, of man and maid
 In wanton dalliance, nothing more afraid
 Than butterflies, bright children of a gleam,
 Gay in the light and amorous in the shade,
 To whom high fate is but a summer's beam—
 Poor insects of an hour, having no after dream.

There are, thank God! upon this wondrous earth
 Hearts that are earnest, souls like heaven true,
 Whose love and gentleness and growing worth

Keep, spite of chance, love's skies forever blue;
 Feeling life's majesty that glimmers through
 Time's petty pleasures or its sterner grief;
 To such love's dream retains its pristine hue—
 Spite of the changing hour, the withering leaf,
 Existence is a joy and age a golden sheaf.

And song and dance and gladness well become
 The time of youth if virtue holds the rein.
 To hearts wherein truth finds a constant home
 The hour of mirth can bring no after stain;
 All loving nature, past her clouds and rain,
 Flashes her brightest sunlight to adorn
 The earth that smiles in glee; but all in vain
 Is laughter when of virtue's crystal shorn.
 Man is no insect but with higher reason born;

And laughter breaks to discord, song to sighs,
 When selfish passion, pleasure, and desire
 Make up life's all, and while those holier ties
 That still to higher thought the man inspire
 Forgotten live, like unextinguished fire,
 To burn and brand when sated passions end;
 Truth in the human soul may not expire,
 And self-condemned they suffer who dare lend
 Their strength to worthless joys, unmindful where they tend.

And discord rose, the discord of deep hell.
 Each to the other but the hollow show
 Of virtue seem'd, suspicion dark'ning fell
 On woman's smile; no friend a friend could know—
 The tainted heart believes each heart is so;
 The canker fear poisons the blossom trust;
 Mirth turns to license, valor cannot grow,
 Nor love inspire, but choked by foulest dust.
 The God in man once lost, he but awakes disgust.

Through every rank had spread the foul disease;
The old retainers most had passed away;
Their bold free speech and glance, had failed to please
The lord and lady of that garish day;
Nor were they such as knew to stoop or play
The flattering courtier to a painted face.
They worship'd truth, all falsehood dared gainsay;
Nor would they cease to speak of parted grace,
And all that splendor grew to them like deep disgrace.

Lured by the wild disorder of the time,
Their neighbor foe assembled his strong band,
And, waking consternation like a chime
Of solemn bells when death is close at hand,
They heard his bugles ringing through the land,
And faces paled within those walls, whose might
Had laughed defiance if but only manned
By those whom danger could not so afright,
Whose hearts not lost in ease had dared sustain their right.

Some efforts were there made to form a force,
But such as still inspired more fear than hope,
And pleasure's parasites, swift to divorce
Themselves from peril, had no will to cope
For friendship's sake with danger, or to mope
In walls besieged, and in the needful hour,
Like curs that yelp and huddle in a group,
They counsel take of fear—"Alas! all human power
Must bow to fate," they sigh, deserting hall and bower.

And of his feasted friends no one remained.
A few, the old brave liegemen of his sires,
Hearts that with cowardice could not be stained,
In whom still lived the pride of race which fires
The truthful soul that duty never tires,
Still gather round him, bowing to his will,

And with the flattering hope despair inspires
 Incite him to be strong and dare the ill,
 Showing the Abbey's strength with all a soldier's skill.

And he from their enthusiasm caught
 A moment's resolution, but it sank
 When she who wept and could not once be brought
 To see or feel the duty of her rank
 Clamored for flight and safety, did not thank
 A husband who so little cared for her
 As to expose her to the horrid blank
 Bare rooms that chilled, wherein she dared not stir;
 Alone if he must stay, let him the risk incur.

So fails all selfish love—Ah! did he think
 A moment then of her he'd cast aside,
 And from his memory take one bitter drink,
 Learning the difference between noble pride
 And vanity and dress, when deified
 In woman's nature, making her appear
 The bauble beautiful to those weak-eyed
 Whose love, caught by a show, must fall to sear
 When trust is needed most in one he holds too dear?

He paused irresolute; but when was man
 Match for the woman who his heart could touch?
 With Adam and mankind the tale began;
 Wealth, fame, and state, and all that he may clutch,
 Or be it little, be it more than much,
 He sacrifices still to her who pleads;
 She in his weaker moments makes him such
 As answers ever to her fancied needs;
 Who boasts resistance knows not love, but its poor weeds.

Who doubts the nobler skill of him who fell,
 Not from the strength of Cæsar or his power,
 But that he loved the Egyptian woman well—

Too well to be himself—when she did shower
The tears and smiles which were her native dower
Upon a heart her nature knew to sway,
Using her womanhood in baleful hour
To bring herself and him to blank dismay,
Blinding his captain's eyes, and leading him astray.

Well did she pay the glorious debt she owed,
And blent with his to all eternity
Her name and fame, but all too late she showed
The hero-spirit that could render free
Her warrior-lover his great self to be
In danger's hour. And in their smaller space
The women-workers still may live to see
That they with vanity can bring disgrace—
For woman is woman still and oft usurps her place.

It is not in the day when danger lowers,
Nor is it when temptation is most strong,
'Tis in those pliant, soft, and gentle hours
When man forgets, when on her lip is hung
The wealth he covets; then round her is flung
The magic mantle rendering woman great;
'Tis then she holds a power like poet's song
To mould her own as well as lover's fate.
She in the trial hour should trust without debate.

And they were gone before the foe arrived;
The few were left all captainless to act;
Dismayed and sad, but nothing yet afear'd,
They choose a leader. Waiting the attack,
The thought arose: Ah! could they but call back
That daughter-mistress, quick would their numbers grow.
The one they deemed most skillful in his tact
To question and persuade was bade to go
In search of her who, found, might still withstand their foe.

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III.

Best highest instinct, true nobility,
 Man's faith in truth in goodness and in God,
 In weakness strength, light in captivity,
 A power to guide him o'er life's roughest sod
 'Mid thousands, or where yet no foot hath trod,
 His heart is fearless that is blest with thee,
 Thou counter spell to sightless fortune's rod,
 Dealing earth's treasures without power to see,
 Upraising fools to boast, but not to equal thee!

There lay deep in the woods from Arby's fane
 A simple lodge with creepers overgrown,
 A shelter, not a structure to make vain
 The heart that prized it only as her own,
 A place where she might live and raise a throne
 To virtue and high thought, where light and shade
 And bird and hind for many years alone
 Had fearless sped along the tangled glade—
 A paradise of charms by loving nature made.

And here the maiden with her scanty train,
 Accepting still her fortune with a smile,
 With gentle words and clear from any stain
 Of pride or malice, did her life beguile.
 The sweetest flower congenial to the soil,
 She seemed to grow unto their watchful eyes,
 A fairer being, freed from the turmoil
 Of men and state which once she knew to prize—
 Her woman's nature shone purer with purer skies.

A minstrel wandering had chanced to light
 Upon their home, and he was wooed to stay.
 The morn was full of splendor and the night
 Made musical with many a loving lay.
 Much did he talk of love, and seemed to play

Upon the theme as though himself had felt
Its cruel barb upon no distant day;
His nature all into his song did melt
As though the joy or grief was still too keenly dealt.

Lofty his presence was beyond his tribe,
His words were "chosen with the nicest art;"
He would not tarry for their golden bribe,
It was their loneliness that won his heart.
Nor did he for long days seek to depart;
And then a sadness trembled in his tone
That seemed a deeper meaning to impart
Unto his voice, affecting even her own,
While feelings strange arose, longings till then unknown.

Her dreams of love and life had mingled still
Duty and power and name with the beloved;
Her heart had grown beneath the poet's skill
To feel that she the passion had not proved.
What was this feeling new? Would she be loved?
Or could she love the simple, noble man?
As to the light will fly the trustful dove,
To nature's bias all her feelings ran—
She loved, nay worshipped him almost ere love began.

He'd taught her heart to know that love was not
A duty paid, but all high feelings given—
A purity too rich for pride to blot,
A power on earth bright as the will of heaven,
Life's highest height, freest from sordid leaven,
A charm, a strength not subject to the will.
Through all her pulses was the lesson driven;
She learned it with a woman's magic skill,
And love's full splendor broke, like some spontaneous rill.
Startled, ashamed, confused, yet feeling strong,
She knew not what she would, but musing went,

Still humming o'er some fragment of his song,
 To where the silent woods a temple lent,
 While in her mind were fear and pleasure blent.
 Who was he? And what could he be to her?
 What power was this that forcibly had rent
 From all the past her thoughts? That did confer
 A wisdom and a light that now could never err?

Or stoop to share with one below herself
 Or fate or fortune, deeming she was blessed?
 No, not for race or name or worldly wealth
 Could she in fancy feel herself possessed
 (Though he were true and came himself and pressed
 His claim) of Arby's throne. She could not give
 Her heart or hand once more to be caressed
 Save to the man for whom she cared to live—
 Her almost acted crime she prayed God might forgive.

For crime it seemed to wed without such love
 As he had sung. Her nature, mastered quite,
 Saw all things from the palace to the grove
 Lit by a new and still more holy light.
 Much did she muse and dream, and day and night
 Were full of fancies. Still within her brain
 A maiden doubt, that mocked at her delight,
 Bade her to pause and think, and brought her pain,
 Doubting if she should wed one of the minstrel train.

While still he tarried, as with the golden light
 Of some rich day the heart scarce cares survive,
 Remembering all its pleasure and delight;
 And while within herself confusion lived
 The envoy sent to seek her did arrive.
 Calling her back to Arby and its needs,
 He paints its people of their chief deprived,
 And running o'er the sum of his misdeeds,
 Name, fame, and place and foe, half weepingly he pleads.

Nor does he plead alone; her minstrel friend,
 Called into council, aids him in his task,
Offering himself as one who knows to lend
 Such help as she from man at need must ask;
 And more, he proffers in his minstrel mask
To seek her followers, even among her foes
 Where they are said to be; nor will he bask
In sunshine, rest in shade, until all those
Once her's and true, with love again about her close.

And she was brought to yield to their desire;
 And on the morrow a small cavalcade,
Herself the centre, with her heart all fire,
 By many feelings moved—threaded the glade
 With nicest care, fearing some ambushade.
But not a sight or sound to wake a fear
 Was heard or seen, until, the summit made
Of one high hill, the Abbey being near,
The foe with banners raised and bent on sport appear.

Here did they pause, waiting the coming night,
 And wondering speculate upon the question why
Such dalliance lived in men, led by a knight
 Reputed first in strength; whose bravery,
 Wisdom and skill, 'e'en from his infancy,
Had been the theme of men. All unexplained
 And inexplicable, this mystery
Beguiled their thoughts till twilight shadows reigned,
When without halt or stop the Abbey's gate was gained.

They parted there, the minstrel on his quest,
 She to inspire her men. Ah, love divine!
Thou sweet strong tyrant of the human breast!
 Brightest in danger's hour, thou seem'st to shine
 When, spite of modesty, thou barest the shrine
Of secret hopes that live untold in words!

A soft hand-clasp, a silence how sublime,
 Proclaims thy touch upon those finer chords
 Whose music is the wealth that memory fondly hoards.

* * * * * * * * *

IV.

Not fearing, yet scarce hoping, those who held
 The halls of Arby waited their threaten'd foe;
 Each in his turn as sentinel beheld
 The morning break, and long night-watches go
 With time's still march, but bring no sign to show
 They had or friend or enemy without.
 A feeling of disgust began to grow,
 And each one vexed his comrade with some doubt
 Before the army came in days that lengthened out.
 It comes at last, and now surprised they see
 No efforts made to take the place by force.
 Surrounded not besieged, there seems to be
 No thought of battle—what may be the source
 Of mercy in such foes? Too well, of course,
 They know the weakness of the house within.
 Ah! would they starve them—'shamed to bring their force
 Against the few determined there to win
 In death a name and fame, untouched by traitor's sin?

The trumpets ring—the camp is all astir,
 And flags are hoisted; there is bustle, life.
 He comes—their chief—ah! he will not defer
 The work in hand. They roused themselves for strife,
 And hopeless valor in each heart grew rife
 For sacrifice; but as night's shadows fell
 A soft note, touched upon their comrade's fife,
 Advised them of his presence in the dell,
 And not alone, she comes and all may yet be well.

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V.

De Bracies bold of Castle Cliff had held
A place in history from remotest time,
And many a tale of valor, sung of old,
Was still extant, showing in quaintest rhyme
Their wonderous strength. The right divine
Of strength to worship has not wholly passed,
But in those days 'twas the one thing sublime,
He who could slay the most was highest classed,
The weak or gentle man of all his race stood last.

But as things changed, when brains began to hold
A certain rank not quite to be despised,
There came a Bracie, who, perchance less bold
Than those his ancestors, was yet more wise;
For he could read and write, and knew to prize
The skill of tongue as well as strength of arm;
And where force failed he tried in other guise
To win the thing that did his fancy charm;
Success was still success achieved in storm or calm.

And he, this Bracie with a learned head
And flattering tongue, did woo a lady fair;
But in the end his wooing badly sped,
For she eloped, and left my lord to wear
The willow's graceful branch; choosing to pair
(As women do at times) without the voice
Of father, mother, who are thought to care
Too much for wealth or name in making choice
Of him who comes to woo and bid their hearts rejoice.

The marriage documents had all been drawn;
The day arrived to set on them the seal.
The bridegroom early rose that happy morn,
But still behind the lady in his zeal,
He but arrived to hear the wedding-peal,

And learn that she had gained on him some days;
 And that her father had been brought to feel
 "Things might be worse"—With each one fortune plays,
 And woman still can mar the plot poor Adam lays.

That lady was the heiress in reserve,
 To whom by chance might come the Abbey rich
 With Arby's stretch of pasture and preserve;
 And from that hour the Bracie hand did itch
 For chance of any kind, no matter what or which,
 Love, war, or craft, so that it did redeem
 This hope now lost—no saint in holy niche
 Hath yet inspired so deep, so strong a dream,
 As did that lady fair, as false as she may seem.

For in the Bracie line there grew a sort
 Of half propriety in Arby's hills and glades;
 Each son and daughter still was duly taught
 To covet them, in love dream, or in raids;
 The valor of their sons, the beauty of their maids
 Were dedicated ever to this end;
 The hope well kept for more than twelve decades
 Had nothing paled when our young lady friend,
 Deserting its loved shade, a wanderer forth did wend.

But Bracie of that day had higher grown;
 Wisdom and valor both were his—he shone
 Pre-eminent; ere boyhood's dreams were blown
 He won a name given to few or none.
 Leader in every sport, there was not one
 Or forester or soldier, minstrel, priest,
 But owned his skill; he wore the crown alone
 As brave or wise, and with his manly zest
 And strength that never failed he still eclipsed the rest.

As boy, 'twas his the highest tree to climb;
 He knew the note of every bird that flew;

No animal more native to the clime,
He found the place where secret flowerets grew;
And joy and inspiration still he drew
Not less from books than nature; he was kind
Except when roused by some ill deed; not true
To what he held high duty—he could find
Excuse for all save this, within his liberal mind;

But this would wake a tempest in his heart;
That man was straight dismissed who failed to keep
A promise made, or left unplayed some part
Entrusted to his care; his feelings, deep
As depths of ocean, could be roused from sleep
By noble acts, by sorrow's sickly smile;
His heart but not his eye knew well to weep
For others' woes, though seeming firm the while
He gave the needed help, or sought grief to beguile.

He in his youth had heard the tales of old
Respecting Arby and its hills and towers,
And in his mad-cap doings over bold
Had feasted there—as minstrel of the flowers—
When she the daughter, in the bright May hours
(The May of life and morning of their years),
Was crowned May's Queen, and worship'd by the powers
Fabled to dwell in forms that nature bears
When laughing sunbeams shine and sweet birds sing in pairs.

And there he learned to love her, but he saw
No hope; for she, wrapt in her cousin, play'd
Queen to his King; and warned by days before
He did not deem it wisdom to degrade
His name by failure. Not the less he made
Himself a castle out of air so fine
It could not stand in sunshine, but in shade
The outline his quick glance could well define,
And many a dreamy night he watched that dim design.

He felt his rival's was no soul to match
 That bright-eyed child of honor and deep thought.
 The jealous mind is ever quick to catch
 Sight of the flaw by which change may be wrought.
 It was not love, 'twas only chance had caught
 Her noble nature—all unfit to share
 The air she breathed, her king was less than naught,
 While she uprose, above, beyond compare—
 To time he trusts his chance, nor once admits despair.

Safe in his love, he passed through every web
 That others set to catch his heart or eye;
 His nature was a sea that knew no ebb;
 In its deep truth and faultless fealty
 It set to her in strong reality
 Of that one passion which absorbs the rest,
 That only bends to one high deity,
 That circles never round a second nest,
 But still unchanging lives, trusting it may be blest.

And trusting, waiting thus, yet nothing tired,
 He learned of her departure and its cause;
 The chance foreseen had come—ah! how desired!
 But still he deemed his duty yet to pause,
 For highest love moves but by highest laws—
 He dare not woo her in her hour of grief.
 Then came the notice of those painted daws
 Who held their revel with her sometime chief,
 And of brave hearts estranged, cast off like last year's leaf.

His castle's outline suddenly assumes
 A firmer form; true love is swift of sight,
 And from the distance on his vision looms
 The things to be. Still had he judged aright—
 As soon could sunbeams kiss the shades of night
 As souls so all unlike together grow.



The sunbeam's kiss turns darkness into light;
She for a time could on her cousin throw
A seeming beauty like the storm-wove transient bow.

It faded; he withdrawn beyond the reach
Of her true splendor, mental darkness reigned;
Thank God! in time the needed truth to teach
The mirage sank—heaven's star alone remained,
Pure, fair and calm, with lustre all unstained,
And that one star, his own heart's guiding ray,
May now be worshipped, wooed, and even gained,
If he with skill love's better part can play;
He seeks the men once her's and bids them with him stay,
And consultations they together hold.

Not crafty he, but open as the day;
He wins the confidence of young and old,
And well returns it in his manly way.
His plans before them did he truly lay,
All save his love. He swears to win the place,
To drive this crowd of jackdaws from their prey,
And then resign it when she comes to grace
Its halls again, without a claim on house or hill or chase.

They all consent, his word no doubt admits;
Sacred his honor ever had been kept.
Each captain straight to his command submits,
Then bugles waked the revelers where they slept.
In strategy not less than truth adept,
He bade them scour the country, make such show,
That still their power by seeming overleapt
Should strike wild fear into their craven foe,
And even perchance achieve their aim without a blow.

And further he confides unto their skill
His forces all, the Abbey to invest,
Bidding them leave one pathway open still
As if by chance—no home must they molest,
And no step farther must the siege be pressed

Till he shall join them, be it days or weeks.

His fuller plans locked up in his own breast
 He still retains, nor cause of absence speaks,
 But from his eyes a smile like morning sunlight breaks.

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VI.

How different is the shout of loyal hearts
 From those huzzas half paid for and half wrung
 From men to greet some tyrant as he parts
 Or comes again his people's homes among.
 The first though raised by few is felt how strong!
 The second though by millions, fails to wake
 Aught save a sense of falsehood or of wrong,
 That bids the hearer not rejoice but quake,
 Foreseeing what must be should chains so fragile break.

Ah! but the shout that bid her welcome back
 Rolled like glad thunder deep'ning in its roll;
 And still the vaulted roof gave echoes back,
 As if the place itself endowed with soul
 Could feel her presence, and the mighty whole
 Of all her ancestors joined in the cheer,
 That rising, falling, all beyond control.
 Died in the distance but to wake more near,
 As peal on peal still came deaf'ning the listening ear.

The wild enthusiasm, hushed not dead,
 At last gave place to question and reply;
 But not before the notice wide had spread
 Throughout the camp where her lost followers lie;
 And ere the bells, speaking of hours that fly,
 Rung out the midnight chime, a sentinel
 Summoned his captain with all urgency;
 A sound of footsteps moving in the dell
 Made him to dread attack, or doubt if all were well.

The sound still grew—the march of many men.

The walls were manned; in silence deep they wait,
When on the breeze the shout arose again,
Their own brave rallying cry, and all elate,
Words that so oft had led them on to fate
Came to their ears, and back from each tongue rebounds:
They come—the foe deserted long may wait
Another chance—to-morrow from the grounds
He swept shall be like leaves when winter takes his rounds.

That night was sleepless passed by one and all,
Greetings and questions in a deluge fell,
Friend still on friend in cheery voice did call,
And every one had something more to tell
Till daylight came the hubbub wild to quell;
Then ranks were formed and order brought to bear.
Again the shout of joy was heard to swell,
As yearning to a form that was not there,
The maiden chief appeared to thank them for such care.

A troubled doubt not noted by her men
Lived in her face. Ah! human weakness, love,
Thou undefined yet potent power that can
Subdue the bravest—who unseen doth move
With subtle influence everywhere, to prove
That mind o'er matter reigns supreme on earth,
The self-sustained to chasten and reprove
And then exalt them by a second birth,
Teaching humility in heart and faith in others' worth!

'Twas this that made her cheek so pale of hue,
Her minstrel had returned not; nor could she
By question learn that he, though more than true,
Had sought their camp. Thoughts rose like waves at sea;
Impossible it was to her that he
Should fail his word. Then fear of accident

And all the mortal chances that may be,
 Came to her mind and darker shadows lent,
 For still his fate with her's by some strong pow'r seem'd blent,
 What means that bugle call? The foemen ask
 A moment's parley with her captains brave,
 And many know that no unpleasant task
 'Twill be to grant the favors they will crave;
 But not the less each brow continues grave,
 As issuing forth all armed in harness bright
 They tread as if the earth could find no grave
 For men whose courage born of truth and right
 Looks proudly from their eyes in that young morning light.

Short was the conference and full of peace:
 "Their captain war'd not with their lady queen;
 One favor granted, hostile frowns should cease
 And never rise their noble lines between.
 'Twas but that she once more upon the green,
 With crown and sceptre, as in years before
 Their homage should receive, claiming the scene
 (To be deserted thenceforth never more)
 As her's not his, 'gainst whom eternal strife he swore."

Ah! for a heart on which her own could rest,
 Not her's, and yet her own, whose clearer sight
 Would see and feel and know what course were best,
 Proving the thing she did to be the right.
 Her followers urge with unconcealed delight
 Acceptance of these terms—yet dare she claim
 What still is his? The coward who will not fight
 Is all unworthy of the place or name,
 In answer to her doubt, they hiss with loud disdain.

Or her's, or lost; for him they will not raise
 A single blade, nor strike the faintest stroke.
 On bended knee their leader humbly prays

That she will trust them. Feelings almost choke
Her utterance as she answers: "To provoke
A war were wrong, yet wrong it seems no less
To take by force;" and here her nature broke
Almost to tears, and in their eagerness
They take as slow consent this silence of distress.

The throne was built, and all her men were ranged
In their due rank about that seat of state.
A feeling once to all her nature strange
Caused her to shrink, her heart was desolate;
She felt no longer in herself complete;
Her strength was weakness; love had taught her fear;
Should she accept, at some not distant date
These lordly favors might be made to wear
A meaning all at war with joys her heart would share.

As some fair blossom in a swollen stream,
Among its eddies, whirled and tossed,
Can keep no onward motion, but doth seem
In its desire to be forever crossed,
So in her mind, poor will was baffled, lost.
'Twas her, yet not herself the captains led
To sit in state among that mighty host;
She heard the bugles blown, and overhead
She felt the sky serene, while round her grew the tread

Of men who bowing passed; then all was still.
One only kneels, and offering her his sword,
His castle keys, his life, his strength, his skill,
He swears obedience to her lightest word.
She hears and trembles like a new-caught bird—
Then, sky forgot, she drinks life through her ears;
That voice her nature to the depths hath stirred;
His generous stratagem the more endears;
It is her minstrel-knight—She bids him rise with tears.

Ah! then came days of festival and joy;
And cause for gladness, living still, may last;
For they were wed, and many a maid and boy
Who from that union sprung, have radiance cast
On England's history in the glorious past;
And still some live, their influence true to wield,
To nail her colors to the broken mast,
Or be a charm upon the hard-fought field
Where England's fearless few shall bring whole hosts to
yield.





LOVE'S FATALITY.

THE brightest blessings when misused by man
Become a curse. The deadliest pang of woe,
The bitterest tear that since the world began
(Heart-born and burning, torturing and slow
As suffering moments that seem not to go)
Hath sprung from love. Virtue and life's best gem
The joy of joys a human heart may know,
Life's fullest flower upon its shapeliest stem
Crown to man's nobler self, his mortal diadem!

Picture the living world and love shut out!
What inspiration, gracious impulse, deeds,
Thoughts delicate and fondest cares, that rout
Self from the heart, were lost! The other seeds
Which grow to flowers would dwindle into weeds;
Still'd were the poet's song, the ennobling tale;
The path of virtue that to heaven leads
Hopeless were trod; heaven's self would fade and pale
And all creation sink into a joyless vale.

Yet picture once again the misery born
Of hapless love that reaches not its goal;
Of guilty love, the piercing, cankering thorn
Of suffering love, whose life's one answering soul
Sleeps the long sleep that wakes not. From the whole
Of love's great grief an inner world is made,
A shadowy region beyond man's control;
A world of weeping, where these sad hearts wade
On through time's darkest cloud, mortality's one shade.

Its power to suffer and not shape its fate,
 To each comes destiny, prefixed, no change.
 The mind may rise up to the good and great,
 Or sink below, yet in the narrow range
 Of human power man may not once estrange
 Himself from circumstance, which comes to teach
 Not grows to his desire. The soul, here strange,
 Commands not life or love it fain would reach.
 Be worthy, hope and wait; the flying moments preach.

Ah! once there grew through childhood and through youth
 Two friends most noble in their birth and life.
 To each the other was the soul of truth;
 Their spirits rose above all meaner strife
 And jealous pangs of selfish love so rife
 With bitter feuds. Each felt the other's fame
 No stab at heart, like some assassin's knife,
 But equal glory; envying not the name,
 Loving the winner more who played the better game!

Thus did they grow; till in the course of time
 Ripe manhood brought to each the fuller mind,
 When all developed rang its perfect chime.
 Such difference shone in them as still we find
 About God's world in human hearts designed.
 Landolfo's soul, on high achievement bent,
 Rushed ere himself to battle for mankind.
 Rinaldo's heart, with gentler music blent,
 Loved, worshipped, one whose maiden beauty sent

A thrill through all his pulses. He, the lord
 Of her fair self, asked for no higher crown;
 Laying aside the shield, the spear and sword,
 Content with love and home, sought no renown
 Beyond such pleasures. With the smile and frown
 Of nature's skies, the season's changing charms,

And with his peasants all content and brown
From harvest labors, far from war's alarms,
He lived and loved and hoped, encircled by fond arms,

His knightly brother left the day he wed
And "*au revoir*," not farewell, blithely sang
As down the oft-trod path alone he sped.

And last, when night's deep shadows gathering hung
About the distance, echoing rose among
The trees his bugle's note, and he was gone.

But each one's thoughts unto the other clung;
For still their love in absence, living on,
About the present smiled as from the past it shone,

Rinaldo's home was happy for a space,

And all his peaceful aims, like ripening corn
Waving in sunshine, lent his world such grace
As from love's hope fulfilled alone is born.

Day sinks to night, night melts again to morn
The while glad smiles and fond about him cling.

His noble nature, dreading no unseen thorn,
Revels in joys the golden hours still bring,
Nor dreams that latter days will tarnish love's bright wing.

And life with Landolfo gaily shone and fair

In spite of trials wove in knighthood's wreath,
Whose highest hopes, like castles built in air,
Fall at the touch and show plain earth beneath.

Yet changing scenes and men and hopes bequeath
To him the careless will that follows whims,

And, for a time, wakes up the poor belief
That he is blest who anchors not, but skims
Bird-like those waves of life that rise with golden rims.

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II.

No fairer scene the day reveals to sight
 Than that brave building girt with park and wood,
 Half fortress and half monastery, whose might
 Hath many a siege and many a feast withstood.
 It lies reflected in the gentler flood
 Of rivers widened to a lake by art;
 Beauty and pride and strength in it make good
 The owner's title to a lordly part
 In man's high game, how great if blest with brain and heart!

And all around to-day with busy care,
 Within, without, men come and go in haste;
 Arches and flags are raised to make more fair
 Pathway and tower, the florid rustic taste
 Of peasants and retainers, not in waste.
 They seek not nature's charms to gild; they add
 Man's welcome to a view that shall be graced
 After long absence by its owner's smile. And glad
 Is every heart, down to the youngest lad.

For he their lord, Landolfo loved of all,
 Is one to crown and heighten such a scene;
 On him God's brightest sunlight deigns to fall;
 His joyous laugh, his kindly, manly mien
 Charm and delight. With her full hand I ween
 Hath nature dowered him. Of a princely line
 He looks a king of men, and faults unseen
 By friend or follower, if such exist to tine
 His nature, are eclipsed; brighter his virtues shine.

From foreign travel among people strange
 Back to the scenes of early youth returning
 To life's lost treasures, fondest fancies range

And tears will rise; and heart's love, newly yearning
To those withdrawn beyond the eye's discerning,
Wakes up deep sadness; spite of reason's reign
Love's unextinguished fires in nature burning
Still force the bitter sigh again and yet again,
And time's poor goals, death spoiled, look lustreless and vain,

Something is left, though more, alas! is taken.

Rinaldo waits him smiling at the door,
And hand in hand in fullest love is shaken.

The friends of other years they meet once more
And plans discuss as in the days of yore.
Each home, from either battlement descried,
Common to both, becomes, as long before
In youth, the stage of love whereon is tried
Who best can please or show affection's fullest tide,

Ah! glorious change! In the domains around,
With horse, hawk, hound, a noble company
Breaks the long silence; and the cheerful sound
Of laughter, the delighted stirring cry
Of hunters in their chase and in their victory,
Ring through the woods. While round the festive board
The goblet passes and the history
Of some high feat, or of some famous lord
Or lady fair, is told, until each day well stored

With deed and word is rounded into night,

Life grows all pleasure while the lady fair,
Rinaldo's wife, is hostess and the light
Of both their homes; for she is ever there
Where they abide, assuming all the care
As queen-directress of the sport and feast.

Purer for woman's presence and more rare
Comes pleasure; the greatest to the least,
At her approving smile, still own their joys increased.

Thus run their days; sparkling as some clear stream
 Gliding through meadows and overhanging trees,
 Whose shadows add a beauty to each gleam
 Of light along the ripples, while the breeze
 Wakes summer music in fair boughs that please
 Themselves at play with their own wealth of leaves,
 Forgetful of chill winds and nights that freeze,
 Ah! joyful days that virtuous mirth still weaves;
 But fate or passions spoil ere garnered into sheaves.

Nothing is new, yet everything must change.
 Storm follows sunshine, summer spring;
 And in the world of mind as wide a range
 Of feelings now alight and now take wing
 As differing scenes and differing faces bring
 New aims, new aspirations, new desires
 Into man's life that, like the opal in a ring,
 From every angle flashes different fires
 Now with ambition all ablaze and now aspires

To nothing higher than a long deep smile
 Of love and sympathy from some blue eye
 That, by an untold charm, seems to beguile
 The heart and mind of all its energy,
 Laying it stranded by the living sea
 Heedless of time or of the surging waves;
 A shell outworn, a toy for infancy
 No longer fit for battle, since it craves
 To lie at rest and dream, wanting the will that braves

Life's dangers for the danger's self, and lives
 In the strong light of hope that seeks to build
 By its own force a fame that all survives,
 Even the deeds that won it. Thus is stilled
 Landolfo's heart; no more his high hopes gild
 The coming years with fame and fair renown;

Moody and watchful, day and night is filled
With a great yearning, and the smile and frown
Of one fair face alone all other fancies drown.

His hand erewhile so firm grows tremulous;
His eye, no longer flashing truth and light,
Meets others with a look so dubious
It seems to fear it should be read aright;
His spirit, now at lowest ebb now bright
With a forced splendor, loudly laughs and long
As in a fevered dream. Day follows night
While she, the enchantress of that glittering throng,
Haunts his still moments like some weird and magic song

That melts all resolution to a sigh,
Transforms ambition to a dream of bliss
Passed in a world where only she is nigh,
Where passion spends itself in one long kiss;
That knows no aim or end except in this,
That she is his, his own, the prize of life,
The be all and the end all of each wish;
A joy beyond all meaner lower strife,
His ruling power, his queen, his more than spouse or wife.

Such was the passion deep that shook the frame .
Of one whose softer feelings long subdued
Burst forth with force in love's avenging name,
When least he deemed his passion could intrude.
Ah! human nature, that will itself delude
Into belief that worldly fame alone
Can sway the beatings of man's heart when wooed
By woman's witchery, never yet hath shone
A fate so bright and high that for such joys atone.

Such truth Landolfo found, but still he strove
With grief and fate, until o'ermastered quite
By a chance meeting in a twilight grove,

Where interlacing branches did unite
 To form a screen that shut the world from sight
 And them unto themselves. Ah! then in bated breath
 That tale was told that in the darkest night
 Hid should have been in silence, even in death,
 O'er ere they dared to breathe a word to wrong His faith.

Ah! fame and friendship, weak and trivial ties
 When madness comes, the madness of deep love
 Not told by youth to youth in bashful sighs
 But such as manhood's full-grown heart doth move
 To swoop as doth a kite, not like the dove
 Winning its way to sweet affections throne;
 Born but of earth and soaring not above;
 Having no kindred with that higher zone;
 Selfish from first to last, and cursed with grief alone.

Vain is the plea of fate, the forged excuse
 That each seemed for the other shaped and born;
 Life's noblest instincts put to basest use
 Eat in the heart like some corroding thorn.
 While he each wish doth wrong, ah! not in scorn
 Can they behold him; with a deadly fear
 They veil their eyes to him and feign to mourn;
 He who's so noble, even still so dear,
 Blasts with his loving smile the hearts he thinks to cheer.

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When honor wins the prize it nobly sought
 And reverently brings to beauty's feet,
 The spoil for which it bravely toiled or fought,
 That smiling she its victory may complete
 And to the pride of manhood add the sweet
 Assurance of that love that makes it strong,
 Earth has no second joy with this to mete;
 The laureled victory, the ennobling song
 Achieved by truth and love, not all to earth belong.

Something of heaven is in the victor's joy,
Inciting him to higher, better deeds;
Time to the noble is no shallow toy,
No string of days for pleasure's simple weeds,
But given to them to sow the glorious seeds
Whose blossoms shed a fragrance over life
In thoughts that elevate, in love that breeds
Hopes that outsoar its meaner pettier strife,
That reach a second world with splendid promise rife.

But when, seduced from these high aims, shall fall
A once brave spirit, veiling its own light
With beauty tangled in sin's damning thrall,
His manhood's day darkened to ugly night
And soiling her, earth's angel of delight,
Whose purity and smile were sent to give
To man and life their God-like meaning; bright
With hopes that up to His high throne should live:
'Tis God, and God alone, who can the crime forgive.

Torn, bruised and broken, struggling in such toils,
Landolfo now must tear himself away.
Guilty the will that, snake-like, closing coils
About the inner man, he dare not stay;
The face he loves haunts him by night and day,
And not with beauty's beam of hope and peace
But with a Cain-like charm, a blasting ray
Of deep remembrance that will never cease,
But, drawing strength from chance, seems ever to increase.

And she, no longer now a sunny gleam,
To day adds beauty, to the night a grace.
No strength of will can force love's hallowed beam
To spread its splendor o'er a darkened face;
Knowing its smile a lie, its truth disgrace,
The laugh still rings, but there is lost to ears
Accustomed every wave-like sound to trace

Unto its home, the heart, the tone that cheers
Telling of mirth all pure, of mind that nothing fears.

Rinaldo's brow grows sad; what should he think;
He knows no doubt of wife or bosom friend.
A change has come, but how? There seems no link
Their inner with their outer life to blend.
The days have not their wonted happy end;
His plans, his hopes, and all his thoughts are vain;
What grief from him their confidence can rend?
Bah! 'tis but a cloud, some shadow of the brain
That will unnoticed pass, and sunlight smile again.

But ere it smiled Landolfo spoke his will:
His mind grown restless sighed for stir and change,
Of peace and home his soul had drunk its fill,
Once more he yearned to scenes and faces strange;
To wake his pulses he again must range
The earth. Alas! he is not formed for rest;
His mind, unlike his friend's, is still deranged,
Nor can with peaceful joy be ever blest—
For hearts like his time hath no home, no tranquil nest.

With full determination forth he goes;
He'll sin no more; no, no, not even in thought;
He'll seek for death among his country's foes,
And win the penalty ignobly bought;
With a fierce agony his mind is fraught,
And all his heart is black with such despair
As passions uncontrolled have ever wrought
Around their victim, since Cain's right hand dare
A brother strike. His marked brow, every where

Darkens with thoughts, that live and burn and blast,
That spite of distance, time and changing scene,
Return and still return unto the past,

Recalling vividly all that hath been.

One power repels, one tempts him, and between
The two existence grows an endless curse,
Without love, or hope, or any softening screen,
To shut out horrors, waxing worse and worse,
A lengthening, deepening night, having no bright reverse.

And in Rinaldo's home no sunshine broke

As he had hoped. Those days that ne'er return,
In memory living, idly still provoke
A wonder why love's star has ceased to burn,
And why his mind must ever vainly yearn
For smiles and music once his truest own.

Ah lesson sad, experience hard and stern—
'Tis deepest loss that changes life's rich tone.
And leaves the saddened heart to beat and beat alone.

For he is lone beyond all loneliness

Who touches, feels, sees one who lives, and knows
Her will, desire, affection's wealth to bless,
And every charm that o'er existence throws
A softening beauty—melted, like the snows
Of winters past—melted and lost to him,
While yet her form pays him in hollow shows
A reverence that fails the eye to dim,
That only wounds more deep, showing the spectre grim

Of love, dead love, that cannot be revived;

That answers not to his once wakening touch,
But like a spirit called and weaned, and shrived
From its past life, evades his skill to clutch.

Oh life's worst death to him whose heart loves much;
This loosing, holding, having, having not

The one it treasures—once, but once can such
Strong grief assail us in one mortal lot—

Man withers at its breath, shrinks dwindled to a blot!

The high, the pure, the slowest to commit
 A crime, are still the slowest to conceive
 Or in their minds a shadowy doubt admit
 Against one heart whose faith they yet believe.
 Semblance or chance or fancy may deceive,
 And seems to them is not a proof of crime:
 Not till the full assurance they receive,
 Beyond loves power to question place or time,
 Will they condemn or hear guilt's harsh and grating chime.

For it is still a truth, and shall endure,
 Like all He taught who wore the crown of thorns,
 That "to the pure of heart, all things are pure;"
 Still such a soul rejects, and bravely scorns
 To watch for deeds at which fair virtue mourns.
 Alas! alas! but time must often bare
 To human eyes the guilt that darkly dawns
 In minds, ah! now no longer pure and fair,
 But tainted with disease to poison God's sweet air.

Not guilt, not virtue, is on earth secure;
 Guilt fails to hide, and virtue to succeed
 In time, both natures suffer and endure:
 Wounds differ, but each soul must bleed;
 He knows the cause who set the living seed,
 And He the fate of each will shape and cast.
 Pause, pause Rinaldo, and forbear to read
 Words that shall life and hope forever blast.
 'Tis done; behold that throe—ah! grief, relax thy grasp!

A letter, nothing more, signed by his friend,
 Found lost by some mistake—'twas destiny that writ.
 Ah! what a trifle serves the veil to rend
 From sin and wrong; no craft avails to knit
 A screen for guilt; the darkest night seems lit,
 And in the end its secrets must disclose.

Shame's garment wraps round him who feels it fit;
Crime and the criminal are deadliest foes,
Accusing and accused, they tell what conscience knows.

'Tis clear, alas! too clear, the meaning now
Of that past change from mirth to mirthless glee;
The unnatural laughter and the clouded brow,
The lost desire, the sullen mystery,
Are all too plain, their withering history
Before him lies—'twas love with guilt combined,
But his fond eyes such meaning could not see;
And now, alas! what solace can he find?
Landolfo's come again. He dare not now be blind.

How much their guilt? Is it but yet in will?
"He cannot live," he writes, "and longer bear
Alone his misery, that only *fails to kill*,
As vulture-like his passions seem to tear
His soul, that yearns and yearns once more to hear
Her voice, to look again into her eyes;
Ah! cruel fate, to show him one so dear,
Yet place beyond all hope the tempting prize,
Condemning him to roam an outcast from love's skies."

'Twas read, and from his hand in fragments fell;
Where shall he turn, where fly? All, all is gone;
There is no charm on earth, in heaven, to quell
The pang that rends his soul; ah none, oh none,
Of all those hopes and joys that lately shone
Are left; and reason totters on her throne.
They were his all; his more than life was one
Most dear; he prized them as his dearest own.
Ah! what a weight of grief lives in that hollow moan.

Hours pass; and through his brain, that scarce believes,
Visions of vengeance come and go, and change.

Vengeance—can vengeance his torn heart relieve?

Ah! never more may his free footsteps range

About those homes and scenes; the place grows strange
Even in thought as he tells o'er his fate.

Could joy be his, though he should dare avenge
With bloody hand the guilty pair? Too late;
Earth is a blasted heath, and life is desolate.

Ah, might he die while yet the crime unknown

Lives scarce in whispers; not to open shame
Need then her cherished form be ever shown;

Still would he shield her life and her dear name;
For them flowers still may bloom, and love and fame
And hope and happy hours returning, smile above

The place she brightens. Who shall weigh her blame?
Who fetter inclination? Who command free love?
The heart is strangely formed, affections still will rove.

And could he joy in her, knowing her will

No longer his? Oh! oh! the pang is hard;
What boots it now his utmost care and skill;

He hath no treasure left on earth to guard;
All life is wrecked. And shall he then reward
Their crimes by other crime, that they may be

Blest in their love, and in that home he shared?
Ah, misery's deepening draught; oh agony,
Oblivion, darkness, death, hide him where none may see

Forth from the place he flies with frenzy's speed,

Darkness around, the madness of hell within;
A tempest howls; he pauses not to heed,
But rushes onward, thinking perchance to win
A goal where peace may once again begin;
He knows not how, he cares not where, away—
Ever away, he shouts amid the din
Of bursting thunders, while the lightnings play
Upon a face from which reason has gone astray.

The morning came, and found him flying still,
 But Heaven was merciful, he knew not why,
 He thought himself escaped from some great ill,
 But questioned, child-like, sat him down to cry;
 His name he knew not, meaningless his eye
 Ran o'er the faces of the few he met,
 Then passed he on his road with one low sigh,
 As if his heart on some sad quest were set;
 But what? 'twas pitying heaven that bade him to forget.

* * * * * * * * *

Day, after darkness and a night of storm,
 Broke smiling sweetly over lake and tower;
 No cloud was left earth's beauty to deform,
 Night's terrors vanished with the sunless hour.
 Ah! could man's soul, when sin's dim shadows lower
 Within, but purge itself, by some strong rain
 Wash out all wrongs, and by some gentle shower
 Bring back the past, to live it o'er again,
 How much of misery would be saved, how much of pain!

Ah! bootless sorrow, always still too late!
 Ah! futile grief, when passion's strength is spent!
 Ah! human weakness, that still weaves the fate
 On which its own life's hope is torn and rent!
 Vainly above the heaven's blue arch is bent,
 Vainly the day smiles temptingly and clear
 To one whose heart with guilt is torn and shent
 Before his life has fallen into the sear,
 Who knows his days laid waste, beyond a chance of cheer,

Who sees the past spread darkening over all,
 Present and future, while a cloud of crime
 Encircles life as with a funeral pall,
 And in his heart a never-ceasing chime
 Of late repentance keepeth mournful time

To wonder and despair; ah! death in life!

Thought wanders back to manhood's happy prime;
Its beauty uglier makes this endless strife
That rages like a storm with fell destruction rife.

The morning breaks all passionless and fair;

Happy are they whose eyes can meet its beam
Dreading no harrowing question that may bare
Deeds that are not, "the shadows of a dream."

Not yet Landolfo hears the rushing stream
That ever more shall haunt him to his grave;
He knows his crime, but all unknown doth deem
It sleeps unread by man, since dark trees wave
Above the spot where they to sin their souls up gave.

He knows—but what is this? a peasant boy,

All spent and breathless, with a thrilling tale
Brings him a hat, that like a leafy toy

The sport of waters, swollen by the gale,
Was found at sunrise where the willows trail
Their branches in the stream below the falls,

And further on a cloak was seen to sail;
The history every heart suspends, appals!
Rinaldo's hat—his name rings echoing through the halls.

Rings, but no answering voice replies to ease

The fear that darkens every face around;
His rooms are tenantless, without a crease
The bed is there, and all his books are found
In their due order. Then comes a wild rebound,

And men make for the river; drags are thrown,
But all in vain. The water's rushing sound
Answers in mockery to Landolfo's moan,
Who sees Rinaldo's form in every distant stone.

Days, weeks, were spent in search, from far and near,
On horse on foot, retainers went and came,

But never farther tidings could they hear.

With time the fiercest sorrow groweth tame,
All poignant grief, and even man's self blame,
Softens and fades into a distant cloud

That darkly hangs above an unused name,
And conscience whispers low that once spoke loud
When some sad tale is wrapped in death's unbroken
shroud.

And many months of storm and shine had passed,
And all men's minds were settled; each could tell
How lost Rinaldo, dazed by rain and blast,
Had sought to pass the ford below the dell,
Forgetting how swift the river rose and fell
When tempests deluged all the hills and plain;
His footing lost, the waters wild as hell
Had borne him helpless to the distant main:
Thus was he lost, and hence their search had proved in
vain.

It may be in Landolfo's heart of hearts
A fear yet lived that deadened this one hope.
At sound of waters all his nature starts;
Not all his strength can with this weakness cope;
His feet avoid the path whose downward slope
Leads to the river; by night and day not less
About it all his darkest memories group;
Men deem it but recalls his past distress,
But, ah! a fear like this must spring from guiltiness.

In days long past, ere yet Rinaldo lived,
And while Landolfo on his mother's breast
An infant played, their fathers smiling gave
Each one his hand, and not in laughing jest,
But earnest faith, pledged their eternal rest—
That he who first a daughter's smile should grace,
The other's son should with her hand be blest;



And all their wealth and lands, so broad and brave,
Thus joined by them should be when they were in the
grave.

But both their lives cut short in one wild day,
When hostile knights made war upon their king,
Saw not fulfilled this dream, that oft would play,
When their ambition rose on eagle wing,
In fancy round this son, whose word could bring
Into the field an army of such might
That few or none should dare gainsay the thing
He should support; they saw him noblest knight
In council fearless rise, foremost in every fight.

And their brave hearts would glow with valor's pride;
They heard their names still shouted in the field,
While their blent banners to the winds flung wide
Proclaimed where men could die, but never yield;
Of king and state, perchance, support and shield,
They saw him to all honor crowned and wed;
His glorious heritage he knew to wield;
Even they would feel it in their silent bed,
And raise themselves with pride among the mighty dead.

Ah! could they see him now, while marriage bells
That shall unite their lands float in the air,
His face but little of such splendor tells
As then they deemed *must* grace the coming heir;
Nor is the hand that joins their lands so fair
The hand of one whose veins can boast such blood
As they in honor's cause knew not to spare,
When war's wild tide, like to a swollen flood,
Poured dangers round them everywhere they stood.

But living men cannot control their fate,
How then should dead men sway the sceptre strong
Of destiny, that more than birth or state

Makes man to fall or rise amid the throng
Of still conflicting powers that sweep along
His path in life? He may in hope propose,
To him this God-like power doth belong,
But 'tis not his to crush *all* future deadly foes
That may arise with time and his proud plans oppose,

Fair is the face that bears, alas! each name;
Fair, frail and guilty, judged by earthly laws
Its maker kindly, when he stooped to frame
A thing so lovely, but with human flaws
Bad men condemn not; but all gently pause
And leave to heaven vengeance as its right;
Since only He could fairly weigh the cause
That led such erring foot-steps from the light,
Nor armed imperfect man with justice in its might,

And they were wed; and from their union sprung
A child who bore the name of her first lord;
Who knows but he the name may bear along
Till in the course of time, with grace well stored,
He shall achieve the fame his sires adored;
In him will center all their boasted power;
Fortune may gild his knightly pledge and word,
And life on him its choicest blessings shower—
The sun of heaven still shines, though earth's dark clouds
may lower.

* * * * * * * * *

Long years had past; the boy had grown to man;
Landolfo and his wife slept deep and still,
When a poor wretch, all woe-begone and wan,
Was seen to haunt the brook, the dale, the hill;
He spoke not, laughed not, but with child-like will
Tottered from place to place the grounds about;
And everywhere would pause and gaze his fill;
His face seemed full of some wild troubled doubt,
That his poor weakened brain could not unravel out.

He knew or seemed to know each walk and turn,
Yet none were found whose memory could trace
A feature once familiar. When they strove to learn
By questions why alone he sought that place,
He nothing answered, but along his face
A shadow past. In vain was all their art—
As well to question stars in heaven's blue space;
He seemed of day-light and the world no part;
A tongueless moving ghost, whose blank gaze made them
start.

Days lingered he among them, and at last
They found him dead beside the stone that bore
Rinaldo's name and history; and the cast
Of his dead features to their fancy wore
A semblance of his; perchance it was no more
Than fancy and the place where he was found.
A peasant's grave received him; all was o'er;
No mourners wept, no friends bedewed the ground;
But not the less he slept, all peaceful and profound,





THE TRUE HISTORY OF ST. ALEJO.

IN the Spanish edition of the "Christian Year," a book published by the Church of Rome, and containing the history of all its Saints, we find the following concerning this man's life and death:

"On the seventeenth of July the Church celebrates the feast of this Saint, so well known for the generous sacrifice he made of the pleasures and conveniences of this life, and for the heroic victory he gained over his own flesh and blood." He was born, according to the authority we quote, of rich parents, and married to a lady of the "*very first quality*," as virtuous as she was beautiful; but deserted her before, or immediately after, the marriage party reached the house prepared for them, on account of his great virtue, and for the pleasure of mortifying himself, and asking alms at a certain church door; the which honorable mode of gaining a livelihood he quitted a short time after in disgust, not on account of its degradation, but because the image of the Virgin Mary (to whom he was especially devoted), became too talkative, informing the congregation at times that he was in great favor with God, and that his prayers had much influence in heaven; at others calling out in a loud voice to the door-keeper of the church to "come and open the door and let the favorite servant of God enter." These proceedings on the part of the Virgin caused such fame to grow about Alejo that he felt his humility in danger, and therefore determined to retire from public life; so, in the guise of a mendicant, he begged to be allowed a dirty corner below the stairs in his own house, which request was granted. "He was thus enabled daily to see his wife and family, and know how much misery they suffered by his absence, and *once more gain a victory over himself* by resisting the desire to throw himself into their arms." All of which conduct in anybody but a Saint would merit a horse-whipping or a straight waistcoat.

Alejo continued to occupy his obscure corner, unknown, till the day of his death; and there (by a priest) he was found with a letter in his hand, the which after many prayers the corpse delivered up. The house in which he died was filled with a wonderful perfume; and the letter, at the urgent request of the multitude, was read aloud. It set forth his real name and character, and explained his conduct as the result of a direct command from God, given in his ear on the night of his marriage. All the sick people who flocked to the place became instantly well, and the following prayer was ordered to be used on the seventeenth of July, in all following years by good Christians:

"Oh God that, year by year, makes us solemnly rejoice at the good fortune of Alejo, *concede to us the power to imitate this, thy glorious confessor*, whose birth into heaven we this day celebrate."

What would the dear girls say if such conduct should become general, and bridegrooms all should have conceded to them the desire to become Saints upon such conditions?

The priests make Alejo flourish, if such a life can be called flourishing, some years earlier than the date of our tale, but the documents from which we draw our facts are better testified to than those of the Fathers; and on the face of them bear more the stamp of truth; therefore, not until we ourselves hear their wooden images talk shall we, for a moment, admit the possibility of their version of his Saintship's life and death being the correct one; but, on the contrary, shall uphold our own, which is as follows:

PART I.

In Spain, in those glorious days of old
 When Dons were respected and rolling in gold;
 When their nation (not mortgaged up to her eyes)
 Drew firmly and freely for liberal supplies
 On her heretic subjects who lived over-seas,
 And who gave her, not lent her, all that she pleased,
 In reverence, not fear, for that noble race,
 Her sons, *whose annals no crime can disgrace*,
 Being blessed with minds too high for pollution;
 Yet, *fearing a speck*, they took daily ablution
 In a laundry divine, long started and kept
 For the cleansing of souls, by a people yclept
 Popes, Bishops and Priests, who clear-starch and iron
 The soul, like a shirt or collar you tie on,
 And warrant to turn it out speckless and white,
 However befouled, should the pay but requite!

In those times, I'm not sure if in Cadiz or Seville,
 Lived one Don Alejo, majestic and civil
 At home, but abroad he had fought like the devil
 With priests and with heroes (alas! dead and gone!)
 Who, following the chart of one Christopher Colon,
 Carried war in the name of Christ and religion
 'Gainst King Atahualpa, his chiefs and his squaws,
 By way of extending the learning and laws
 That have made the Priests and Bishops of Rome
 So much respected abroad and at home
 For gentle forbearance and father-like care
 Which they show all mankind, who, as they declare,

Saint Peter consigned to them and their Pope
When he went up above, Heaven's portal to ope
To each who may come, the happy possessor
Of a true bill of health from a Father Confessor.

In those times, but alas, I forget in whose reign
The Church looked with a favorable eye upon Spain,
As churchmen can look when there's something to gain;
So sins were forgiven, and saints were made,
And poor old Nick was cast quite in the shade;
While Heaven and Rome did a flourishing trade,
In Dons and in Doñas, Hidalgos, grandees,
And in all kinds of people, in all their degrees.
In fact there blew heavenward quite a stiff breeze;
But the stiffest of all, and by far the most quaint,
Was the making poor dead Don Alejo a Saint!
Now Alejo, the sainted, perchance if not told
Mayhap you'll confound with Alejo the bold;
So to clear up the question, and guesses to smother,
We'll proclaim him at once a son of that other,
Or, if you object, why the son of a mother
Who died without leaving him sister or brother.
And the father he had was always at strife
Till he died; some said out of love for his wife;
A second one this: the son came of a first,
And was quietly put out of sight to be nursed;
So knew little of home, its joys or its fears;
In fact, as men say, he was "tender in years"
When his father pegged out from "this valley of tears,"
And left him, poor boy, to the love and protection
Of a step-mother, wanting a nearer connection!

So an orphan is he,

And a widow is she,

And of course looking doleful as doleful can be.
But women like her do not long play the fool,
And quickly she packed the boy off to his school;

Paid the masses she'd caused to be sung for the dead,
 With a liberal hand, till the good Bishop said
 She might quietly lay herself down in her bed,
 And know there was nothing left under that head
 To do. And so, as the days grew to weeks,
 The roses began to come back in her cheeks,
 So nicely laid on, pearl white and rose mixture,
 Just such as you see in a dear lovely picture
 Called "The Month's Fashions," and published in France,
 To teach the sweet creatures to dress for a dance,
 A ride or a walk, or a short morning call,
 And to put them O. K. — that is, up to all.
 New trimmings and tuckers, silks and such stuff
 A man need but mention to prove he's a muff;
 So we'll leave them alone, and at once we'll proceed
 To tell of things far more important indeed.

Just fancy a widow, lovely and free,
 Oh, as lovely, as lovely, as ever could be,
 And loving of course, like all ladies in Spain—
 See Byron (but speak to him never again).

Then fancy how nice:
 How years pass in a trice
 In a country all summer, without any ice,
 To a lady with riches
 To spend, and in store,
 And whose smile so bewitches
 She's beaux by the score.

But time, as all the sages sing,
 Time, time is ever on the wing;
 Time is, time was, and then at last
 Even Bacon's brass head knew it had past;
 And Isabel, in middle youth,
 Learn'd something of this ugly truth;

For this son, that to her was never born,
Grown into man, in her side is a thorn;
A plague spot he is, defacing her day,
Or in sight, or in thought if out of her way.

With questions rude he troubles her sore,
And something 's to come that must trouble her more;
For soon, alas! she will have to give o'er-
Nearly all the large fortune of silver and gold
Won by Dear Don Alejo, in battle so bold,
'Gainst Incas and chiefs in his youthful pride,
And for love of which she became his bride.
Hard, hard it will seem to relinquish a part
Of a fortune that won the whole of her heart!

Oh, that bitter pill in store for her still,
In the shape of an unopened note to the will!
House, land, and estate, are left by "the late,"
—— To his only son,
In case he should marry, or reach twenty-one;
While the widow dear, with many a tear,
Will have to receive from him so much a year!

The blow it came, and found her game;
"So much," she declared, should be called "so little!"
Hoped he might choke with a "mouthful of vittles,"
For the moment a tempest raved and blew,
And then to her Father Confessor she flew,
First he did bless her, this Father Confessor,
Then asked the reason why she at that season
Had come to consult the Church and the Priest?
Was it the result of sin, or, at least,
Some mistake about meat, or the right thing to eat?
For he felt quite sure that one so demure
Had committed no crime of a nature so grave,
But a very short time of penance would save
Her soul from all danger. He paused, and she sighed,
And thus replied:

“ Father, I am no stranger
 To you or your church, and I know your wits
 Leave quite in the lurch the lawyers and cits
 In giving the cue what a woman should do
 When the poor thing 's bereft of her husband, and left
 In this wicked world, all day and all night,
 Without any one near to pity her plight,
 So I come—I come—”

Here she stopped, her eyes down dropped;
 Looked here, looked there; bowed was her head
 While thus the pious churchman said:

“ Daughter,
 The priests of Rome are ever at home
 To dry the widow's tear;
 And young or old, for love or gold,
 We esteem them especially dear;
 And to have and to hold their souls, we are bold!
 'Gainst devils or men, our Church—a brave one—
 Is ready to save from

Slaughter

All, every one, 'both Jack and John,'
 As school-boys say, in their random way,
 When out at play;
 So please to begin—your particular sin?”

She screamed out, “ No sin of hers brought her!

Father,

A widower would a wooing go;
 He'd houses and money in plenty to show,
 In fact was a prize to which none could say no!

Rather

Than lose such a chance, any girl would cry, dance,

Or do neither

To please him and gain her just ends,
 And trust to the future to make her amends.

So I played, I won! Things went merrily on!
 He died; I saw the will was all right,
 And after due mourning began to delight
 In those innocent pastimes a free widow might;
 When lo! a letter left for his son,
 To be opened 'when he was twenty and one,'
 And attached to the will, and called 'codicil,'
 Gives his house, and estate, and Dear Father's blessing,
 To his son of——."

" Daughter, it's really distressing,
 But cheer up, and tell me if all would well be
 Should this son of——, so blest, become *non est*?
 Would it suit your books if he went off the books
Ad instante ?"

" Father, it would, could, and should,
 (Oh that his mother had miscarried)
 But that he's soon, too soon, to be married;
 And then——."

" Well daughter, I'll see if this parried can be;
 Go home; leave the matter entirely to me;
 And when
 You've left me to think, I shall hit in a wink
 On some feasible plan to nail down this man,
 Who's turned out such a bore, and by Holy Church aid
 To have him safe laid where he'll trouble no more!"

The churchman, with an air sedate,
 Walked up and down to meditate
 Upon his plan, or, perhaps, his pleasure;
 He was a man you could not measure
 By simple rules: he spoke so bland,
 Smiled benisons, and waved his hand
 As if it were a sacred wand
 Or cross of peace to all the land!

So gentle, kind, and debonnaire,
 As priests should be, and as they were
 In those days of old
 Ere Luther came out, with schism and doubt,
 And had to be felled
 With that Papal Bull (of the Irish breed)
 That cracked its own skull against its own creed,
 As Rome shook her "shilaley," crying "Arrah! by Pat!
 Now see what you'll get for laving the hat!"
Par parenthesis, still, admit it you will,
 Poor Luther just did get it hot after that,
 For things up above are not as below,
 And Peter was just the Saint to show
 To a very warm place, a son of high treason,
 Who talked about reason, so all out of season,
 And got himself into disgrace!

 But stop! Let me see! I fear I digress,
 And if I'm not careful, shall get in a mess
 With this tale of a Saint—or I should say, rather,
 This sketch of that Father, I'm trying to paint!
 For that's where we're lost, confounded or crossed
 In our tale. But to him again: For example—
 Of his Church and his creed all held him a sample;
 A good one, and doubtless had reasons quite ample.
 He looked young for his years, and looked well to his
 dress;
 Could be moved e'en to tears by the tale of distress
 Which, on a Friday called "good," he told with such
 pathos
 One feared he'd be drowned deep in his own bathos!
 But no! Like the ark in the flood, he grounded or stood
 To tell o'er his beads, his matins and Paters,
 Such as those you may hear in the sweet land of "taters;"
 Or sweeter one still, of macaronian eaters.
 Shaven smooth, soft and mellow, this priestly good fellow

I really must sing of true love
 A tale so very thrilling,
 That even the holy Saints above
 To read it may be willing;
 If not, why let them still proceed
 Chanting their "Hallelujah" chorus,
 Each doing that which is decreed—
 We sing the song as laid before us!

Know ye the land whence the orange and nut
 Are shipped to our shores for the Christmas time?
 Where hazel eyes languishing sweetly, put
 Painters and poets in raptures sublime?
 It is there, it is there! The land of the Don,
 The Doña, Hidalgo, and other great names,
 Where priestcraft and anarchy ever live on,
 In the deeds of her sons, and the hearts of her dames;
 It is there, it is there, you must go with me
 In the year of our Lord, one, five, seven, three!

A lovely girl and boy
 Played in those days together;
 And life was full of joy,
 And it was summer weather!
 But as they grew in years,
 Stern fate them separated;
 Of course they shed some tears,
 And each felt desolated.

They swore a vow at parting—
 A heart's deep vow they swore
 (Their love grim strength imparting)
 That they would meet once more;
 By deep, deep love they swore it,
 And it wrought like flame to fuel—
 That each one would ignore it,
 That parents' order cruel!

“Go, get you to a nunnery! To a nunnery go,
And mind your education, for I will have it so!”
Said this parent stern and grand to the daughter of that
land
Famed for oranges and eyes, and men more turbulent
than wise;
And so my lady went, and, to make her still more steady,
He added, “When you are seventeen, I have your hus-
band ready!”

* * * * *

In the convent walls, both high and holy,
Among the sisterhood so meek and lowly,
The maiden learns to kneel and pray,
And hears of virgins, martyrs, saints,
Who kept bad passions so at bay
That, though of earth, earth scarcely taints
The history of their lives while clay.

With pure companions by her side,
And such bright precepts for her guide,
How can she go astray?
She looks from the iron lattice strong;
Deep thought is on her brow:
The passing years have seemed so long,
But they're nearly ended now!

She pictures the days to come with glee,
When she shall be out, and once more free,
Away from the nuns, and their nunnery;
And one might conclude, from the “hems!” and the
“ahs!”

The slight innuendos and sundry shirks,
That, while she recalls these angels, in bars,
Now half flashes out, now inwardly lurks
In voice, eyes, and shoulders, that this daughter of Eve

Would hint to beholders, and have them believe
 All was not so pious, so pure, and devout
 When you got inside as you'd pictured when out!
 She "can't understand" what the Holy Mother
 Has still to arrange with that handsome lay brother,
 Who came from the monastery far away,
 And who asked but to rest for a night and a day!

She "can't understand" why Sister Jane
 Takes up two hours in her confession;
 Or why Father Joseph comes again
 At night to show her the next day's lesson.

She "can't understand" why it is that the
 Poor sisters and plain, like Sophy and Patty,
 Need scarcely five minutes of time to confess,
 To get absolution, and turn up at mess;
 While Isabel, Jane, or Mary, beginning
 In the earliest morning to tell of their sinning,
 Can never get through till the convent bell
 Warns each Father Confessor to go to his cell.
 She thinks it seems odd, then wonders again
 If rich pretty girls sin more than the plain!

The eventful day at last arrives!

A finished woman in mind and heart,
 Educated to make the best of wives,
 And fitted to take a leading part
 In love, or intrigue, or whatever may be
 Considered the thing to win her degree
 In the world, 'mongst sisters worth rivalry,
 She goes to shine and make a name,
 A girl of spirit bent upon fame.
 Her beauty shall be the talk of all;
 And men before her in crowds shall fall!
 Her Father may preach, and preach his fill;
 Let him! a woman that will, she *will!*

And determined she goes to enjoy her day,
And not to be tamely given away!
Shut up for years from daylight till morrow,
She thinks she has had quite enough of sorrow,
And learning, and snubbing, and that sort of thing,
And now she's determined to "have her fling!"

She arrives at home, and the stately old Don,
Her Father, admires her beyond expressing;
Gives her "carte blanche" to get things to put on
(For Spaniards are all of them fond of dressing);
So to shopping she goes, not a moment she yields
To her jeweler, draper, dressmaker, or maid,
Till she's ready, aye ready! to take the field,
Armed at all points; no task must be stayed.

In less than a month her wardrobe completed,
And she in her boudoir all quietly seated,
Debating what dress she shall wear for the ball—
The first of the season (her first one of all!)—
Her maid comes to say that, in his own quarter,
Her papa would speak a few words to his daughter.
A moment she stays, just to gather her wits,
And then, like a sylph, down the stairs she flits;
The next at her father's feet she is kneeling,
And asking his will, with a face full of feeling,
As if he had only to make his will known
To find it in all correspond with her own!
He praises the school that has taught her such duty,
And obedience, he says, has doubled her beauty.
Then she speaks of Alejo, to whom she is plighted,
And her forthcoming marriage, at which he's delighted,
Recommends her to dance with none else at the ball,
And she smirks, bows, and seems to agree to it all;
But if he could read what she's thinking the while,
He'd perhaps put on the frown, and put off the smile!

What Jesuit *men* mean, is pretty hard spelling,
 But what Jesuit *women*, lies far beyond telling!
 Thus deluded papa his dear patron saint blesses,
 And she returns to her room and her dresses;
 Once there, she smiles sweetly, and looks in the glass,
 And asks it—"Who knows what may yet come to pass?"
 Married riches and freedom, may perhaps—she can't tell—
 Suit her plans: if so, then all may be well.
 It depends on Alejo; if he's easy to rein,
 Not jealous, or stupid, or prying, or vain
 Of himself, but in all things inclined to hand over
 The rights of a wife, to adore her and love her,
 And be blind to all faults in herself and her friends
 (Of whatever sex), and to make her amends
 For the time she's been shut up from freedom and light,
 And her dear Don Alfonso—why, perhaps she'll requite
 Both him and her father, by giving her hand
 And the rights to obey her—(but *not* to command!)

The ball is over, her course is clear,—
 Not to marry Alejo for millions a year!
 A brute and a beast,—a bore of a man
 Who dared to preach,—ay, even to plan
 On the very first night a humdrum life,
 And express delight should he find his wife
 Or thus, or thus, as his humors prevail,
 Making man the head, and woman the tail:—
 She laughs, ha, ha! Let her first be caught,
 And afterwards trained to divine his thought.

"But, dear Don Alfonso!—how handsome he'd grown!"
 His was the heart just cut out for her own!
 Whatever she wished, thought, did, or could do,
 She was perfect to *him*, and he worshipped her, too;
 As woman should always be worshipped before
 Consenting to enter as wife at the door

Of any man's house;—for, as sure as the day,
If not worshipped thus there's the devil to pay:—
Rows, wranglings, disgust last of all, and of course
Marriage ends in elopement, or else in divorce!

Then that sister of Al's—Alejo's half mother,
Or father's widow—so like to her brother
In face, temper, and kindness, she too was nice,
Not too old, nor too young, and made friends in a trice.
For companion, duenna,—whatever may be
The name of the matron, who stands guarantee
For a girl just out, she would suit to a "T."
With Alfonso for slave, herself his queen,
The world for a play-place, Isabel for a screen,
Protector or guide, when feelings should range,
And both, getting bored, should desire a change
In places and faces:—(for as Isabel proved,
Monotony sullied the pleasures of love;
And nothing gave tone to life like variety;
And a change now and then in one's daily society:)
A life like this, she thinks worth the living,
And so, goes to bed without any misgiving!

Now, whether her night passed in sleeping or dreaming,
Waking and watching, contriving or scheming,
The historian leaves us all here in the lurch,
But tells of her rising and going to church,
Like a pious young lady, to pray and confess,
(As all Catholics do when they get in a mess!)
Her dress was black, and in fashion quite simple,
And her face spoke resolve in its every dimple.
Of course, if we knew, we dared not unfold
The advice that was given, the tale that was told
By the priest, or the lady, passed under the seal
Of the sacred confession; who dares to reveal
A word or a thought? But this we may tell,

Since all was made public, as it befell,
The lady went home from the church that morn
Not only absolved, but as if new born;
Agreed with her father to name the day,
And spoke of Alejo without dismay,—
In fact, in a pitying, tender way;
Then begged her papa (which won him quite),
In drawing her papers, to see them all right,
And her dowry so fixed, that, let come what might,
She could not be left, or poor, or in need—
For *that* she felt would be dreadful indeed!
A word or two more: the scene came to an end,
And she dressed, and went out to call on her friend.
Now, an English maiden is given away
'Neath the beams of the sun, and in face of the day,
And counts herself happy if on her a ray
Of his golden splendor falls, like a blessing,
As she leaves the church, where 'mid sobs and caressing,
For the last time she signed the name of her youth,
As she swore to her husband obedience, truth,
And love, and fidelity, leaving all else behind her
Except this new duty, as her name must remind her.
But her sister in Spain declares for the night,
And, in place of the sun, chooses wax for the light
To brighten the scene while she's plighting her troth,
And she don't lose her own name—indeed, she takes both;
Her husband's she wears or discards as it pleases,
Or perhaps, as it flatters her fancy, or teases
Her mind, with suggestions of the tyrant or slave
She cajoles with, or fights with, when, determined and brave,
She asserts her own rights, to flirt, dance, dress and mingle
With whom she may please, since she's *married*, not single,
Her mother, thank heaven, did not bring forth a fool,
And, the saints be praised! she no more needs a school
Or a master to teach what is due to her station,
The name she was born with, or her place in the nation.

What must be, will be! The marriage night
Is come at last, and the tapers burn bright,
The guests assemble, the priests are ready,
Father, bridegroom and all, wait to welcome the lady!

The rites, of course, are performed at home;
Since few of distinction belonging to Rome
Go to church, save for mass, and (at times) confession,—
Just when they've committed a little digression
In honesty, honor, in love, or what not,
Which happens at times where passions are hot,
And which trouble the Catholic mind with a doubt
Until declared to be duly wiped out
By gifts to the church and the saint who pleads
In heaven's high court, to annul misdeeds,—
(Ho! Judges of earth! From this take example—
Not vainly he pleads, when the fee is ample!)

But lo! In clouds of lace descending,
Comes the bride and takes her stand!
With her bridesmaids round her bending
And Isabel at her right hand.
Perhaps she looks a little pale,
Trembles, and is heard to sigh;
Still her response does not fail,
Nor is she weak enough to cry.

All is over and done! The die is cast.
They are wedded, and joined together so fast
That only the Pope—unless the priest lied—
Can undo the bond by which they are tied!
All is over and done! But the bridegroom seems
Like a man half lost in a sea of dreams!
What does it mean? How? Wherefore and why?
Has the widow her finger got into the pie?
It bodes him no good; nor can he explain,

Tho' he ponders and pauses, and ponders again,
 How change so miraculous came in a day,
 Upon mother and wife! Is it real or but play?
 His mother knows well that now he can take—
 After the marriage she's helped him to make—
 The estate that was left by his father's will;
 She knows that he can, and knows that he will;
 As sure as the day dawns after the night,
 Claim all that is his! He swears by the light,
 Knowing *that* cannot fail, tho' other things might.

Oh, Alejo, my boy! there are dungeons in Spain
 That even God's sunlight looks for in vain!
 And many's the man who has lived till the day,
 But who felt not, who saw not, a single ray
 Of light, in the place where the churchmen decreed
 His impious carcass should suffer and bleed,
 If he were but denounced as false to their creed.

In secret they met, in silence they wrought,
 Doing just as they pleased, if not as they ought;—
 Those fathers of Rome, in their snug little way
 Swept men, like cobwebs, down in their day;
 In religion, in riches, in love, they admitted
 No rivals, nor ever were known to have pitied
 A victim condemned to rack or to stake.
 Equally partial were they to broil or to bake
 To burn, or to blister, or starve in dark cells.
 Whoso doubted their creeds, or courted their belles.
 And Alejo, alas! was accused by the priest,
 It might be of both crimes, but *one* at the least
 Could be proved to his face; for he, in his youth
 Neglected and lonely, had doubted the truth
 Of the saints, and even the sweet Virgin Mary,
 He said, had small care for the sad and the weary,
 Since he'd prayed so long that his mother and teachers

Might be, by the saints, the virgin, or preachers,
 Moved to pity an orphan sick and in pain.
 He had prayed till he felt his prayers were in vain,
 And then prayed no more.

And this was the wretch,
 Who (unless Holy Church a point would stretch),
 Must wrest from the widow, with heretic greed,
 Riches not more her own than the church's at need!
 Holy Fathers of Rome! can you see such a sight?
 Ho! dungeon, rack, thumbscrew,—where is your might?
 Defenders of weakness, protectors of right!
 A widow appeals! Do you pity her plight?
 Then sign, seal the doom of Alejo this night!

* * * * * * * * *

The supper is ended; the dancing flags;
 The guests seem weary; the music drags.
 It is time to escort the bridegroom and bride
 To the house where, in future, they side by side
 In concord so holy, in love so divine,
 Shall know no division of "mine and thine,"
 But each to the other be all in all
 In joy or in sorrow, as fortune may fall.

They assemble, they start! The bride's first at the door
 With her friend, and the bridesmaids mentioned before.
 But the bridegroom tarries. What may this mean?
 With whom did he leave? When last was he seen?
 Are questions passed quickly from one to another,
 As they wait at the door of the widow, his mother,
 Who'd petitioned he'd give, ere she quitted the place
 She had loved as a wife, as a widow had graced,
 A few days to arrange her new home and affairs,
 Before being politely shown down her own stairs.

He came not with morning! He came not next night!
 Without notice or warning, he'd passed from their sight!

He spoke with two men, a few yards from the door
Of his new father's house, and was seen no more.

* * * * * * * *

Oh, the mistletoe bough, and the Baron's Hall,
With its missing bride, and frantic groom!
Isabel, as a parallel case, doth recall
While sipping her chocolate, in her own room;—

But the future, she feels, will clear up this new mystery,
And by means as romantic, reveal the whole history.

PART III.

The nine days of wonder and speculation,
Of doubting, guessing, and calculation,
Have passed, and Alejo, surnamed the erratic,
Is heard of no more in parlor or attic.
Isabel mother, Victoria wife,
Are settling into their paces, and life
Assumes for each one an aspect serene,
As if no such person had troubled the scene.

For one *dead*, a year must be given to grief,
After which, the mourners may seek relief
In pastime and travel, company, change,—
In anything pleasant, or anything strange,
Each in her own way, our heroine's pay
This tribute, which custom levies on all
For losing their "nearest and dearest of all!"
Their part by each was duly enacted,
And nothing forgotten, and nothing contracted;—
They wished him dead, and plunged into woe,
Trusting the world would believe him so.
Their friend the priest and Alfonso dear
Were there to assist, to comfort and cheer,
And were very attentive by night and by day
In helping the ladies to keep up the play.

Can you fancy the sun by a blanket shaded,
Till with hot indignation he burns and broils?
Till, deeming his power defied or degraded,
He puts forth his brightest, and thus the foe foils?

So, after their year of seclusion and doubt,
This sweet maiden-wife, and the widow forlorn,
Burst on the world, at ball, bull-fight and rout,
To dazzle, eclipse, to delight and adorn.

With envy and rage, all the women behold them,
And their husbands, beaux, lovers, swelling their train;
With no one to check, to chide, or to scold them,
Crowned queens of beauty and fashion they reign!

But alas! In this world there's nothing abiding!
Or flowing toward us, or ebbing away,
Life's tides, like the ocean's, growing, subsiding,
Work something of change in us every day!

Thus our brilliant Victoria, after a time,
Lost all her taste for flirting and dressing;
Seemed strangely to sicken, to pale, and to pine,
Until her state became really distressing!

Alfonso's brow also was shaded and gloomy,
The widow, at times, looked puzzled and strange,
The priest found the atmosphere lowering and loomy,
And vainly guessed at a cause for the change!

But the secret will soon become patent to all;
(It is one of those secrets revealed in a life!)
Oh! her dear reputation must go to the wall,
For a child's to be born to our virgin-wife!

When Isabel learned the cause of her grief,
She scolded Dame Nature, by way of relief.
It was shameful, she said, and wrong indeed,

To send forth a child without any need;
 But this, she'd noticed, was always the way,—
 Where children were wanted, she kept them away!
 She sent some too soon and was too late with others,
 And often mistook in selecting the mothers,
 Who, having no will, voice or vote in the question,
 Should be held free from blame, if not indigestion!

At last, when her rage was somewhat suppressed,
 She quietly went to her room, and was dressed;
 And the colors she chose told Victoria plain
 She was going to consult her confessor again!
 She came back an hour after, and, highly delighted,
 Appeared to consider the question as righted;
 Bade Victoria prepare for a second wedding
 Which (unlike the first), could not fail in the bedding;
 Since, that much of the contract already completed,
 It remained but to hope dear Alfonse was not cheated!

Victoria looked down, but nothing replied,
 And her cheeks with the sweetest of blushes were dyed;
 At length, turning pale, she asked, under her breath,
 By what means she should prove her first husband's death?
 Since Rome, in such questions, was strict in her laws,—
 And (knowing the ladies of Spain) perhaps had cause!
 Laughed Isabel then (her voice rang like a bell),
 As she cheerly assured her that all would go well,
 Not only with her, but one more should be blest,
 And Alejo, poor man! should be fully redressed!

* * * * *

Unshaven, unwashed, and all tatters and dirt,
 A poor mis'rable wretch nothing cheered or could hurt,
 On the first wedding night, in the whirl of affairs,
 Found a kind of a shakedown under their stairs.
 He'd strolled in, like others, if not to the feast,
 Hoping perhaps for some trifle,—expecting at least

That wine would be served to the mob at the door,—
And he craved for the wine, should he get nothing more.
The place he discovered when all was dismay,
And he deemed it wise to get out of the way;
But, liking his lodgings, he stopped till next day,
And the next; and when he crept forth to the air
Was surprised that none asked his right to be there.
Poor Isabel! Ah! in her grief, it might pain her
To be questioned or spoke to! So this dirty retainer
Lived on, and crept in or crept out like a mouse,
Till the servants all thought he belonged to the house.

One morning, a perfume, ambrosial and rich,
Embalsomed the mansion in every niche;
Not the sweetest of flowers ever distilled,
Not the sweetest of wood ever burned, could have filled
The house with a scent so divinely enchanting,
So suggestive of heaven and angels when chanting.
Oh, whence could it come? and oh, what could it mean?
Were they sleeping or waking, or all in a dream?
It was strangely delicious! They scarcely felt mortal
Who breathed but the air that escaped at the portal!
High and low did they search, but discovered no reason
In their bottles of scent or the flowers of the season;
And all vainly they asked whence it came, what it meant,
Till the story got wind, and the Church kindly sent
A priest, charged to examine and then to report
If the miracle came from God, as it ought;
Or whether the devil, at his old tricks again,
Was trying once more to get footing in Spain!

But long ere this, a great crowd had collected
In the street and the house; and the people expected
Nothing short of a miracle, fresh from the mint
Where such fables are coined ere they come out in print.
And as tarried the father, so holy and learn'd,

Still deeper and stronger expectancy burned
 In the hearts of the watchers, and prophecy grew
 And spake full from the lips of that motley crew.
 "An angel or saint from the Virgin, no other,
 Had come to console the fond wife and the mother."
 Conviction grew stronger each time it was stated,
 And the priest for his dalliance louder was rated.

Weak and pallid, as if from long prayer and long fast,
 And muttering and crossing himself, he goes past,
 With the choristers chanting around him a hymn,
 And the stars coming forth, and the light growing dim.
 On the threshold he pauses, prays, staggers, and falls,
 As devoutly on Christ and the Virgin he calls.
 O'erpowered by the odor, he feels himself faint,
 And knows by his instinct he's nearing a saint.
 He enters the house, but ascends not a stair—
 The presence he seeks must be sought for; and there,
 He points to the corner in which the poor wretch,
 On the night of the marriage, his limbs chose to stretch!
 They open the door:—Lo! a rich flood of light
 Pours out, to attest that the churchman is right.
 They enter, start, scream—what is this meets their sight?
 'Tis Alejo—clothed just as he came from the ball,—
 But his face is a sight to shock, petrify all!
 So gaunt and so ghastly, the lines by death fixed:—
 Each pulse was stopped and each eye transfixed
 As they gazed at that wreck of humanity, spread
 On the rags of the beggar, as if for a bed!

In the hands of the corpse, see, a letter is lying;
 The priest kneels, takes it up:—'Twas written when dying
 By Alejo, and tells how God spake in his ear
 And inspired him with virtue, and bade him forbear
 To gratify lust; to leave wife, wealth, and take
 The form of a beggar, and yet farther to make

An essay of virtue to dwell 'neath her roof,
To see, hear, and not speak, but keep ever aloof
Until death. Such the letter, and none seemed to doubt it—
(Or, if any one did, they said nothing about it.)

'Mongst the crowd of the curious who flocked to the scene,
Were many whose health bill was not overclean;
But the sight and the smell of so sacred a corpse
Was found efficacious; and, as matter of course,
Pilgrims by hundreds came from far and from near,
And the cures that were wrought proved his saintship quite
clear.

So the Pope was appealed to—at once gave consent,—
Canonized him in Rome on the first day of Lent;
After which he'd a church built, by "patrons," I wist,
And our heroines' names proudly headed the list.

Isabel was delighted, and showed to each friend
How her words, on that night, had come true in the end.
And Alejo the lost,—the dear saint that was now,
Had left a romance, like the mistletoe bough!
To go into mourning, she said, would seem treason;
For if ever a mother and wife had good reason
To thank God and the Virgin for special behest,
'Twas the wife and the mother of Alejo the blest!
Besides, they had mourned, as the world was aware,
When he first disappeared, and were plunged in despair;
But now, his fate known, they felt such a relief
That joy would come natural, 'stead of deep grief—
And more still. The two lovers, now free to unite,
Had named not the day, but appointed the night;
And Victoria felt anxious at once to be bound,
As her time became short and her figure grew round;
Lest the chapter of fate should place her with others,
Who, without being wives, have yet become mothers!

So, in place of black crape, of tears, sighs and sorrow,
 Our ladies were dressed in white silk on the morrow;
 When Alfonso the true and Victoria the tried
 Crowned their youthful vows as bridegroom and bride.
 Just a month and a day ere the birth of a son,—
 From the loss of Alejo, twenty-four wanting one.
 How they lived ever after is folded in mystery,
 But later, perchance, we may look up the history.

Of Isabel, we are told that she still remained single,
 But scarcely as much with the world cared to mingle;
 Since she found (and for this he did not fail to bless her)
 All her comfort and joy in her father confessor!

PART IV.

VICTORIA AND ALFONSO.

Playmates in childhood and lovers in youth,
 And famed for their beauty not less than their truth,
 Were the pair who received heaven's sanction that night,
 Their fortunes, pains, pleasures, thenceforth to unite.
 With trials a many and troubles in plenty
 Besetting their years till the lady was twenty,
 They seemed destined to live separated forever,
 And to suffer the pangs that come with the "never"
 Of poets and lovers, who find once, and no more,
 The being who thrills their heart to its core.
 But fathers or friends turn cruel and vicious,
 Or fate in some shape cuts in unpropitious,
 And rarely the dear ones a trial can make
 Of a love they're convinced no trial could shake,
 While their passion by time suffers no diminution,
 But in verses and letters is held in solution.
 Such fate is, alas! the too common lot,
 The ingredient of every poetical plot
 Told by letters, or tales profuse in their prose,

And whispered all secretly, under the rose;—
Indeed it is common; but, thanks to our saint,
We've a different picture entirely to paint;
For our lovers are married and settled together,
And (in the Father's cap they call it a feather)
A fair child is born to gladden their eyes,
Binding each to the other with mutual ties.

By the fact of the child, of course all may gather
That love's gushing first years, for the mother and father,
Have passed—(those sweet days of "My dear," and "My
darling,"

Alas! that such days should end sometimes in snarling,
And so debar us the pleasure of seeing and showing
Wedlock's earlier joys, so well worth the knowing)
And opens our tale in times after love's spring,
The first delicate bloom had been swept from his wing,
And when summer, profuse in her blossoms and light,
In their marriage's calendar stood at full height!

She was dressed for a ball—superbly dressed,
And showed more than a glimpse of a finely formed breast,
That gleamed out, like rich beauty disdaining a cover,
Or like luscious ripe fruit its bonds bursting over;
As she passed to her carriage so stately her air,
Each timid first look became fixed in a stare—
A forced tribute, exacted by glances imperious,
Quite enough to make any man feel and turn serious.
Her husband, politely assisting her enter,
Appeared to vibrate at the sight to his centre.

The carriage rolled off; he turned back with a sigh,
And the sparkle at once faded out from his eye;
And he entered the house with a dark gloomy brow
That said things came to pass, tho' he scarcely knew how!
His wishes—for orders he'd never yet given

To her, whose smiles had made earth appear heaven,—
 Were not understood, or ignored, or forgot,—
 He scarcely knew which; yet he doubted her not,
 Tho' their home, himself, and their beautiful child
 Were no longer the charms that her fancy beguiled;
 But a word or a thought, their past days recalling,
 He trusted would save her from sinning or falling.
 And, perchance, he himself had been something to blame,
 Tho' he scarcely could tell whence the feeling first came,
 Or how it had grown, until they appeared
 As if each to the other was far less endeared.

How sad is that feeling when once it is known,
 To our mind's eye revealing, tho' we scarcely dare own
 To ourselves, as we ponder and muse o'er the past,
 And, sorrowing, wonder *can* love die at last?—
 Is that something all strange, in one who hath been
 Loved without change through life's varying scenes.
 To one and the other, hearts speak with the eyes,
 And vainly we'd smother the fact when love dies!

With her, love had been but weak woman's desire
 For the worship and praise her charms might inspire,
 While his burned, and was fed by that holier flame
 Of truth that can sacrifice self, and such fame,
 To a home and a life above bull-fights and balls,
 The flatt'ry of fops, and the glitter that palls
 On all hearts that are not so vacant and vain
 And so selfishly full of their own little pain
 Or pleasure; they know not, and never can know,
 A joy deeper than making the first in a show
 Of folly, 'mong fools that bow, flatter, and simper,
 And speak of all life in a meaningless whimper,
 Calling gallantry love, and making at best
 Of passion a plaything, more often a jest;—
 When days of desire end in mutual disgust,

And each growing tired find, as shallow minds must,
A new bauble or pleasure to distract or amuse
That God-given life they so waste and abuse.

Oh, beauty, divine, glancing out from bright eyes,
Oh, music, the sweetest that lives in replies
Of woman to man, in youth's innocent flush,
When her rich cheek is stained with that eloquent blush
That tells of a passion half painful to bear,
From the might of her joy, that is burning to share
Her love and her truth with the chosen from all,
Whose heart she awoke to love's magical call!

Oh, beauty and music, once heard and possessed,
If lost, or grown silent, to him who was blest
By your charms in his life, his home, and his heart,
Time hath little to give and earth less to impart.
For memory, however hope bravely may fight
'Gainst the shadows by day, will recall them at night,
And no power shall avail to take from life's door
The raven-like shadows that moan "nevermore."

Not from death comes the blow that is hardest to bear,
Not from death springs the grief that is wildest despair!
O'er the tombs of our dead a bright halo is flung,
And love clings to the lost, as in life it once clung,
And God in his mercy set death round with hope,
And gave us a power with this shadow to cope.
But what shall avail us to soften the pangs
When regret and remorse fix their venomous fangs
In a heart that not heeded or cast from its side
A husband once loved, or a dear worshipped bride,—
When the soul, looking back o'er a long line of years,
Shall see naught in the track but crimes watered with tears,—
When the soul and the senses grow palsied and shake,
Telling o'er such a life from mistake to mistake:—

Comfort comes to the mourner by nature bereft,
 But repentance alone for such spirits is left;
 Though the voice ring with laughter, the eye gleam with
 mirth,
 Yet never comes peace back for them, on this earth!

O'er the bed of their child bowed the father a space,
 And watched with delight the small, tranquil face
 Which lay rosy and warm in its innocent sleep,
 Not fearing the future, with no past to weep,
 But all virgin and bright, like a pearl in the deep.
 He thought of the mother, and prayed that this night
 He might win her again from the hollow delight
 The world gave, to his heart and his home by a word,
 And a sight at which nature had trembled and stirred
 Thro' his being, and reached even her, as she lay
 Proudly back in her chair, in her box at the play,—
 "The admired of admirers,"—the gayest of gay!

All gently he spoke of these things when she came,
 But her blood in a moment was up in a flame—
 Her's was the fortune, not his, that she spent;
 And, pray *who* was to blame if alone she went?
 What *his* pleasures might be she knew not, nor cared,
 But with her they had certainly never been shared.
 As to dressing, he'd better turn milliner's maid,
 And study the fashions ere offering to aid
 In selecting her dresses,—tho' when she required it
 She'd show him her next, and ask if he admired it.
 Till that time, he could censure or praise at his pleasure,
 Since her dress would be cut to suit her own measure
 Not his,—and, thank God! all the money they cost,
 Tho' paid by his wife, yet by him was not lost.
 She begged, the next time he would kindly choose morning
 When he felt bound to preach, and give her due warning;
 For the present, she thanked him tho' he *was* bitter,
 Then wished him good night, with a smile and a titter.

A play by one Shakspeare, called "Taming the Shrew,"
When well put on the stage in my day always drew
In all parts crowds of people, to witness "Sour Kate,"
Become, thro' rough treatment, the obedient mate
Of one Mr. Petruchio. In prose, play, or novel,
No argumēt charms more, in palace or hovel,
Than to make some brave woman acknowledge man's right,
And yield up with much grace after showing some fight
To the will of that man who may take her in hand,
As the giant did once a sweet Miss Crowland,
Whose five valiant brothers departed this life
Through going to meddle 'twixt the man and his wife

What think you 's the meaning of this popularity?
Or is it that shrews are in life such a rarity?
Or is it, perchance, that they seldom get tamed?
Or that men like to see women broken and shamed?
Or—no matter now; be the cause what it may,
It's less pleasant in life than when seen in a play,
As whoever shall try it may find out one day.

But this heroine of ours is no genuine shrew;
If you carefully note her character through,
You'll find that she's shallow, vain, selfish, and proud,—
A specimen picked out from fashion's rich crowd,
Whose aim from their birth till death turn the sad page
Is to shine, dress, be talked of,—perhaps counted the rage.
Those shrews of the poets have hearts you can reach,
And not vainly their husbands or reason or preach,
But in life they are found quite callous to lessons,
And impervious to all save *wished for* impressions;
And Petruchio might rail and smash all things before her,
Ere bending the will of a wife like Victoria;
And even the treatment that cured Kate of canker
Had most likely failed with the gentle Bianca.
Not she who speaks loudest or rails at a trifle,

Is the hardest to soothe, or her passions to stifle;
 But that soft pink and white sweet creature of grace,
 Whose soul seems to smile from her beautiful face,
 As she sits by her mother and plays with her fan,
 May perhaps turn out more than a match for her man.

'Tis an impost laid ever on marriage by fate,
 The lady can never be known till too late
 To break up the contract, except by a scandal
 And by giving the curious a pretty strong handle
 To pump out our secrets domestic, and show
 To the world what it's best the world should not know.

In such trials most wives rise superior to men,
 And bear better the griefs that come to them, when
 In life's lottery a blank turns up in the place
 Of the love and attention they trusted would grace
 Their homes, when as mothers and wives they consented
 To share life with that dearest one fortune presented.
 How many sit watching alone and in tears
 Until his step comes, when the gentle face clears!

Life's balance once struck, as 'twill be in the sequel,
 Spite of shrews, *woman's* love will be found without equal,
 The one thing on earth most perfect and whole,
 Most Christlike, most Godlike, and purest of soul!

To our tale. With much patience and gentle persuasion,
 And even with firmness and strength on occasion,
 The husband attempted his wrongs to resist.
 Pitched battle and skirmish were foughten, I wist,
 By day and by night, 'tween this once loving pair,
 But did not result in cleansing the air,
 Like the thunders of heaven. On the contrary, they
 Appeared to make darker each forthcoming day.

Thus it fared with Alfonso, who'd lost his command,
And who might have been pardoned for "raising his hand
Gainst a woman," to win her from folly and blindness,
And in this way have shown that he did it "in kindness,"
Had it proved a success; but in face of the doubt
He scrupled to try it, so managed, without,
To hit on a plan that served, perhaps, as well
(If not to win heaven) to save him from hell!
Thus, one morning the husband and child were both
missing,—

Had gone, none knew where, and left without kissing
The mother and wife, at which she felt sore,
And had scolded, no doubt, had they come back once more.
But they did not; and rumor, which runs on the breeze,
Reported them shipped and away over seas
To a new world that Spain possessed in those days,
And lost when Great Bolivar won his bright bays.

Thus our heroine again, now skilled by experience
In life, had once more achieved her deliverance,
And was free from all fetters, to follow the bent
Of a heart that to pleasure alone had been lent.
Still her time she employed much as she had done
In the days that were passed, excepting in one
Small particular; and that was, receiving at home
Many friends that before she could not let come.
There were generals, priests, actors, politicians, and wits,
With poets and painters and sparkling young cits.
Her passion seemed changed; she forgot on the morrow
Her favorite to-day, in her general horror
Of anything old in dresses and lovers, she
Appeared on a voyage of perpetual discovery.
Not the famed Russian Empress, Cath'rine the Great,
With her "right divine" titles to splendor and state,
Nor any one Queen of any one nation
Made changes on shorter deliberation.

This held for some years; then scandal began
 At length to point out one particular man,—
 A great general, all covered with gold and with lace
 Round a padded figure, with a whiskerless face
 In which Dame Nature had signed her receipt
 For cunning and craft, cowardice and deceit.
 He had won his fame in a low revolution,
 And by work,—dirty, as suited his constitution,
 Had raised himself up from obscure destitution.
 On this man her favors bestowed were so long,
 Many lovers fell off, and ceased to belong
 To her train; the while she was growing in years,
 And also around her were growing compeers,
 Who began to divide and diminish her sway,
 Which, like Hamlet's dog, had at last had its day!

It was full on the wane, when one came to her door,
 Quite a king of a man to all men gone before.
 Her spirit, her charms, seemed to flash out once more,
 And an effort she made to be what she had been;
 But her fate, or her stars, were against her I ween,
 As Napoleon's were at that famed Waterloo,
 Lost only because one can't win and lose too!
 So it fared with our lady. Her lover betrayed her
 And left *her* for another; which seemed so to degrade her
 In man's eyes and her own, that she took it to heart,
 And resolved there and then it was time to depart
 From a world vain at best, and begin to prepare
 For that other, where age is not known, nor despair!

* * * * * * * * *

Most punctual at mass, most contrite in confession,—
 Soon lost was all chance of Nick's getting possession
 Of a soul he had counted his own for some years,
 And he vented his rage in the hottest of tears
 As he watched her demurely take (daily) her way

To atone for the little she'd perhaps gone astray;
 But ere long, even this, she feared, might not prevail,
 So she one day determined on taking the veil;
 And having of fortune left still and to spare,
 Why, admittance was made for her easily there,—
 In that convent wherein she had passed her youth,
 And picked up what she knew of love, virtue, and truth!

Thus once more and forever she enters the place,
 And concludes, as it were, life's circle of grace
 In this visible world dedicated to man,
 And her higher and holier life began.
 She rose soon from the rank of a simple sister,
 And her goodness increased as if God himself kissed her,
 Imparting at once, without effort or pain,
 The fervor, faith, wisdom, that never in vain
 Are shown by believers, IN A HEAD AND A TOE
 Proved infallible—(reason:—because it is so!)
 Many years was she spared in the house to officiate
 As Lady Superior, having passed her noviciate:—
 At last died with an odor none dared to call faint,
 And her soul, clothed in sanctity, went to her saint!

There was joy in heaven as she sprung to his side,
 And all fearlessly claimed him as groom to her bride.
 No "Alphonse" for her *now*,—no, nor any soul smaller;
 She had won *him* at last, and he boldly might call her
 His own, *all his own*. The saints, angels, around,
 Were much moved by the sight of a joy so profound,
 And declared, as they passed from the place where they
 stood,

Since Guinevere's coming, they'd seen no sight so good!
 Then the organ struck up, in a glorious roll,
 The full chorus of heaven, to welcome her soul!



SANTA MARINA.

NOTE.—The feast of Santa Marina is celebrated on the eighteenth of July. Her history, shorn of the miracles and fables the Church of Rome has woven about it, will be found in the poem. “The Christian year” makes her one of nine children, all born at the same time and of one and the same mother, and all sainted; their names were as follows: Genevera, Liberata, Victoria, Eumelia, Germana, Marina, Basilia, Gemma and Quiteria. The mother, ashamed and frightened at having given birth to such a number, commanded the nurse who attended her to throw them all into the river; but she (the nurse) repenting after having consented, intrusted them to the care of some Christians, with whom the children grew in grace and beauty, until it came to pass that their father (governor of the place) caused all Christians to be brought before him; when their birth and relationship was discovered and proved, in hopes of saving them from punishment. He at once offered to receive them, and marry them as became their station; the condition being their renunciation of the Christian religion; the which they all refused; and after a vain attempt to convert him to their faith, they agreed to separate and take each a different road, to save their father from being guilty of their deaths, and to fulfill the mission heaven had intrusted to them. The poem opens as Marina leaves. These events are said to have happened in a remote part of the Peninsula, towards the latter end of the second century.

FRAIL bodies may enshrine a spirit strong,—
Ah me!—and such have in all time been found;
And therefore virtue oft hath suffered wrong,
 And truth and beauty taken many a wound;
 Since brutish force can trample to the ground
The weak and delicate, tho’ rich in worth,
 And, vainly glorious, look with pride around,
As if it were the noblest thing on earth,—
A king by right divine, and sceptered from its birth!

And such, in brief, is sweet Marina’s tale;
 A maiden pure and delicately fair;
Who left her father’s home and native vale

To seek for peace and freedom elsewhere;
Throwing herself on God's especial care,
To whom she yearned with all her might of soul,
And vowed to dedicate her virtue rare
To him and his, and not to idols foul,
For which, with angry eyes, parents and priests did scowl.

For in those days she lived, when old and new
Shook men and states and every social tie,
When war was waged betwixt the false and true,
And pagan rites with Christian dared to vie,
And claimed for customs old a victory;
Deeming the new light but a mirage vain,
A fabled tale, or passing history
Of some new God or sect that sought to reign
By miracles as false as they themselves did feign.

But young Marina, in the deepest deep
Of being, felt her spirit move and stir,
Bidding her tarry not, nor idly sleep.
And well she knew that spirit did not err,
That on such mission forth had guided her
To teach the law of Christ and all his love,
To poor and suffering hearts to minister,
And carry on his work who went above,
With all a giant's strength, tho' meekly as a dove.

So, in these days, full often is it seen
That not the lordly brain but lowly heart
Is chosen for this greatest work, I ween:
Since gentle words and deeds may more impart
Of heaven's love and care than by much art -
The greatest sage in choicest words can tell.
Words only speak, while actions seem a part
Of heaven itself, and never vainly fell
The golden seed of love where sorrow chose to dwell.

And on her mission forth the maiden went.

Sunshine and beauty played about her path;

But not on beauty was her mind intent.

She sought the darksome home, the troubled hearth,

Where death had been, and gods in threat'ning wrath
By their false priests were said to scowl and frown;

And there she taught the sacred truth that hath
From death removed the sting, since Christ came down;
She bade them follow him and win their heavenly crown.

And many followed; everywhere she came

The people's eyes were opened to the light;

And much of reverence grew about her name,

And in her eyes was seen such sweet delight

As comes to those who feel they work aright.

But not forever could she thus proceed—

It is not given to any mortal wight,

However good or wise, to all succeed,

And every path hath thorns that make the feet to bleed.

And nothing good but hath an opposite;

And in religion most hath this been shown;

And now the priests began to move in spite

And seek to have her into prison thrown,

Fearing her influence might outgrow their own.

Before harsh judges is she rudely brought,

Who know no gods, except their gods of stone,

Who bid her take of youth and beauty thought

And leave her foolish task, and wed as maidens ought.

And one among her judges, with his eyes

Did seem to feast upon her lovely face;

And drank the music of her low replies,

As if he, too, had been a child of grace;

And such she deemed him in that horrid place;

For still the words were gentle that he spoke,

Nor hinted aught that might her life disgrace;

But later on the dream all rudely broke,
When he alone with her, by wildest offers, woke

Her spirit to resistance and disgust,

Seeking herself by tyrant's powers to gain
As partner of his crimes and of his lust.

But little knew he, with his code profane,
How souls like hers resist the lightest stain,
And dare the worst that can by men be used;

No earthly torture and no stretch of pain
Is equal horror to a sense misused
By such as feel the truth that Christ himself diffused.

And many times he came, but never ceased

His quest of that which she might never give;
And from his power she could not be released,
She almost prayed that she might cease to live.

Till last, as wife, he wooed her to forgive,
And, as an honor, take his noble hand.

But all in vain! She did not dare to live
By heathen favor in God's holy land,
Nor to forsake a task she had so firmly planned.

But rather with her voice and gentle smile

She sought to win him to that better life,
And by such means his passion to beguile,
From thought of her as leman or as wife;

And 'neath her soothing words, the fiercer strife
Of passion changed into that holier love,
Which, freed from lust, with tenderness all rife,
Comes, as an angel guardian from above,
Bearing the branch of hope as did the winged dove.

Her tortures change, alas, but do not end!

To his compeers he answers now no more
That in a little time her knee shall bend
And bow their altars and their gods before:—

The cruel priests are thirsting for her gore,
 Nor can he, tho' he would, avert her lot;
 And they will beat her tender body sore
 With scourge and whip and cruel pincers hot,
 In hopes to make her seem the thing that she is not.

But nothing know these cowards, as they strike,
 How weak the smart that finest nerve can feel,
 Compared to that which in the conscience like
 A viper clings, and makes the senses reel
 With pain that plant was never found to heal:
 The pain of deeds that all pollute the mind,
 The sense of loss that nothing yet could steel;
 Making the soul feel lower than its kind,
 Knowing itself debased, degraded, lost, and blind.

And much she suffered, but not she alone:
 Her worshipper—not lover now, was he—
 As if each lash had cut him to the bone,
 Would writhe as one in direst agony;
 And once, with a mistaken sympathy,
 He prayed her for herself to make a sign,
 As if with those foul men she did agree;
 She answered with a smile from eyes benign,
 But shaped a simple cross and prayed a prayer divine,

And in her cell, with gentle words, rebuked
 The wish expressed; by fraud to 'scape from grief
 Was crime to her, and might not be o'erlooked;
 Tho' pain seemed long, yet life was only brief,
 And the brave soul might not, as did the thief,
 Escape from punishment by force of lies,
 Nor bind one tare up with life's golden sheaf;
 But bear whate'er of sorrow might arise,
 If it had hope and faith and yearned to reach the skies.

And now by other means they go about,—

These cruel men—a Christian's strength to prove.
From food, light, people, and from all shut out
Her aching limbs with scarcely room to move,
They bid her there to feel that God is love:
And thinking to affright her mind with show,
Strange figures, and forms horrid from above
By some vile means they cast on walls below:
But still the maiden smiled, and fear could never know:—

Till, in the minds of even her worst foes

Began to grow a kind of dread and awe,
That one so frail should bear such weight of woes,
And with a faith and hope so free from flaw
Hold firm to this new God and his strange law;
And never taint her speech with bitter word,
Altho' that God on earth she never saw.
This was a something that had not been heard,
And spite of all their strength, with fear their spirits stirred.

For there is something awful and sublime

In this strong faith in goodness and in truth,
This hope that reaches far beyond all time,
This strength to age, and guiding star of youth,
This love that trusts, beyond all doubt or ruth,
The power unseen which guides the universe:
Imperfect dream of wisdom's perfect truth,
Unchangeable by pain,—with no reverse,—
This mighty faith of faiths, in laws that seem diverse!

Then came a pause to her in suffering;

Her tyrants shook before her and recoiled;
She had withstood their skill in everything,
Power to inflict by power to bear was foiled;
And they in vain with cruelty had soiled
Their hands in blood. So virtue ever shines,

While sin and crime with care unceasing toiled,
Virtue and truth won to life's utmost lines,
Where all of worth and joy, as light with light, combines.

But yet they cast about, in their own souls,
What remedy in such a case might be;
The power that man above his fellows holds
Is not resigned or vanquished easily;
And should she now obtain the victory,
The gods of old, and they themselves must fall;
For faith grew fast in this new history,
And it behooved these priests, both one and all,
By means infallible for help upon their gods to call.

And thus did they appoint a special day,
In which the proof of God 'gainst God should show,
And bade her, as themselves, to kneel and pray
That all the world might be convinced, and know
If theirs or hers were true; should it prove so,
If she had played false prophethess to gain
Her foolish followers, who would tamely bow
For novelty in each new-fangled fane,
Her life should forfeit be for preaching hopes so vain.

With solemn pomp, with revelry and game,
And long procession to some sacred spot,
To clothe with mystery their murderous aim,
Did they prepare to show her God was not
A living truth, and from the world to blot
Her fair young life, that they might freer reign.
They chose the test of water for her lot,
And from the deep sea bade her rise again,
To prove her hope was not some fable of her brain.

With clang and clash of pipe and cymbal harsh,
With beaten discords from a thousand gongs,
With gestures frantic and with speech all rash,

The dancing priests move to the spot in throngs.
And there is heard the noise of many tongues,—
Fit music for such gods and men debased:—

Oh, Christ! Look down and let them not reign long:
The maiden prayed, as with firm step she paced .
Her path to that high rock, which showed forth, million-
faced.

All eyes were fixed upon her as she passed;
And much they marveled at her tranquil mien.
Calm strength and peace in her bright face were glassed,
And 'mongst those men, she looked an angel-queen,
A brilliant purity, as snow in morning sheen;
And when she turned her eyes from earth to heaven,
Had she ascended to the height serene,
No heart with wonder had so much been riven
As when she fell where waves on rugged rocks were driven.

Yet, ere she fell, in accents clear that rung
Like trumpet call, in one short moment's hush,
She said her God was with her, made her strong,
And tho' her limbs the cruel priests might crush,
Her deathless soul should all outlive the rush
Of angry waves, and from God's heaven look down
With pity on them; and she bade them rush
Their souls to save, and win a sinless crown,
For God was true, tho' she could die and priests in envy
frown.

Then from the rock she fell; the air was rent
With cry of men, and many wailing tones
Of hearts that wept. As back the people went,
Their voices threatened, and those lifeless stones
And mumming priests were hailed with angry groans.
Not less in death than life she seemed a power,
And each, once doubtful, Christ's great doctrine owns,
Since he has seen her perish in her flower,
Made strong and calm by faith in that last trying hour!



SANTA SINFOROSA.

NOTE.—This noble woman was born in Rome in the middle of the second century, and married one of the great lords at the court of Adrian, by name Getulo. He became a Christian, and thereby incensed the Emperor, who cruelly put him to death; but not before his wife had borne him seven children, with whom, after having ministered to her husband in captivity, and buried him at his death, she retired from the court, hoping to escape persecution; but in vain, since the Emperor fixed upon the place of her retirement to build a palace and a temple. The high priest declared he could not sleep for her prayers, and by an oracle instigated the death of her and of her children. She needs none of the miracles the Church of Rome has woven about her to make her life beautiful, or her character divine. Will the Pope and his people never learn that the simple and true life of the man and the woman is the highest, noblest and greatest character human nature may attain to in time? or will they forever and ever go on attempting to gild the gold, paint the lily, and perfume the violet, with their quintessence of lies? lies that, if true, would only deform man's nature and destroy the simplicity and beauty of his every action and of the soul itself.

Mother of England,—her I called my own,—
Writing of mother brings thy look and tone
And all thy strong affection, and the might
Of that great care I never could requite,
So clearly back, I cannot leave the theme;
But linger still, as if in some half dream,
You were my own again, my hope, my stay,
My priceless jewel, God has called away!

FAIR 'mid the fairest of that mighty land
Whose history blends with nature's—where the grand
In man's achievements seemeth to arise
Most mountain-like,—a maiden, gentle, wise,
And rich as the summer's budding tree
With promise of much fruit,—oh, such was she
In her full youth and bright simplicity.

Yet was she born to suffering, and great stress
Of hard temptation and deep wretchedness,

All that can shake a wife's heart and a mother's,
Deeper and fuller this than may be borne by others;
Since ever is it easier far to *bear*
In noble hearts, than watch another's care;
And to the mother's soul comes this perforce
With tenfold sorrow and with tenfold force.

A lover wooed her, worthy of her line,
And formed to mingle as is vine with vine
Was his and hers, and gently did incline
Her soul to his, as when a willow bends
To summer's wind, that blowing softly lends
New charms to boughs that passive lying
Remind us of the dead or dying
In their still beauty. But awake to motion
Was this bright soul, and her new felt emotion,
As she responded to his love, did make
Such holy melodies as at the break
Of day are heard, and felt when stars grown dim,
And nature sings the morning's matchless hymn.

All that is known of perfect, in poor time
They shared in joys that ran as doth a rhyme
Of different measures; change and change again,
Made pain seem pleasure, and then pleasure pain:
As children's faces grew about their home,
And years of love went by, while years seemed still to come.

This fell in times when Christ was little known,
And while the world to pagan gods bowed down;
When Adrian ruled and poured forth human blood
In sacrifice to shapes of stone and wood;
But Sinforosa and her noble lord
Had caught new light, had heard the sacred word
That filled their souls with love of him who trod
But yesterday on earth, the great and living God,
And whose pure faith so firmly they embraced,

From out their minds it might not be erased;
And all their children from their earliest youth
By mother's lips were taught the living truth.
Thus did they grow as Christians, just and strong,
In early days when Christians suffered wrong,
And when that faith was mark for scorn and shame
To those for whose dear sake our Lord and Saviour came.

High in the state, and of much note their sire;
And to his home did Christians oft retire
When persecution was let loose, to take
These heretics and bring them to the stake
To appease the fancied wrath of idols, or
To grace the arena's games. For this, and more,
Did Christ's own followers in those days endure,
When faith was death and heaven alone was sure.
But spite of death, and all in scorn of foes,
His followers follow, and their number grows.
Among this number Sinforosa's name
And her good lord's were high in holy fame;
The which when Rome's great Emperor Adrian learned,
His rage the more against the Christians burned;
And, all in wrath, he bade his soldiers bring
In chains her lord to answer to his king.

Firm was the soul of Gétulo, the Good—
So was her husband called,—and by him stood
His brothers, both accused of the same crime,—
The secret worship of that God sublime
Who gave to heaven and earth and living things
The shape they wear, and to the soul, like wings,
High thoughts, that lift above the brute in height
That man who knows to find in pain delight,
And pain in pleasures that are sinful shown
By him who came to teach and make the world his own.

Days were they held in prison and in chains,
And suffered greatly from inflicted pains,
The all of which were meant their souls to wean
From Him above who rules this world unseen;
And still each day their penance was increased,
And not from thralldom might they be released
Unless they bowed the knee in praise before
The altars of those gods the vulgar minds adore.

In this sad time did Sinforosa come
To see her suffering lord confined in Rome;
She bade him be of cheer, but never speak
The false before the true; while down her cheek
The salt tears ran, God gave her strength to say
The words that make man strong and brave to play
At life and death, as His will may dispose
The fate of each he sends to battle with his foes.

And later, and when all in vain were found
The galling chain and deeply smarting wound,
Were offers made of honor and great wealth;
But little could the tyrant, from himself,
Judge of such men,—all wealth to them was dross,
Not from his hand could come or gain or loss.
And all things failed him—kings may not control
The God-inspired and heaven-directed soul.
The body may be scourged or given to death,
The soul unchanged breathes out its latest breath.
And thus fell these three brothers, by the axe laid dead,
For following Christ the Lord, who for their sakes had bled.

And when, as adding insult to the wrong,
The bodies without burial out were flung,
Came Sinforosa, void of any fear,
To pay all rites to forms she held so dear,
That by the cruel tyrant were cast down

To be the mock and gibe of all the town.
The which performed, she with her children went
And sought for peace in self-made banishment.
And there her children, as they grew, she taught
With her sweet voice to know that life is naught
If wanting honor and the love that fills
The heart with strength to master pain and ills,
That by God's grace, or for some human fault,
Are sent to scourge, yet otherwise exalt
The soul that suffers and is not afeared,
Seeing that God, when God himself appeared
In guise of man, the like inflictions bore,
And on his regal head the crown of sorrow wore.

Thus did she teach them, and the days went by,
And beautiful they grew unto their mother's eye;
Amid a solitude of trees and streams
And flowers that blew and ripened in the gleams
Of summer suns; till, by some fate unseen
Directed, came Lord Adrian to the scene;
Who, all enchanted at a sight so fair,
Bade men erect his stately palace there,
And for his gods a temple, so that he
Might not be wanting to his deity.
And this they did; but, ere the fane was built,
And in its honor Christian blood was spilt;
Since that great oracle, a pagan priest,
Temptation in such form could not resist;
And Sinforosa, as her lord before,
Was bade to give her foolish worship o'er.

Full sad was Adrian to condemn the wife
Who in such way would not redeem her life;
And to each word such noble answer gave,
As cowed the strong and would have won the brave.
"Not mine," she said, "the life that I do hold;

'Tis God's own gift, and He doth make me bold
To hold my faith, and should you burn or strike
My body to the earth, as, should you like,
You have such power on earth that you can do,
I must submit, as must my children too;
Or young or old, and of whatever sex,
The Christian soul is strong and may not vex
Itself with fear of other gods or man,—
Who having done the best or worst he can,
Sends it but one short moment in advance
To where it goes at last, in spite of chance;
And thus, great lord, I bow me to your will,
But with my soul defy the utmost skill
Of you and of your gods, for I and mine
Adore the living God and may not bend to thine."

Full sad was Adrian, and for days did pause,
Trusting to change, or to those subtle laws
That in a mother's heart hold mighty sway,
When from her offspring she is torn away;
But trusting vainly, for this mother knew
That God was great, that false could not be true,
And that no gain could come to any one
Flying the rod by His own hand laid on.
For who hath power to move without his aid?
So for her children was she less afraid,
And when her time to its last hour was spent,
Weeping, but firm, and straight of step she went
To where the priests were gathered in a throng,
Who stoned her dead, then in the river flung.
A form that while it held a living will
Tho' not as God, was Godlike in its skill.
Her husband, then herself, and next were tried
Her children, too; but each and all defied
The power of those false gods and tyrants stern,
To make them bend, or ever to unlearn

The lessons deep of life and death and fate,
Which she as wife and mother, when elate
With such high titles, all divinely gave
To guide on earth, and light the darksome grave.
And mothers all should from her pattern take;
For men are still but what their mothers make
And mould in mind, when life itself is new,—
Things false unknown, if she herself be true!





RETRIBUTION.

Where first he had lisp'd her name,
Where his earliest years were spent,
In sorrow, not anger, he came
To sigh a farewell ere he went.

CROWNING mistake of a wretched life!
Bitter, bitter,—bitterest pain;
To bear and to wear the name of wife
As the felon must wear his chain!
Peace, peace, I am robed in costly gear,
I am mistress of park and hall;
The things that I coveted once are here,
Have I not, have I not all!

All—let the daylight shun me ever!
What am I?—a bauble bought with gold!
Nay—from thyself thou can'st hide it never,
Poor wretch, touch, kiss, smile, all are sold.
I—I—Oh that the earth would open wide,—
Bury me from my own disgrace,—
From the love I feel and must ever hide,
And the scorn of my pretty face.

Have I gone mad that I rave like a child,
For a sun that I cannot reach?
Fool'd by a dream till my brain grows wild,
My tongue falters, breaks in its speech!
What is it? Who knows but I loved him best?
And my mother said it was wise.
Ah! but the aching pain lives in my breast,
The past will not pass from my eyes!

He came to the church to-day, all alone,—
I had thought “he is far away;”
If grief and pain for sin can atone,
I have suffered, God knows, to-day!
While the preacher seemed preaching at both,
And his words were like arrows sure,—
The man, he said, was not known by his cloth,
And virtue alone was secure!

Ah me! and the truth went home to my heart,
Made it bleed with an inward pain;
And I turned to look where he sat apart,
And I strove to pray, but in vain.
A mad’ning glimpse of the wrong I had done,
Of my folly and pride and untruth;
The splendor, the worth, from life was gone—
I had bartered beauty and youth.

And a costly misery weighed me down,
I wept, hot, scalding, impotent tears;
That love which to woman’s life is the crown
I had changed for a waste of years;
For a gilded name, for a wealth of dross;—
I had sworn it,—a false, false love;
On my brow, in my heart, burn’d a flaming cross,
And a curse came down from above.

And the past still haunted the present back;
My love seemed my own to give;
A voice and a hand were tracing life’s track,
And were teaching my soul to live;
And my cheeks were lit with a tender blush,
And my heart thrill’d at the tones
Of a song that came with the twilight hush,
Where the stream ripples over the stones.

The soft breeze sigh'd through poplars tall,
 And a trembling kiss was given;
 While the gloaming deep grew wide, over all,
 And the stars came forth in heaven.
 A moment's joy, with an endless grief,—
 Oh, why did I heed what they said?
 Not yet had there fallen a poplar leaf
 That had fluttered high over head,

When another came, and my heart was won,—
 Won with gold and a mother's tongue.
 Ah, me! I may never undo what is done;—
 And shame, like a serpent, clung,
 Clung to my heart as I sat 'neath God's roof;
 As I heard the whispered prayer;
 As I saw him sit by himself aloof,—
 And I longed to kneel to him there.

The pride of a wife,—yes, yes, I have. pride—
 I faltered not even in thought;
 But the sorrow, grief, the desolate void
 My vanity round us had wrought!
 Oh, why has God given no child to bless?
 I have nothing my heart calls mine;
 And the love of the man whose name I possess,
 I scarcely dare call it mine.

The "might have been" once, the "never to be,"
 Come ever, and go like the wind;
 From myself, from my thoughts, I cannot flee,
 From the chaos that lives in my mind;
 And to feel and to know that *he* scorns me,
 And to know that his scorn is just!
 Wretchedness,—envying all it can see,—
 Ay, even the worm in the dust!

Why did he come?—Was it right?—Let him go;
 Let him never trouble me more;
 I sin'd, I suffer, but he must not know,
 Though his sorrow lies at my door.
 My duty,—God give me the strength to bear
 This heaviest burden of time,—
 As the woman, wife, and above despair,
 My punishment's less than my crime!

DEATH IN LIFE.

IT is not death and loss
 Nor heavy years like dross,
 That follow after,
 That tint the whitest hair,
 That bring the worst despair,
 And bitterest laughter.

These come from love declining,
 While still dear eyes are shining
 All clear and bright;
 While yet the heart is beating,
 And memory keeps repeating
 A lost delight.

From love, forever broken,
 From passions, wild words spoken,
 And pride accursed;
 Making sad hearts defy,
 With deadly gleaming eye,
 The bitter worst.

CHANGE.

IT fell in long past summer hours,
Wandering amid the woods and bowers,
Dreaming a dream inspired by flowers.

Little he knew, as thought followed thought,
Catching idly at things that never were caught,
What a change in heart and life should be wrought!

He had play'd in the sunshine fancy free,
But the earnest of man was now to be
Cut deep in the page of his history;

Cut deep by the hope and the love that lends
A strength to the heart to reach its ends—
A strength of will that never bends.

Oh! she came—Earth's child of truth and light—
A maiden splendor that charmed his sight,
And his pulses rang with a new delight;

And ever, forever, the boy was lost
Past all returning, youth's boundaries crossed,
And man on his heart and his brain indorsed!

Graceful she was, as the blossom we see
Stir'd by the wind as it plays through the tree;
Yet poor—ah! but love knows no poverty,

Save only in spirit; earth's ashes and dust,
Not love; may be timid and fearful to trust,
Forgetting the lilies in sordid lust!

What is it to love the dross called gold?
Love is for the strong, the brave and the bold
And the earth is for them, with a giant's hold

They wrest from it even the corn and wine
 And life's best treasure—a joy divine,
 And a wealth of hopes that may never tine.

And trials that come, they are still God-sent,
 For the bow of love is but half-way bent,
 Till sorrow to joy has a shadow lent.

They met! and their lives anew began,
 The girl and the boy were the woman, the man;
 Thenceforth and forever, the moments ran,

And the days came on, and were changed to years,
 And much was their joy, and many their tears,
 Love wove in life's picture, with fond hopes and fears.

THE FUTURE.

HARVEST of love and joy!
 Autumn of hopes, oh happiest dream
 Oh glorious future! for the boy,
 And for the man what stores of wealth ye hold
 Far more than ever yet was told
 By human tongue. Thy dazzling stream
 Of hours and years and of eternity,
 Laden with loving hearts and friends
 And aims, all lost, but still to be
 Once more our own restored to us by thee,
 Bright fairy vision! vast futurity
 Where all still is, where nothing ever ends,
 But like two rivers rolling to the sea,
 The past returning, with the present blends,
 Forming the ocean of eternity.



CONSTANTIA.

A love tale that begins with great suffering but ends happily. Told by Emilia in the Decameron of Boccaccio—Second Novel of the Fifth Day.

HE was no more:—then what was life to her?
Daylight or hope? since all was lost with him.
She did not rave, or weep, or seek to stir
A sympathy in other hearts; no whim
Of girlhood's was her love; death could not dim,
Nor sympathy relieve it; first and last,
Life, joy, aye, even existence, all in him
For her were centered, and with him had passed;
In death was hope alone, in his dim regions vast.

Yet could she not, the beautiful and fair,
With dagger harsh her lovely form deface;
Altho' resolved, even beyond despair,
Was she for death; perchance it was the grace—
That tender something in sweet woman traced,
That must do all things daintily and neat—
That made her shrink from blood; the starlit face
Of night on the hushed bay and lonely street
Smiled, as she stood where earth and ocean meet.

A stricken heart, most sad, beyond a gleam
Of hope to touch her in her dark desire;
Hers was not life, it was a fitful dream
Lit by wild thoughts; as unextinguished fire,
Or thunder clouds, dart forth in sudden ire
A flame, a flash, life, in her came and went—
Her lover in his beauty, then her sire
In sordid meanness, and whose will had rent
Their lives asunder, with her dream were blent.

And she would start and then again grow still,

Ever as the dream did move her mind

Beyond her settled purpose, and her will.

The expression of her face grew soft and kind,

And with her hair she'd play, that in the wind

Disported gently, as though one were near

Who might have wished her lovely locks to bind,

And who, she knew, did hold them more than dear;

A moment this would last, then all again grow sere.

And her clenched hand and quivering lip would tell

Of deepest suffering and resolve as deep;

Her startled eye upon the landscape fell,

Seeking for something; then, as if from steep

And fearful height she strove herself to keep

From falling, would she cling unto the rock;

The awful law of life her soul did steep

In these strong fears; none can resist the shock

Wedded to self-sought death, however grief may mock,

Or faith may hope, or earthly ills bow down.

So was she shaken till the stars grew faint,

And the first dawn of day the hills did crown;

When pale and speechless as a marble saint,

And beautiful, and all without a taint

Of passion, or of hope, she made her way

To where the ebbing waves in gentle plaint

Receded to the deep and distant bay,

And there she loosed a boat that all untended lay.

The which she entered, and with her fair hands

Guided it forth towards the mighty sea.

When in the distance sunk the lessening lands,

And when, with ocean and eternity,

Alone she was in her extremity,

Rudder and oars away from her she threw;

Trusting that death would end her misery.
 Once more she look'd to the o'erhanging blue,
 And, meaning no more to rise, lay prone and dreamt anew.

Herself she knew not; was this her who lay
 Lonely and loveless, in a boat that sped
 Driven by winds at will, in sportive play,
 On where the wide and trackless ocean spread?
 Or was that her with garlands round her head,
 Crown'd queen of hope in fair Lipari's groves,
 That in the dance so daintily doth tread,
 Singing for joy, while lovingly there moves
 About her one who smiles but never distant roves?

Which is the real and which the counterfeit?
 She seems to know not; and they mix and change.
 What has been and what is like visions flit
 Before her; *all,—yet nothing* seemeth strange.
 So will the shaken mind forever range
 Through life, while trembling on the brink
 Of deep eternity, awaiting change.
 The-soul, in this one pause, appears to drink
 A draught that calls to life all forms and scenes that link

The past unto the present;—and to her
 Whose life from one great hope and one alone
 Had grown and gathered strength, did these recur
 With wonderous vividness, each grace and tone;
 And joy and fear that once had been her own,
 Did she re-live in her bewildered brain,
 While, in the boat, she listened to the moan
 And plash of waves; but void of any pain
 Or fear or pleasure, life's dream came back again.

As not to her, but to that other self
 That lived when hope still shone;—day sank to night;
 And night deepened to darkness; but the gulf

Dividing life from immortality and light
 Was still unpassed; she lived and breathed, and bright
 The stars came forth above the restless deep,
 And their sweet stillness and their calm delight,
 Together with the gentle voice and sweep
 Of ocean's song, lulled her tired brain to sleep

A calm and gentle sleep; no storm arose
 To ruffle ocean's breast, or angrily
 To wake the billows; lovingly seemed to close
 Above her and about her nature's lullaby;
 As if her God, in his great sympathy
 With her, His sorrowing child, had bade be still
 The elements; the boat most quietly
 Yet swiftly flew before the breeze at will,
 And no harsh sound or shock disturbed her there, until

And just as morning broke above the earth,
 It grounded on a sloping pebbly beach;
 And she awoke as if to a new birth;
 And once again heard kindly human speech!
 Safe through all dangers did her frail barque reach
 A friendly port; she dare no more rebel.
 Not vainly such a lesson love can preach
 To any gentle soul; and so it fell
 Constantia was beguiled on earth again to dwell.

A rough exterior, but a noble heart
 Had that poor fisher's wife, and knew to speak
 Those words that to a sufferer can impart
 A better strength than ever sprang from weak
 And polished sympathy; she sought to break
 Constantia's grief, by telling o'er her own;
 Showing, though tried, a faith that dared to seek
 Even in grief and loss, the love of one
 Who guides not vainly all beneath the sun.

She 't was that found her in her boat, in tears,
 And bid her kindly welcome to her home,—
 A poor and humble home. Alas! she fears
 The fare may be too coarse; but when they come
 To know each other, and the deadly numb
 Hath something left the heart of her poor guest,
 She saw how little worldly wealth could charm
 A mind with such a load of anguish prest,
 And sought by other means to soothe her into rest.

Nor vainly sought; and peace became the lot
 Of sad Constantia; and she grew
 Calm, pale, but almost pulseless; not forgot,
 But hidden, was her grief; her heart still true
 Beat to no other hope; she did not sue
 To heaven for death, but bore all things that came
 As if to suffer were but her just due
 For that premeditated crime; her name
 And place of birth did she conceal till fame

And rumor of great wars spread in the land
 The praise of one, called like her lover lost,
 Who'd served the king;—a prisoner and
 An alien years ago; sold by a host
 Of pirates into bondage on the coast.
 Then did she sue to see *him*; and her tale
 From first to last, told to her friend. It cost
 Her many tears; these and her face so pale
 Had moved the stoniest heart to help a thing so frail!

And they to Tunis went, where dwelt the king;
 And with a lady of that place was left
 Constantia; who, like to a new-born spring
 Full of sweet music, as with magic gift
 Won every heart; of joy no more bereft,
 Her gentle beauty and her goodness bloomed



With hope, strong hope, that seemed to lift
From off her fate the darkness that had loomed
And for a space too long her faith and worth consumed.

In vain the lady preached of doubt and chance,
Of might not be; Constantia felt within
A secret surety, which did enhance
Her joy, and her confusion for that sin;
And most devoutly she sought to win,
By fullest thanks and by her deep devotion,
A pardon for her crime. It was not in
Her nature to hope less; her every motion
Was joyous prayer for this her happy portion.

At length the day arrived when, to the court,
Her friend, who'd craved an audience, was gone.
The hours seemed long; and then again seemed short
At her return; while in her face there shone
The assurance of the hope; and there were none
Who did not share the joy that sparkled, flashed
From that sweet face erewhile so woe-begone,
That now with tears and now with sunshine dashed,
Beam'd like a day in spring when winter shrinks abashed.

And who shall tell the joy and the delight
When these two lovers met again and saw
The picture stretch before them clear and bright;
Their earth and heaven without a single flaw.
Such joy hath been and shall be, and is law
To those who love, so they be true, nor let
A change their hearts from their one idol draw;
But ever to that deepest music set,
Know love can never die or fail to pay its debt.

It may not be in time; but it must come;
The faith is all; the power to wait and watch
And hope if needed, yet beyond the tomb;

And from love's lore this brightest truth to catch
That nothing is in vain; that none can match
The care that guides and governs human fate;
That all in their due course must reach
The destined goal; nor early, nor too late,
But at the appointed time wake joyous and elate.

And so these lovers passed to their own clime
Loaded with gifts, and happy words that spoke
Respect and love; the while, their marriage chime
Rang in their ears; and from the people broke
A loud acclaim; their constancy awoke
In every heart a chord of joy and pride.

Not less, to-day, the love that bears its yoke
Bravely, shall meet such greetings deep and wide,
And peace and joy shall crown the bridegroom and the
bride.

LEFT.

A STRAIN of fancied music, heard,
Through sorrows yearning fears,
As through the clouds the lark's first hymn,
When the God of day appears.

A voice, at which the soul is stirred,
Pouring songs of love to earth,
Telling of an immortal birth,
In floods of sweetest melody,
Such is memory's dream of thee.

A spirit star in heaven shining,
A rainbows glory bright,
Something for which the soul is pining,
Pining with strange delight.

SYLVAN DEITIES.

BEAUTIFUL spirits!
 Not only in the poets dream-wove page
 Ye lingering dwell, each wood and dell
 Is peopled still with you—in every age.

Beautiful spirits!
 Ye inhabit earth; though veiled from mortal eye,
 The impress is seen and thy care hath been
 Where the lilies spring and the dewdrops lie.

Beautiful spirits!
 Not worshipped alone in days that are sped,
 Where a flower may blow or a stream may flow
 Ye have worshippers still, not lost nor fled.

Beautiful spirits!
 Symbolled by things that are fair and good,
 Guardians of flowers and genii of hours,
 Still are ye haunting the meadow and wood.
 In the scent of the flower, the song of the stream,
 In the bow-crowned shower and the rip'ning gleam,
 Beautiful spirits of earth and of air,
 No fabled existence, your dwellings are there.

HER KISS.

OH! could the heart but tell its gladness,
 When thy lips to mine are pressed,
 'Twould blot a thousand years of sadness
 And make them all look blest.
 To thread time's labyrinth through and through
 Appears a task too small,
 To win such perfect happiness,
 Thy love o'er pays it all.

OCTOBER.

“Covetous Death bereaved us all
To aggrândize one funeral.”—EMERSON.

ALWAYS sad, but sadder' now,
I tread the withered leaves among,
(They lie as care-marks on the brow
Of one disease, or time doth bow),
The woods and fields along.

On Nature's face like wrinkles, here
Swept by the wind in heaps they lie,
As Earth had fallen to the sere,
The cheerless, desolate, and drear,
And still her lingering beauties die.

The clouds above are cold and grey,
A pestilence seems o'er the scene,
Fair forms are changed by foul decay
To sights from which we turn away,
And none could guess what once hath been.

I hold man has no right to grieve,
Or I would sit me down and weep
That things so dear so soon should leave
But memory their forms to weave
From fancy and the shades of sleep.

I hold man lives to love and bear
And bide the task he finds to do,
That cravens only know despair;
He with his might of faith should dare
Believe in joy and sorrow too;

That all things loved and lost on earth,
Though he can neither touch nor see,

Are still to him of priceless worth,
A dowry given to him at birth,
And his through all eternity.

The flowers that fade, the leaves that fall,
The slumberers in the silent grave;
First, last and dearest dream of all,
The heart with love would fain recall,
And memory from oblivion save,

Are they not his in hope's bright dream?
Oh, there are things as sure as death!
Say, who can stay a gushing stream
That strives to ripple and to gleam
Sun, stars, and clouds beneath?

Stop up its spring, it still will find
Another outlet for its birth;
Such power I hold belongs to mind,
That yearns to mingle with its kind,
As may not yield to common earth;

But it will find a path to where
Things still exist, though lost to time.
Look up, brave heart, and be of cheer;
Somewhere within a distant sphere
They live and love, and thou shalt climb.

For love is stronger far than death,
And mind can rule the grosser clay;
And hope outlives the latest breath
That mortals yield to phantom death;
These end not with the passing day.

Look up, God's heaven is full of light,
Infinity doth gird thee round;
Past, present, future, day and night,
Far-stretching far beyond thy sight,
Are in its depths profound.

And somewhere, though we cannot trace
The loved, the lost, the once possessed,
Amid its ever deep'ning space
The soul shall find their resting place,
As sea birds find the far off nest.

THE WITHERED LEAVES.

LIKE the sorrowing wail of the heart when it grieves,
Is the fitful tale of the fallen leaves;
Scattered around, around, around,
Withered and yellow they cover the ground.

Sighings and moanings fill the air,
And restless spirits seem everywhere,
Trailing, rustling, round, round, round,
Yellow leaves bestrew the ground.

They whirl and sweep, they rise and fall,
They quiver and leap over all;
Winter has kissed them, they are dying,
And as they pass for the past are sighing.

Sobbing, sighing, woe, still woe,
The leaves are sighing as they go,
Falling by thousands at every breeze,
Rent with a moan from their parent trees.

Scattered around, around, around,
Once beautiful leaves bestrew the ground;
Remnants of summer how swift in decay,
Like all that we love, ye are passing away.

THE RIVULET.

RIPPLING, rippling, all the day long,
 Hark to the rivulets murmuring song;
 Glittering over the pebbles and glancing
 In and out mid forget-me-nots, dancing
 To the tune of waves as they sparkle and play,
 In their musical mirth the livelong day.

Onward, still onward with melody wild
 As the blithesome notes of a happy child,
 That frames no word with its eloquent tongue,
 But breathes out a bird-like flood of song,
 Oh it rolls and ripples and bubbles free,
 Singing of natures deep harmony.

Though wove into rhyme by a poet's brain,
 What are man's words to this artless strain;
 To the joyous carols of bird and stream,
 Or the murmurs sweet of childhood's dream;
 Woe born and weak they break up the spell,
 Of raptures like these words are but the knell.

 THERE.

AND fondly in our dreams of hope and love,
 Or when bereaved of both we turn to heaven,
 As though the orbs serenely bright that move
 Through its immensity had to them given
 A power upon our destiny—There,
 Ever there, we turn, as if to meet
 The face whose smile can lighten our despair,
 Make grief less harsh or joy itself more sweet.



SAINT PEDRO OF LUXEBURG AND HIS MIRACLE.

NOTE.—This Saint, whose feast is celebrated on the fifth of July, was canonized by Clemente VII. He affected great austerity, greater humility and had performed (according to the register kept in his church in the Valley of Avignon), no less than 2400 miracles, when the last accounts were published in “the Christian year” of 1866. When appointed to his first See, he made the journey on a donkey, in hopes of gaining greater power over the people by thus recalling Christ to their minds, and by showing himself so free from pride. He used the whip to himself freely, and ate but once a day. He died requesting his servants to chastise him, for having so often set them a bad example at the table.

OH! ye heritics all—Jew, Protestant, Turk,
Mahomedan, Atheist, Hindoo, Rosicrucian!
Leave the devil alone to mind his own work,—
Come and hear what a saint of ours can do for a man!
Hear and believe, for this is no jest :
No trumped up tale
Of a Prophet and Veil,
Of fiery spirits that know no rest!
No question of monkey, ape, or ox,
Or of nature being its own great cause;
No picture of grapes, that are *not* for the fox,
But a proof over which none need to pause,
To know that the Church delegated by Peter
To represent heaven, is not only true,
But the very height of religious perfection,
And has with the saints direct connexion,
So is able to see all her children through.

Our hero in life was a Bishop of Grace,
And in Metz had the finest house in the place.

But he entered the town on a donkey's back
 To show that his mind was free from a crack,
 And because he thought it the thing to draw down
 An admiring gaze, from the whole of the town,
 To see a Priest so powerful as he
 Clothed in such sweet humility;
 And also because, as he was a stranger,
 The sight might recall that "child in the manger"
 Whose doctrine he came to expound and enlarge,
 And show that the Pope had them under his charge!

 He'd a soul energetic
 In prayer and in fast!
 And in life was ascetic
 From the first to the last;
 And many things more in visions he saw
 Than are shown to mortals,
 Who take kindly their meat and who thank God and eat;
 The very own portals
 Of heaven he saw once, in a vision; and angels came down
 And offered him there a most glittering crown,
 That so dazzled his senses, he fainted and fell
 In a puddle of mud, so slushy and brown
 His servant feared it would spoil his new gown!
 But when he rose up the marvel to tell,
 Not a single stain
 Of mud did remain
 On the holy man, by which it is plain
 That everything foul must turn and flee,
 From a Priest in the pride of his purity!
 With a thought unconfessed
 He could never rest,—
 Which is always the way with these "better than best"
 Kind of souls, that are farthest from sin and from flames;
 They appear to glory in deeds which molest
 Other men, and in calling themselves ugly names,

And proclaiming their faults, which turn out to be *nix*,
But, if true, would perforce get their souls in a fix;
This humility wanting in truth saints are given to—
In them such lying's considered a virtue,
 And each one lays them on
 To suit his own case,
As our lady friends do, the paint on their face.
 When this one was dying
 And his servants were crying
For grief at the loss of their master, they said
 He managed once more,
 Though it troubled him sore,
To sit quite upright again in his bed.
 He thanked all for their kindness,
 But he showed it was blindness
To esteem him as aught but a very great sinner,
Who had often and often ate far too much dinner;
 And set, by such means a fearful example
 For which he now begged a pardon as ample!
But, fearing that this would not purge out his sin,
He bade each one take up a stout "discipline"
 (A kind of a whip the saints all use
 When in for a treat, their backs to abuse:)
And lay it on bravely his shoulders about,
And make his too sinful blood fly out;
He begged them, he pray'd them, would admit of no nay,
So at last they just let the sweet soul have his way,
And laid on the lash to keep off the flies;
While "harder and harder," were the hero-like cries
Of the saint, till at last, with the fullest content
He thanked them again, and then quietly went
Off into a dose—from which, when he arose
Is a kind of certainty nobody knows,
From the poor ranting parson to the high chanting Popel
That "rising again" takes the form of a hope,

And personal experience stops at the door
 With life's exit, then blank, and,—who knows what more?

But enough of this strain in a doubtful vein!

Turn we at once to our saint again.

I have shown you the man, in this world full of strife
 And now for the miracle wrought after life.

It is one picked at random from two thousand four hundred,
 All of which he performed, and never once blundered,
 As the monks can attest, in that Vale Avignon,
 Where they raised him a church in which to work on
 In aid of the Pope and priests, who abound
 In very large shoals, on that sanctified ground.

A little bird built a warm nest in its tower,
 To have it quite out of all cruel boys' power
 To steal or molest her young brood when it came,
 And perhaps, also, because she respected the Fane;
 For she, too, was Catholic and Roman, perforce,—
 Being born in the church this was "matter of course,"
 From the first to the last her hatching went well,
 And the little ones crept one by one from the shell;
 And their mother with food flew in and flew out;
 When a mischievous boy who lived there about
 Fixed his eye on these doings, and was heard to declare
 He would have at that nest, though so high in the air.

Away up he goes, higher and higher,

(The nest was between the tower and the spire

On a sort of projection, it might be a spout,

This much of the question admits of a doubt.)

But what follows is certain;—in striving to touch

The place where he hoped the rich booty to clutch,

He somehow lost his balance, and downward he fell

With a dreadful "whiz" and a half smothered yell,

Plump on to the angle where the building increases,

Which dashed him at once to a thousand small pieces

That fell in the street, as when tempests come down
In drops that are said to be big as a crown!
The people then passing looked up with amaze,
But as nothing more fell, they diverted their gaze
To brains, arms, and legs, and splinters of bones,
That in fragments lay scattered about on the stones.
At last came a cry of, "Oh my! its Tom Jones!
That idle young scamp who has ended his days
As we all said he would, if he kept such bad ways!"

Now Tom's father, poor man, had a small something wrong
A kind of a rift all his roof tiles among,
Not sufficient to merit the full term of madness,
But a predisposition to confession and sadness;
With a powerful belief in the church and its people,
From the dirtiest chorister to the point of its steeple.
But his principal faith was Peter the second,
As I think this Peter of ours must be reckoned.
He had dusted his church and his altar for years,
Made free use of his name when his heart filled with fears;
And fancied he'd had of his favors no few,
Though in what they consisted, *he* perhaps scarcely knew.

When he heard what a fate had his Tom overtaken,
His whole nervous system was very much shaken;
He went at once on his knees, gave way to despair,
Rolled wildly his eyes, and pulled hard at his hair;
But words came at last, and the first that he spake,
Was "St. Peter," at which all his faith seemed to wake.
He pauses not now, he takes hold of a sack,
And throws it at once with skill on his back,
And is off to the place, nay, is there in a crack;
And collecting the bits, both of limbs and of clothing,
And the dust stained with blood without the least loathing;
All he drops in the sack, as if filling a pastry,
And then puts for the church in very great haste. He

Deposits the sack on St. Peter's own shrine,
 And lights up the candles, to the number of nine;
 That done he pauses a second, not more,
 And again is gone like a shot through the door;
 To summon the priests, and invite all his friends
 To assist and watch how the catastrophe ends.

Now this church's receipts had diminished of late,
 On account of a new one that opened in state
 With three hairs of Peter, the saint and apostle,
 (For churches like other professions may jostle
 In interest at times); and these three precious hairs
 Had made the new fathers to put on such airs
 As disgusted their brothers, who wanted to know
 What were "*three hairs*?" they'd a whole saint to show!

But now came the time, with Tom Jones's mishap,
 To arouse up their saint from his rather long nap,
 And show to the world by his consummate skill
 That Achilles, though sleeping, was Achilles still;
 Oh, the heart of each father grew light as a feather,
 As they started to put poor Tommy together.

In the church there were thousands (if thousands it held)
 While each to his neighbor iron-like seemed to weld,
 In the pushing and crushing, that threatened to smother
 Or change arms and legs from this one to that other;
 And no one could count these members their own,
 As the organ gave out its most sonorous tone;
 And the priests, in full voice, struck up in the praise
 Of the saint they had lived on for so many days.

But just half the service has chanted, when—crack!
 A *strong* word was shot from the mouth of the sack;
 And after some struggling, young Tommy stepped out
 To bid his friend Stephen to keep a look out
 "On the nest since he'd—halloa! what does this mean"
 "Oh! Jago," said he, "what a very strange dream!"

Now the people all rushed the youth to behold,
And the monks feared his tale would perish untold,
For Tommy restored to life and sensation
Was in danger of dying from sheer suffocation!
Which caused them to issue, a strong prohibition
'Gainst coming too close, while, in full exhibition,
They placed Tom, on the highest first step of the altar,
So that none in the crowd, of their wishes could falter;
There he stood, till was cleared out the last hungry sinner,
After which he went home with the priests to his dinner.

Tom after that day thought no more of the nest,
But of chorister boys he made one of the best;
Attended to church, was so changed in his spirit
That he won to high grades which told to his credit.
But his wicked companions all of them swore
He was not the same Tom "as they'd know'd afore!"
"That Tom was a sharp un, and 'know'd what he know'd,'
But this was a 'soft un' as might go and be blowed."

The father of Tom, in the wildest delight,
Pray'd his last to the saint on that very same night;
And the doctor's discovered (but then he was dead),
That the shock was too strong for his very weak head;
So the church gave up its fees, in toto, and found
A coffin and pall, and a small slip of ground,
And the priests at the funeral all chanted in pairs,
And have laughed ever since at the "THREE PRECIOUS
HAIRS."



HER GRAVE.

AND love shall come full circle yet,
 In spite of partings and of tears;
 And joy be like a jewel set
 In life, not measured out by years,
 But living by a fuller faith,
 And higher hope, and deeper trust:
 Treading with firmer steps the path
 That leads unto the good and just!

The soul shall wake and live once more;
 And not in vain, oh! not in vain!
 To win the crown that fancy wore
 When coming years, like golden grain,
 Were still before us and the task
 Seemed but to reap and gather in;
 And when to have was but to ask,
 And when to *love* was sure to win!

Ah me! The mound has long grown green,
 The stone itself is rich with moss;
 And all the years that since have been,
 Were heavy with a love and loss.
 The air is filled with trembling sound,
 With voice like whisperings, heard of old
 As summer twilight deepens round,
 And shadows gather, fold on fold,

About the grave of her I loved.
 Alas! she never bore my name,
 Yet not the less she lived and moved
 The first, the dearest, in life's game.
 The graceful girl of summers back,
 The woman, forty years ago!

Do human hearts break on the rack?
Ah, no, the brave ones still live on!
And true to love is true to life;
To live, to master pain and grief,
And, oh! not breathe the name of wife,
But *to be worthy*, brings relief.
Love lives not less without return:
Another's thou? alas, not so!
Death comes: old fires anew may burn—
I love the girl of long ago!

I love the woman, once a child,
My playfellow in far-off years,
Grown earnest, who with accents mild
And eyes so blue, so full of tears,
Bade me farewell, but could not heal
The deepening wound herself had made.
Oh, if to love, were to be loved
Life's sunshine might exceed its shade!

And I have lived my life away,
I will not deem I lived for naught;
While yet thro' memory sunbeams play,
While still my days with toil were fraught;
Tho' love is much it is not all,
And life hath yet a second goal,
And manly voices loudly call,
And work is worthy of the soul!

And I have worked and years have passed,
My time of peace is growing near.
I offered first, I bring at last,
My all of manhood to you here.
Here, 'mid the scenes where we have played,
Here near the church beside the yew,
Where first we wept, laughed, parted, prayed,
I come to lay life down by you!

THE PORTRAIT.

TO other eyes 'tis nothing more
 But just a girl's fair loving face,
 In which, perchance, they read a trace
 Of deeper things than fashion's lore.

To them it is not, as to me,
 A volume, full of life's sweet songs,
 A chant that memory prolongs
 Of wildest unreality,

Filling to overflow the heart,
 A life within the life I hold,
 A promise, infinite, untold
 Save in a dream; I could not part

From my own self, but I should pine
 As one in darksome dungeon pent,
 Where not a gleam of sun was lent,
 Where not a single star could shine!

All have such treasures, rich to each,
 Poor to the world that cannot know
 What spirit strains of music flow
 From unseen strings, a gentle speech

Finding its goal by other ways
 Than through the dull sense of the ear;
 The fancied touch of lips, how dear!
 Oh! memory, the enchanter plays.

And thoughts will come again, again,
 Of things that were, or would have been;
 The little mound of earth grown green
 Is but a myth, and death is vain!

We live the life we thought to live,
 We feel the joy we should have felt,
 And sorrows like the snowflakes melt,
 A touch, the talisman can give

All, all! and I, I see thee now,
Glad childish faces round thy chair,
My wife, my children, all are there;
They come to me, I know not how.

For they have never been! she died,
The promised sunlight of my home,
And the dark shadows round me come,
In place of her the wished-for bride.

Yet, as I gaze upon this token
Of that deep love I deem not lost,
But only for a moment crossed,
The dream to me is all unbroken.

I live, live ever in the hope,
And ever seems the vision true,
As when we gathered flowers that grew
Where meadows to the river slope!

NANCY.

AS wayward and wild, as fetterless fancy,
Dear nature's own child and darling sweet Nancy.
Like a beautiful thought, she is hovering still,
Yet cannot be caught strive as hard as you will.

Now she lures with a smile, now rejects with disdain,
And hearts worship the while she is forging their chain;
Oh! she fetters them all, yet her own she keeps free,
And away she starts like a bird or a bee,

If you speak but of love, or attempt but to press
Her beautiful lips, for she will not confess;
Oh! she will not confess that in heart or in fancy,
One's dearer than all to beautiful Nancy.

LIKE THE SONGS.

LIKE the songs in poet's pages,
Oh! the old tale still seems new;
Hearts repeat it in all ages,
Eden's love-tale bright and true.

They repeat it as in spring time,
Nature's legends still are told
By the primrose and the wild thyme
And the daisy's eye of gold.

These repeat the lore of beauty,
With creations woof inwove;
Godlike wisdom, dying never,
And the man and woman ever
Still repeat the tale of love.

Thus is nature ever young,
Like a maiden lost in dreams;
Listen, still a bridal song
She sings her woods and wilds among,
And in her countless streams.

With a wisdom never failing,
She builds the forest wide;
With a splendor never paling,
Come the day-star and the tide,

Comes the seed of every flower,
Comes the fruit of every tree;
And man, in love to woman bending,
Each fulfil their destiny.



THE HOLIDAY.

UPON the threshold of the man,
He but a disappointed boy,
Earnest of life not yet begun,
Held it but as a broken toy;
Full of a growing discontent,
Half foiled and weary home he came,
So all unlike to him that went
Sure of success in life's rich game.

He'd dreamed youth's tinsel dreams of pride
Of fame and honor that should be,
And turning from the world aside,
Vexed at their unreality,
He sought once more his father's home:
Three years, long years of toil and pain,
Since he had left had come and gone,
And he was standing there again.

The sunset deepening into night,
The woods and meadows lying round,
The hymn of rest and fading light
Trembling in every sound;
The village everywhere unchanged,
The stream still rippling on its course,
And scenes and friends so long estranged,
And love came back with tenfold force.

His father's house, his home so near
Before him there—he sees the gate,

And is it nothing to be dear,
And something only to be great ?
There stands the oak tree by the door;
There has he never asked in vain;
He pauses but a moment more,
It opens to him once again.

His eyes are all suffused with tears,
He cannot trust his tongue to speak,
His mother's voice is in his ears,
His mother's kisses on his cheek;
His father's hand is in his own,
A father's love is in the grasp;
And, who is this, the woman grown,
Fearing yet longing still to clasp ?

But little more than child was she,
With laughing eyes and sunny hair,
Three years and she has grown to be
A woman, graceful, tall and fair.
Like one awaken'd from deep sleep
Wondering if all he sees be true,
Striving some vision still to keep,
He gazes in her eyes so blue.

To him she has been still the child;
In letters, when he read her name,
Ever the face, the voice so mild
Of Alice had been all the same.
He scarcely thought a change to find,
Perchance a little, yet not much;
And lo! the woman rich in mind,
Who made his heart thrill at a touch!

Twelve years ago some one had died,
And Alice to their home was brought,

And he remembers how she cried,
And still with childish passion fought.
'Twas on a cold and wintry day,
And mother wept and looked so sad,
And told him God had called away
Her friends—and they were all she had.

And he must love and comfort her—
His own eyes filling fast with tears—
And as he stands beside her now
The scene comes back from out the years;
Humbled in heart with cheeks all wet
He feels—to comfort is not mine,
He feels his mother's kisses yet,
He feels their arms about him twine.

II.

Deep mists are seen at morn and eve,
The harvest all is gathered up,
The night a crystal splendor leaves
On twig and leaf, and from the cup
The acorn falls unto the ground,
And all the trees are growing bare,
And in the landscape wide around
The winter meets us everywhere.

The few remaining leaves are all,
Crimson and yellow like the sky
That heralds night, in showers they fall
With every wind that passes by;
And restless, quivering at our feet,
They change their happy songs of June
To rustle, rustle, beat, beat, beat,
Through hedgerow and wood-path thickly
strewn.

And still he lingers as if bound
By some strong spell he cannot break,
As if the goal of life were found,
And lost if he again should take
A farewell of his home and friends;
He lingers, then again would go
And questions of his life the ends,
And changes as the winds may blow.

He wanders musing in his mind,
And nothing settles into form;
Comes her dear face—Oh, Alice kind,
Alice!—and like an April storm
A smile makes rainbows in his tears;
Oh! if she love me I will stay;
Then rings an echo in his ears,
The great world calls—I must away.

Away and with an aching heart,
Leaving behind the better hope,
Oh! never yet did man so part
Love, and ambition weak to cope
Gives way; the world, the voice of men,
Their praise, their censure on us pall;
We love, are loved, and there and then
A touch a kiss outbuys it all.

He could not go but he would speak,
Would ask her counsel, ask her love;
The color mounts into his cheek
And swifter all his pulses move,
“Oh! should she love me—should she not!”
Even he doubts his worth the more,
And full of hope and hope forgot,
Change follows change, thoughts fly before.

His life, his happiness, his peace,
Trifles when in the balance set;
Better by far his life should cease
Than on her brow a grief be set;
Self lost beyond the realms of thought,
Oh! should she love—and love indeed!
And all his life the fancy caught,
And like the blossom from the seed,

A thousand visions sweet of home,
Of children and of Alice wife,
All thronging with the fancy come,
And play like sunshine through his life.

III.

Night with its host of stars comes on,
With shadows and with silence deep,
And all the signs of life are gone,
And all the village hushed in sleep;
Save but the low song of the wind,
The faintest splashing of the stream,
Breaks nothing on the ear or mind,
All things seem molten to a dream.

“Oh! Alice!” and he holds her hand;
“Speak to me Alice, make me strong:”
Alone beneath the stars they stand,
And words come broken from his tongue:
“Alice, I purposed to return
When first I came, long, long ere this,
Now other thoughts within me burn,
And other hopes—Oh! let me kiss

Thy lips—for, Alice, in my heart
Has grown a richer dream than fame

And the boy's yearnings—all apart
 To my own ears I breathe thy name;
And as the sun expels the shade,
 Life wears a richer hue for me,
And all the years with love inlaid,
 Are full of tender imagery.

I dream—my life is but a dream;
 Speak Alice, speak and bid me wake;
Make all things true that only seem,
 Or from the bough the blossom shake;
I love you—I would stay or go;
 Alice, to me thy love is more
Than all my words can say or show—
 Than all things that have been before.

Shape all my future as you speak,
 Speak Alice, speak to eager ears!"
A crimson splendor tinged her cheek,
 And looking through a mist of tears
"Not mine," she said, "it is not mine
 To bid you go or tarry, still
That love were not a mate for thine
 That left you aught less free in will.

And should you stay, I know not
 But other, higher hopes would rise,
Not dead but for a time forgot,
 And I should weary in your eyes;
And you are young and I am poor,
 My only wealth your father's care;
To thee is open many a door,
 And love and fortune wait you there.

Not now—not now—Edward, not now;
 I must not take what you would give.

Nay, look not with that anxious brow,
My love through all my life will live;
And night and morning in my prayers,
And all day long and all the night,
My life with thine a semblance wears,
Like thine my heart is sad or light.

But selfish were my love and blind,
And all untrue to thee, should I
Take these hot words with which you'd bind
Our fates, till one or both should die;
Go when you will—or go or stay,
I love you, but I may not hold
Your promise, and when comes the day,
Edward, this tale is all untold.

And you are free—I love not less,
Not less, dear Edward, but the more;
Still shall I pray to God to bless
Still love you ever as before;
And when the days and years have grown,
And should you then be free to choose,
And should you woo me for your own,
Edward, I shall not then refuse."

He takes her fondly to his heart:

"Oh! Alice, Alice, do not fear!"
About them lies a world at rest,
Above them shine the stars, and clear
A waning moon hangs in the sky:
"Oh! Alice, Alice, not in vain,
But for a little while good bye;
I go, but I shall come again."

A GLEAM FROM THE PAST.

TOUCHED with a soft and tender grace,
In the action, the word, and the tone,
He looks in her fair, youthful face,
And the hard lines fade from his own.

Oh, he listens with eager expectant ears,
He answers with faltering tongue;
His mind is busy with by-gone years,
That come like the echoes of song.

Faint, faint sounds in the distance there
Of music, passingly sweet;
And the long past wakes in its lair,
And again youth's pulses beat!

And the old man, no longer gray,
Like a change in some fairy scene,
From the present has wandered away,
And the days come back that have been!

And his heart leaps up once more,
A moment he wakes to rejoice;
And his being thrills to the core
At the sound of a woman's voice!

The sound of her voice, and her smile,
Death relaxing, yields to the charms
And seems to restore for awhile
A dear lost form to his arms!

As he gazes the maiden blushes
All rosy and red as she stands;
Nor can she divine why he offers
His withered and trembling hands.

"Like, like! so like," he murmurs,
"To her who sleeps under the ground;
She died in the far-off summers,
But I started, thought she was found!

“Found! and the present vanished away,
And memory loosened its hold.”
Tears from his dim eyes stole away
As he whispered—“Old, old, so old!”

“God bless you! Forgive me, forgive me—
Like, so like, to the face that I knew;
Oh, let it again smile on me,
For the fancy seems still as true!

“Ah, a kiss, from the lips so fair,
And the vision were perfect now!”
And the maiden stooped by his chair
And she kissed his wrinkled brow!

LUCY.

L IKE a flower in motion,
By soft sweet breezes stirred,
Like whispers of the ocean,
In the distance heard,
All full of grace and beauty,
All full of music wild,
Is the mind and form of Lucy,
Nature's darling child.

A day that's newly breaking,
O'er earth and heaven serene,
A flower bud sweetly waking,
From its long wintry dream,
Are charms less fair than Lucy,
In her simple dress,
And beauty fast expanding
To woman's loveliness.

MARY.

WHEN twilight trembles o'er the earth,
 And night resumes her reign,
 When fancy to the dead give birth,
 I see thy face again.
 It has not lost its gentle power
 To soothe the soul at will;
 And in night's holy, silent hour
 Thy spirit guideth still.

A lightning-flash the pang of grief,
 Which tells me thou art dead,
 The vivid misery is but brief,
 I turn, thou hast not fled.
 I see thee on hope's tranquil shore,
 On memory's golden waves;
 To where life's treasures stream-like pour
 From times rough rocks and caves.

And on me smiles thy deep blue eye
 Calm as the star above,
 Pure, fair and frail mortality,
 Rich with immortal love;
 I cannot, dare not, deem thee lost,
 Life, heaven, hope, all were gone!
 A moment parted at the most,
 Thou bidst me still love on.

I do, I do, through clouds of time,
 My soul springs up to thee,
 And on me dawns the bliss sublime
 Of immortality.

THE LETTERS.

DEAD! The best and the bravest of friends, dead, dead!
Far from home! No kind eye to watch by his bed!
He has breathed his last, and with no one near—
None to help, or to soothe, or to whisper of cheer!

No ear to catch the last words as they fell—
He has gone! and his letters—his last farewell—
Have reached me, with blessings, from over the sea,
And with one for HER, wherever she be!

For her! by his brave heart, forever at rest,
Which she flung to the winds, once again she'll be blest!
She'll be blest by a love which she knew not to prize;
Will it reach to her heart? Will it moisten her eyes?

Will she feel it? Last night, when I passed the farm,
I saw her all smiles, as she hung on the arm
Of a man—a man? The word seems but a sneer,
As I picture the dead one still living, and here

In the strength of his manhood—brave, noble, and young;
Light leapt from *his* eyes, truth flowed from *his* tongue!
And this fop of a man, scarce seeming a part
Of God's daylight and truth, who has reached to her heart

With his clerical drawl, while his delicate hands
Bear the box of the mission to Christianize lands
He describes so degraded, so lost, and so blind,
As he narrows God's love to his own narrow mind!

Oh, the heart laid to rest, ever manlike and whole,
Held a faith all too wide for her poor, timid soul;
And she trembled and feared—the child's step may err,
But what was the charm that so bound him to her?

Oh, I see him again, catching light from her eyes,
 While his broad, manly brow is bare to the skies,
 As he speaks of his love and his hopes, and the tears
 In his earnestness rise while he pictures the years;

And lays, with devotion love only can mete,
 All his fortune, his home, and his heart at her feet!
 Oh, I see them! They stand where the tree forms a screen,
 While the dance and the music go on on the green!

Oh, I see them come forth! There's a shade on his brow;
 (The deep shadow of death has settled there now!)
 But the scene in the twilight flashes back on my brain,
 And I see him—I hear him—He speaks once again!

And the twilight still deepens, the dances go on;
 He has eyes, he has ears, he has love for but one;
 For one who is all, and yet nothing, and gay—
 One who knows not the prize she is casting away!

One who knows not the worth, or the depth, or the truth
 Of his bounteous love; one who, full of her youth,
 Is yet formal, and fashioned, and shaped to the world;
 Oh, the eyes may be blue, the gold locks may be curled,

But the heart of the woman to answer the man—
 Not the sordid or vain, but God's marvelous plan
 Of a God on the earth, with a mind and a will
 Strong to bear and forbear, and to battle with ill—

Is wanting! Blind, blind! for to him she seemed
 All the light, and the truth, and the grace that he deemed
 Was the woman's! Ah me! but the secret lies deep.
 Who knows what so won him? I cannot but weep

For the friend who returns not, so loved and so lost,
 And whose life by her fair form was shadowed and crossed.
 Far away, he sleeps on—the long sleep of the grave—
 Where blue skies bend over—where tall palms wave!



TO —

MYSTERY, deepest mystery!
The poet cannot spell
The secret of his history,
Or why the tale befell.

Thy smile can make a fuller day;
Thy coldness turn the day to night;
Thy blue eyes in their gentle play,
Wake deepest pain or wild delight.

BESSIE.

THOU canst not know, oh gentle heart!
Aught more of earth or our distress,
Thou canst not strive to make it less
By mutely bearing—thou hast played thy part.
Oh, gentle form bereft of speech!
Oh, little hand so cold and still!
The life and love, and living will
Are ended here. God measures each
One's length, we live so long, so much
We bear, and then we pass away
Out from the sunshine and the day,
Out from the world of sight and touch.
Out, oh! not out of hope or love,
With those who love we still live on,
And thou sweet child, thou art not gone!
I hear thee speak, I see the move.
I see thee shake thy curls and smile,
I see thy blue eyes fill with tears,
True thou art lost unto the years—
The years are but a little while.

HELENA.

OVER eyes, hearts, souls, at will
 Sways her beauty, magic, skill.
 It were easier far to break
 The prison chains that tyrants make,
 Than to sever those she holds
 By fetters forged in Nature's moulds;

By charms more fell than Genii's mind,
 Ere wrought of old man's will to bind.
 Idol of youth's first sacrifice,
 Gleam of long lost Paradise!
 Oh! beauty, still thy toil so strong
 Might lead a second Adam wrong!

In her full bloom and blush of youth,
 Ah! who could doubt her worth, her truth!
 Far easier were it to believe
 That all, aye all things else deceive,
 Than that such eyes, so soft and blue,
 Were yet more beautiful than true.

As easy were it for the heart
 From hope to tear itself apart,
 As doubt what seemeth written there:
 "Ah! she is good as she is fair,"
 With mind as pure as childhood's mirth,
 Or aught that lives upon the earth.

Such is beauty's trusted power;
 Beauty to her is heaven's dower;
 And all who look upon her face,
 Where sin and sorrow have no trace;
 Where time hath touched, but not to dull,
 Must think her good as beautiful!

THE WANDERERS.

DREARY and lone, and the deep winds moan!
At her feet lie the rotting leaves;
She rests on the road, with her living load
And a cold mist round her cleaves.

In her tattered dress, her gaze of distress,
Her touch on the little one's cheek,
A love is told, that song cannot hold
And a grief that words may not speak!

In the tender grace, in the tiny face,
That gladdens our own fireside;
In the cradled sleep; in the eyes that keep
A watch; in the mother, the bride.

To a happier tune, the same deep rune
Of a woman's life is set!
But mother and child, 'neath the hedgerow wild,
Are mother and child, tho' cold and wet!

Is her history known? was the fault her own?
Is he dead, who should be her stay?
Were they man and wife? was he true in life?
Did he kiss her, and pass away?

We know not! she came, tired and worn, and lame!
And painfully sat herself down,
Where, in summer's heat, the glad children meet,
On the bank with its tall oaken crown!

The little one pressed, close, close to her breast,
The grief and the love in each eye,
Of a cruel wrong, and a mother young
With no home, save the pitiless sky!

Sad, and forlorn! had they killed her with scorn?
Christians, and mothers! ah, me!
They judge and condemn! the world smiles on them;
Know they, "the greatest is charity?"

Could they read all within, were they without sin?
Did they slay with a stony stare?
What was her name? whose was the shame?
Poor child, what a grief was there!

She sat in the rain! the cold and the pain
Of a breaking heart she bore!
Tired, weary and spent, the strength was not lent
That would reach to the nearest door!

And the wind blew loud, and the angry cloud,
That hung frowning above her head
Seemed ready to burst o'er the land accursed,
Where the leaves lay scattered and dead.

What was it to her? she did not stir,
But bent to shelter her child;
Till a step drew near, and love and fear
Cried, "save us! I shall go wild!"

And to where they lay, where the children play,
He came,—the young and the strong,
And the wanderers both in his arms he took,
And bore them with him along.

To his mother's home, with him they came,
And a mother's care they found;
But care was vain, for the grief and rain
Had wrought a mortal wound.

They buried her there, where the flowers so fair
Still arrest each passer by,
Unknown her history, all is mystery,
Save that *here* her ashes lie!

But the child she left, of her love bereft,
 (She has grown into girlhood now),
Is the loved of all, and, if harm should fall,
 It would sadden each village brow!

For none in the place, but know her face,
 And to each has her smile grown dear!
And flowers that grow, where her mother lies low,
 Are held sacred things by us here!

TO MARY.

THE first love of youth entwines with thy name,
 'Twas my heart's cry then when I struggled for fame
I breathed it in hope, I sang it in joy,
Now it comes with a dream of the days gone by.

Oh! canst thou remember those hours of delight,
When together we strayed 'neath the shadows of night,
When the boys wild picture of what should be,
Brought a joy to her who was all to me?

Oh! canst thou remember the star so bright,
The brightest of all in the temple of night,
We called it our own and gazed as it shone,
Till our hearts and our hopes, and our life seemed one.

Oh! canst thou, oh! dost thou ever in dreams,
In the night when with shadows fond memory teems,
Behold what to me is still sacred ground,
That home and the woods that encircle it round?

And ah! in the scene fancy sketches in air,
Of the dear old spot is the boy still there,
When thy thoughts to the past all silently steal,
Dost thou e'er breathe a wish, a wish for his weal

TO EMILY.

THERE'S a smile upon thy lips and such brightness in
 thine e'e,
 As when a sunbeam slips through dark leaves on the tree,
 And I would give the world to know that they were meant
 for me.

There's a fullness in thy words love might covet for his own
 And a music like the birds in each clear silvery tone,
 Ah! if I could but win them mine, and ever mine alone.

But, alas! I cannot spell the meaning in thine eyes,
 And like murmurings in a shell still I hear thy low replies,
 Ah! but the hidden meaning beyond my searching lies.

INEVITABLE.

WHOLE joys come never to us
 To-morrow as to-day;
 Some want shall still undo us,
 And turn our gold to grey;
 The boy with impulse burning,
 The girl with radiant hope,
 Shall meet some bitter turning
 Adown life's glittering slope.
 The flowers that seem to strew it
 Shall die, perchance, of drought;
 Or the fruit, if they should reach it,
 Turn dust within the mouth.
 For never comes the pleasure
 That we with hope did measure;
 And fancy finds her treasure
 But dying leaves and flowers
 That wither from the root, or grow, not to be ours.

TO NANCY.

BONNY Nancy! blithesome Nancy,
Idol of my heart and fancy,
Like a lark in heaven singing,
Like a flower in summer spring,
Thy voice is heard thy face is seen,
And gladness comes where gloom has been.
Like a sunbeam, first of spring,
Love and joy and life to bring.
Love and joy and life are thine,
Bonny Nancy, make them mine;
With thy loving words and tone,
Make them, make them, all my own.

THE WORD FAREWELL.

PARTING knell, on hope's sweet bell, thy accents tell
Of heartstrings broken;
Cheeks pale with fears, eyes dim with tears, and sorrowing
years
Of grief that may never be spoken.
Thou dirge of joys, of hope that flies, and love that dies,
Thou art ringing, ringing ever
The solemn knell, the mournful spell, the long farewell
Of things returning never.
Music of sadness, sigh of distress, when all we possess
Of love from the heart is torn;
Melodious sound, with sorrow crowned, which grief has
found
To breathe to those we mourn.

As the songs we sing, and the flowers we bring, when sor-
rowing

 We lay the dear one to rest,
Are sweetest, fairest, loveliest and rarest, most prized and
dearest

 Of all the giver possessed.

So is the sound that tells, the deepening grief that dwells,
in the heart that swells,

 As it severs with throbs of pain.

'T has "a dying fall" and goes, like the notes which rose,
in the wood at daylight's close!

 Oh! 'tis the saddest, the sweetest strain,

 FAREWELL.



A SCENE OF HORROR.

NOTE.—In Santiago, the Capital of Chile, in the year 1863, at the commemoration or feast held in honor of some one of the different names given to the Virgin Mary, the church, more like a theatre than a place of worship, was adorned with all kinds of tinsel and trappings, and illuminated nightly, when letters were received for, and supposed to be answered by, the Virgin herself, and many other wonders of a like nature were brought to pass. Towards the end of the feast, some of the draperies taking fire, the confusion of the congregation (all women) was so great, and the help or control of the priests, *if any were attempted*, so ineffectual, that nearly every soul in the church perished in the flames, and the building itself was reduced to ashes. Upwards of two thousand are said to have lost their lives. Upon the site a column and statue are erected, and the figure is, beyond all sculpture pieces I have ever seen, a marvel of expression. Like the feeling such a tale must create, the figure appears not to have been slowly cut, but to have leapt into being from the artist's brain.

A SOLEMN temple, raised to the high God,
 And full of worshipers! Hark to that scream!
 Oh Christ, what horror! Fire—flames, that rob
 The stars of brightness, burst from every beam!
 Wives, mothers, sisters, perish in that gleam.
 Bright, beautiful they left their homes this night,
 Full of religious, holy hope and dream,
 And there they perish in the frenzied sight
 Of husbands, lovers, brothers—powerless against such might.
 A temple yesterday, with gold and flowers
 And saints and virgins glittering to behold;
 A place where Rome exerted all her powers
 To fascinate the minds of young and old
 With signs from heaven, and miracles not cold.
 Deeds of to-day by Holy Virgin wrought
 Were there said to be passing; and the hold
 This took upon the public mind had brought
 Thousands to see and hear Rome's priests, who boldly
 taught
 This falsehood in the face of God and man!
 The altar with a thousand lights was lit.
 From column unto column glowing ran

Such tinsel trappings as perchance were fit
 To grace some pantomime, not holy writ,
 Nor altars raised to Christ, the pure, the wise,
 The simply beautiful, whose words so knit
 Man's life in God's as makes the soul to rise,
 And in religion's name false acts and arts despise.

Not man's to judge a brother for his creed,
 But it is man's to bid the *liar* hush.
 Who clouds heaven's truth deserves to bleed,
 And it is right in self-defense to crush
Whoso shall trade on ignorance, and to brush
 The webs of fiction they would weave around
Our sacred names with them into the slush
 And slime of hell; to cleanse the holy ground
 That purer men may speak and publish truths profound.

A church, a ruin and a hecatomb;
 A bank of simple flowers and leafy trees;
 A marble statue, motionless and dumb,
 But not expressionless, the gazer sees
 Upon that site, and feels his blood to freeze.
 The agony, the wild heart-rending groan;
 A nation's cry floats by him in the breeze
 As he beholds that figure fierce and lone;
 That concentrated horror there transfixed in stone.

A milder mind perchance had made it weep,
 Or children pray above the fearful spot,
 A scene like that for tears was all too deep;
 The culminating point of terror, not
 A tale of gentle suffering, but a blot
Upon that Church that plays with pomp and glare
 To make believe it *is* what it *is not!*
 That supplicating figure's wild despair
 To heaven appeals against such Christless prayer!



ALL-SOULS.

NOTE.—This day (the second of November), simply in its outward observances is in Catholic countries where the cemetery is well kept, a touching sight. The graves are adorned with flowers and wreaths, and the mourners kneel beside them, while a mass is chanted in the chapel. The day is instituted by the Church to pray the condemned souls out of purgatory. The Church only prays for such as have left no relations behind them; to such as have, it becomes the duty of those relations, and they are thus exhorted to the task in the “Christian year:” “Nothing can compare with the pains of souls in purgatory. You would feel for your worst enemy in such a place, yet those who burn in this red hot oven are your friends, your brothers, the nearest and dearest relations you have known in life, and they are burning and suffering because you are selfish and mean, and would amass riches for yourselves upon earth, in the place of causing masses to be said for their souls. Is it possible you will not make an effort for them? They can only pay their debt to God by suffering the last rigor of their sentence; but you may satisfy Him for them at a trifling cost to yourselves, by an oration, a mass, a mortification. By such means you may liberate them altogether, and they, in their turn, having ascended to heaven, will plead for you at the throne of God; and who knows what they may not achieve, in the way of salvation for your souls.” No Protestant can be buried in a Catholic Cemetery. To such an extent is this feeling carried in the Catholic countries of South America, that bodies have been exhumed, and cast out from the churches and the grounds. A man is not a Christian until baptized by the Church of Rome. Those only, who have lived where Catholicism has undisputed sway, can form a just idea of its intolerance. In Ecuador, under the dictatorship of Garcia Moreno, the nineteenth might well have passed for the fourteenth century. No book could be brought in without the approval of the bishop; and no religion was or is tolerated but that of Rome.

ALL-SOULS. The dead of every age and clime;
A Pause and conceive how vast a theme is here!
Let thy thought range throughout recorded time
And thence return unto this last made bier!
What wealth of passion, pleasure, pain, hope, fear,
Of highest, lowest, noblest, best and worst,
Worshiped, despised, condemn'd, and treasured dear,
Is in that dark unknown in silence hearsed,—
Death's solemn mystery, wherein no Sage is versed.

All-Souls. This day man dedicates to them!
 Whence and what are they? In our minds they live
 As some refined, pure, priceless spirit gem,
 Where pain can touch them not, nor sorrow give
 Another pang, and where like bees they hive
 With equal souls in some bright state of being;
 But when we deeper in the mystery dive,
 These images, that come from want of seeing,
 Must pass, as shadows from day's sunlight fleeing.

For greater is the soul when striving greatly;
 A sweet, blank, blissful calm, and nothing more
 To those strong spirits that on earth so stately
 Plann'd, thought, sung, built, and sailed from shore to
 shore,
 Achieving, striving and not giving o'er
 Till life's last hour was here completely told.
 Souls God-inspired and Godlike to the core,
 That, spite of earth's decay, were never old,
 But went as first they came, determined, brave and bold.

Can souls like these sing just one simple tune,
 Changeless and sweet as twitter of some bird
 That in the leafy month of sunny June
 Pipes out its life unheeded and unheard?
 Ah no! by innate influence moved and stirred,
 Living they reach to higher heights and power,
 To higher, not to lower life transferred;
 In time and in eternity the dower
 Of mind expands bring the perfect flower.

Here mid the graves of those who lived and toiled,
 Pause and reflect! The forms that rot below,
 Wasted by time and by diseases soiled,
 Blending with nature yet again will grow
 To newer life in newer form, and show

That matter working from within can weave
 Itself to shapes of things that live and know;
And in the spirit world we *must* believe
That souls shall wake anew, to strive, if not to grieve.

But turn we from such speculations vain.

All souls are lost in God, and human sight
Shall see them not, and know them not again
 Through the swift changes of our day and night;
 Yet o'er their graves love hangs with fond delight,
And memory treasures still a lasting prize.

Blest is such sorrow, in its shadowy light
The lost still move and live in fadeless guise,
All palpable to that which in us never dies.

Here consecrated to yon city's dead

Crosses and mounds and marble forms are placed;
And here to-day with reverence shall tread
 Death's yet uncalled, and things mute be laced
 With flowers and leaves, and living love be traced
In hearts and eyes that see what is not there.

Affection's gaze beholds the sleeping face,
And soul meets soul in yearning and in prayer.
 The spirit is not bound to time or place,
 And deathless longing love with magic power is graced.

Here pause we then, and lo! the mourners come.

Watch, and each grave shall grow a history
To some one heart, though to the others dumb;
 And deeper than night's starry mystery
 Shall penetrate the soul that cannot see
Behind that veil, but feels its love and loss,
 And weeps anew for poor mortality;
Kneels with the dead, and by that symbol cross
Trusting that dream is true, since life is bitter dross.

Old age and youth, each burdened with like thought.

 Strange are the ways of God, who gives and takes

By some deep lore unfathomable, yet wrought
 So fast in nature that death often makes
 What to poor human wisdom were mistakes.
 The stay of age, the guide of youth must fall;
 While he who hath not, or who perhaps forsakes
 Such sacred duties, overliveth all,
 And hears not till long years the fatal trumpet call.
 Who shall explain? 'Tis faith must guide us here;
 Not ours the skill, nor ours the strength to know
 The subtle workings of the plant or sphere;
 Even from the highest to the thing most low
 'Tis mystery still; but ever do they show
 A great design, a spirit vast and good,
 To whose strong majesty we have to bow;
 That hath not and that may not be withstood,
 Nor would the wise of heart resist it if they could.

Sad is such loss, a bitter, bitter pain
 And desolation wild and deep have been
 And will be felt again and yet again
 In many a broken life, that shall be seen
 To haunt one spot, one little mound of green,
 Where tender love is laid to sleep in earth;
 A love which left no equal here, I ween,
 For that poor wanderer. In the heart's great dearth
 Death comes in life, and life pains, even as hollow mirth.

* * * * *

Pause here, and see where shameless priests who play
 Religion's game as if they held from God
 Power to condemn or bless man's lifeless clay,
 Have dared divide death's universal sod;
 And this is Catholic, by the *blessed* trod.
 Enter and you shall find like passions, pains,
 And griefs and sufferings from the self-same rod;
 Yet they, with little hearts and shallow brains,
 Dare offer to these souls a larger share of gains

In God's grand heaven; turn we from the theme.
 All creeds and all religions end in Him.
 However wild, strange, high or low the dream,
 However bright and clear, or dark and dim,
 Man's soul in hope may shadow forth its hymn
 Of praise, thanks, fear and reverence divine,
 He knows who gave the power; to Him
 The Indian's cry, the savage's harsh whine,
 Are one with Mahomet's prayer and Milton's song sublime.

* * * * * * * * *

All-Souls; the great and little ones of earth;
 Kings, beggars, poets, statesmen, savage, slave,
 All that have owed in time a human birth;
 All who have made this passage to the grave;
 Murderers and thieves, and lunatics that rave;
 The good, the bad, the wise and nobly pure;
 We pray for all, they were as nature gave
 The power to be; and while time shall endure
 God's meaning in such fates to man remains obscure.

All would be great and good, if that, might be,
 All would be happy and content in life;
 Nor stoop to crime nor writhe in misery,
 Nor soil their soul with low and sordid strife.
 But who can choose his fate? A lesson rife
 With many thoughts that ever end in one,
 The great unfathomable first cause of life,
 The meaning of this world the sun shines on,
 Its myriads yet to come, and those its myriads gone.

Bid some poor wretch be Shakspeare, and so make
 The world pay homage to his noble mind.
 Be anything but what he is, and shake
 With cold and hunger, houseless in the wind.
 Nature is full of beauty and is kind

To those who bow beneath her gentle sway,
 And poetry exhaustless he may find
 In men and stars and in the night and day;
 Why is he shivering thus, choking the public way?

Why is he not some lord with large estates?
 Or some strong man, with sinews fit for toil?
 Whence comes it, and what crime is this of fates?

For what misdeeds is he condemned to coil
 About his wasted form those rags? The soil
 He treads is God's, and freely given to all.

Alas! in Nature's deep and grand turmoil
 Such histories within our sight befall.
 We see, but scarcely heed, and yet they might appal.

The bravest spirit and the wisest brain,
 Who dares be proud of intellect or wealth?
 Behold that wretch, then, turn and think again.

He poor and weak, and thou rich and in health;
 See where he creeps along as if by stealth;
 He held his place amid God's day and night.

Ask, then, thyself why intellect and pelf
 Were given to thee, and by what self-won right
 To thee comes joy and hope, and love, and sweet delight.

Ask and be humbled. Pray for these, and feel
 That not in words, but in each act and deed
 Man's life should be a prayer, and seek to heal
 Such pain and suffering, and to sow the seed
 Of hope in hearts that know so great a need.

Oh, high in intellect and high in place,
 Be gentle, kind, and take the fullest heed
 Of these sad forms that seem but to deface
 God's grand creation and the day's bright face.

By His will are they here, and throughout life,
 Though feebly felt by man, some meaning grows.

Unto the wise and great in this world's strife
 Comes compensation for the toils and throes,
 That by their innate natures round them close;
 Since they can work, work bears a certain joy,
 But these poor wretches, with their hungry woes,
 Their hopeless struggle up to man from boy
 Amid the haunts of crime, where want and care destroy.

Is hope for these or for that sister soul
 Who shares such fate, and knows no fall or rise?
 What mortal dare be judge upon the whole
 Of suffering life that throbs beneath the skies?
 While peerless help, and such as God may prize
 The meanest hands to meanest wants may give.
 From vanity and pride awake! arise!
 And in the light of full creation live,
 And know no best or worst, since God alone can give.

Or best or worst, and it is to blaspheme
 To hold those lost who here from first to last,
 In ignorance and their gaunt misery, seem
 Forced by some fate to tremble at each blast.
 What, when man's longest span of life is past,
 Are his few years to vast eternity?
 Poor shadow of an hour, dare he forecast
 Life's horoscope in God's infinity,
 Or stain with one foul thought creation's full divinity

Is man but flesh, a thing that must decay?
 And is his be all, and his end all here?
 What profanation to the grand display
 Of stars and suns that light him to his bier,
 And to those minds that carol in his ear
 Visions of things beyond time's low estate,
 And to his mind that whispers still of cheer,
 And bids him hope and ever be elate;
 The not to be is false, *to be* is still man's fate.

Life stains not. No! It is the radiance
 Of that eternity that calmly glows
 In heaven's high dome, and without variance
 Shines from the heart that hath no fear, but knows
 God in itself as Christ divinely shows!
 Oh Christ! thou greatest soul! when shall it be
 That each who in Thy temple lowly bows,
 Shall leave his fancies vain and come to Thee
 A simple child in faith, hope, love and purity?

Not with a name, a bauble, or a text,
 A creed, a sect, a vision still apart
 From God's great universe, changed by the next
 Who bows to thee, but with a full, true heart,
 Christ-like, not Christian, with a timid start
 At name of those who use a different form
 To worship Him of whom all make a part,
 But with a spirit doubt cannot deform,
 That knows all things are His, down to the meanest worm.

Both His and Thine, Lord Christ! our second God,
 Our lord of mind, of faith and hope and trust,
 The world's more sacred since Thy feet have trod
 Amongst us, and no longer are we dust,
 Although man must be still the thing he must—
 A being far below Thy perfect man,
 Yet is it something to wipe off the rust,
 The spirit degradation that then ran
 Deep in his nature when Thy work began.

All-Souls. Lord Christ, to Thee, the king of these,
 Thou wise and sweet, pure shepherd of Thy flock,
 Who sought its safety, not Thy gentle ease;
 Who founded hope upon its highest rock;
 Thou more than mortal, who withstood the shock
 Of strong temptation, insult and disdain.

All-Souls we dedicate to Thee, but mock
Ourselves and the great God, by quibbles vain,
By Romish arrogance, and protests still profane!

Sunshine and rain and Thy bright loving words

We find at one with Him who freely showers
Upon each creed and race and the wild herds
From hands o'erflowing rich and welcome dowers;

But men misusing their divinest powers,
And in Thy name, oh Christ! on earth declare

For one poor sect bloom God's immortal flowers;
That Thou wilt hear no other voice in prayer,
Condemning all besides to darkness and despair.

Oh Thou man God divine! compared to Thee

Poor human wisdom, intellect and worth,
Virtue, truth, valor, love and purity,

Sink into nothingness. The teeming earth
That ever still to fruit and flower gives birth
Is likest Thee. Each word of Thine doth bless;

A mother's fadeless love that knows no death
Is likest Thine; yet even this is less;
Her love's her son's, but Thine doth every form caress.

What are the great of earth, the mighty names
Of Shakspeare, Washington, and many more?

Winners were they in some Olympic games;
Champions of thought upon a single shore.

But Thou, oh perfect soul! that didst adore,
Live, suffer, teach, feel, see but truth alone,

Canst conquer still with words of gentlest lore,
And in all climes and under every zone,
Thy love and purity and truth have found no equal, none.

What are the mountains of the world, though high,

Compared to that sweet mountain graced by Thee,
Andes or Himalaya's peaks? The sky

Is still above them, their sublimity
 Is of the earth, and all their majesty.
 Thine reaches up to heaven and lights a world,
 Reflecting rays of God's infinity.
 Not clouds but truths divine around it curled,
 A haven for all souls, a throne from which is hurled

Sorrow and sin and every wrong in life;
 A place of rest to those who mourn and weep;
 A spotless home within a world of strife,
 Where minds o'erburdened find refreshing sleep,
 And loving words to soothe the heart, and steep
 Man in such hopes as may not yield to fear;
 Imparting strength the onward march to keep,
 Knowing that God and heaven are always near,
 And spite of clouds below, that there above is clear.

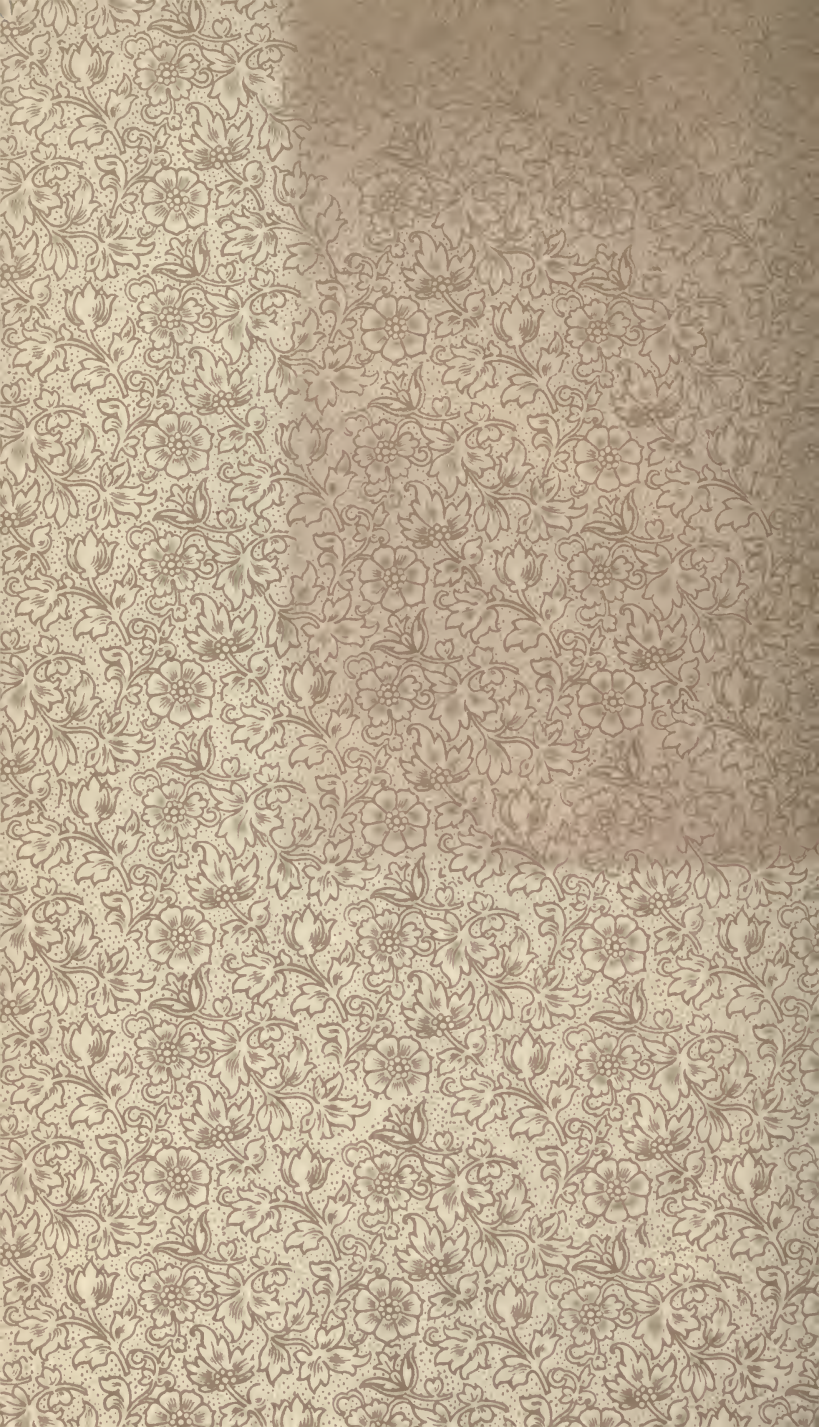
Then from this mount pass we to that on which
 The story ends. Bow heads, hearts, souls, bow down;
 Who here dare be or great, or good, or rich,
 Bow to that bleeding form and mocking crown;
 Bow while a dark'ning universe doth frown;
 Bow to a form and mind that knew to fill
 Life's darkest depths with hope and pure renown;
 With worship purer than earth's purest rill,
 And in thy heart and soul all lower passions still.

Here at the foot of this last symbol lie,
 And let thy thoughts go forth to one and all,
 To every man in Christ-like sympathy;
 To those who rise and unto those who fall.
 No sect or creed is here, love void of gall,
 And help to those who need from it do come,
 And none in vain upon that help shall call.
 Here pray we for ALL-SOULS in their true home
 In Christ's great Church, more Cathölic far than Rome.





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