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FLORIDINA



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FLORIDINA

FLORIDINA

POEMS

By

SAMUEL D. LEE

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LIBRARY
DURHAM, N. C.

NEW YORK
JAMES T. WHITE & CO.

1920

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ALPINE BOOK CO.
NOV 25 '42
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FLORIDINA

On violet bank,
 'Mid grasses rank,
The sunshine is stealing over;
 Does love, away,
 This wintry day,
Think of her careless rover.

Thro' dreamy hours
 I pluck fair flowers,
By forest trail and ramble;
 Or woo sweet sleep,
 Where soft winds sweep
Some jasmine covered bramble.

But she, tonight,
 Where anthracite
Throws out a radiant glowing.
 Draws close her chair;
 Without, the air
Is murky thick—'tis snowing.

'Mid bays I hear
 Low, mournful, clear.
The wild notes of the whippoorwill

And watch the clouds—
Like drifting shrouds—
That all the sky with phantoms fill.

She hears the roar
Of hails that pour
Along the roof and frozen ground;
It is all gloom
No sun, no moon,
But sleet, but snow, but ice is found.

II

My bird may sing in sunny climes;
Her bells may ring in chilling rhymes.

My flowers may bloom the twelve month round;
Her pure snows deck the frosty ground.

She wanders forth on summer days;
With me the summer ever stays.

My thousand trees perfume the air;
With her they raise their cold limbs bare.

I breathe with joy the warm south breath;
Her northland lies 'neath robes of death.

III

My Love-bird would sing
Forever and aye,
Could his warbling bring
You away—away.

SONG OF THE BIRD

O come from the frost land,
O come from the lost land,
O come to the dear sunny south—sunny south,
O come from the ice land
O come to this nice land,
O come to our own bonny south—bonny south
O come to my own bonny south.

O escape the cold blast,
O flee from the bold blast,
O come where the orange blooms for thee—blooms for
thee.

Bid good-bye the light snows,
Bid farewell the white snows,
For myrtle and rose blooms for thee—blooms for
thee,

O myrtle and rose blooms for thee.
O come from the dull skies,
And where storm-clouds arise,
And live where the air ever cheers—ever cheers.

O come where the beams shine,
For such beauty as thine,
And love is but born of the years—of the years,
Where love is but born of the years.

My bird may not sing
Forever and aye,
For bright hopes a-wing
Are flying this way.

Where hearts united
In ever fair day,
Can live as they're plighted
'Neath laurel and bay.

SUNSET

A Florida Forest Camp

The sun flames on the brink of pine,
It spreads its crimson wings afar,
And poises there, as fain to stay
Where beauty sleeps the hours away,
As though 'twere tired of constantly

Journeying toward eternity;
As if 'twould pause where no toils mar
And rest beneath the odorous spray
Of virgin's bower and eglantine

It never spreads its wings so wide
Nor shows its colored plumage o'er
Another spot on earth as here;
Not o'er the Mediterranean tide,
Nor at the Dardanelles' door,
Nor on the other Mexic shore,
On higher or on lower sphere.

The lake lies in tranquility,
As ordered Christ on Galilee,
So calmly blue and freshly fair;
Save where a few faint ripples show
That some old saurian swims below.
Its rim is fringed around unbroke
With feather'd grass and moss-hung oak.
A gnarled magnolia bends above,
Its leaves of glossy green scarce move;
Its gorgeous buds are bursting wide,
So purely white, of incense rare,—
Angels, perhaps, I've thought would prize
These lovely flowers to strew inside
The chancel rail in Paradise.

The brown squirrel seeks its basket-home
Of cross-laced twigs, where rough bough leaps;
The rattler sounds his castinets,
And draws his mottled form away.
The winco-pipe its petals fold,
As fearful that some bold night-gnome
Would touch its heart with fingers cold.
The stammel-crested picus sleeps,
And sings in lower, softer frets
The Cardinal in swift volee.

NIGHT

A Florida Forest Camp

Pile on the knots; these hearts of pine
That reek with flame of Pluto's mine,
Whose stronger half fell to decay
And sprang to gaseous realms away.
If these are souls then left behind
And long, as does the chaste suttee,
To join in some starward abode—
Oh, bid them better speed than wind,
And let their leaping chariot be
Like that in which Elijah rode.

An amphitheater of light,
With velvet blackness hung around,
Thro' which pine columns, grand in height,
Corinthian capital'd in green
Rise up, to hold the dome profound,
The wonder of the countless crowds
Who are on earth and who have been.
Thou glorious sky! O man, would breast
The ether in a rapid flight
To reach the realm of silence, where
The billowy softness of thy clouds
Invite to never ending rest;
Where myriad flaming stars keep ward,
And dreamy fancies ever guard,
For all who come to slumber there.

From off the distant black-jack ridge
Comes loud and sharp the sand crane's howl;
And in the jungle down the stream
Echoes the wildcat's wildest scream,
And the gruff call of the moon-eyed owl;
The salamander tunnels run
Skillful as any engineer
With compass and theodolite,
And every rod or so appear
Glistening in the bright fire's light
His pyramids of fresh, damp sand.
Great yellow spiders, striped with black,
From twig to stump, forward and back,

Throw filaments that soon expand
By dexterous curve and marvelous lap
Into a curious, glittering trap,
For flies that stir with rise of sun.

These things and scenes for them alone,—
For miles there is no human sign,—
Two stalwarts from another clime,
In flannel shirts, and black with grime,
Who sit on ancient log of pine
As very princes on a throne;
Who smoke perique in meerschaum pipe,
And drink of bourbon, mellow, ripe;
Rehearse old tales of travel lore,
Old tales they've told oft times before—
Old tales by which they set great store.

The fire burns low. The sinewy men
Stretch their tired limbs, and sleepy yawn;
They look with care to rifle charge.
To pistol cartridge and cap—
Ready for foe, tho' small or large.
Grasping the ropes, with graceful spring
They reach the hammock's easy swing
And closely 'round their blankets wrap.
Morpheus waves his wand, and then,
Thro' dreamy vistas of far home.
Folds them in magic of sleep, from
Which they are freed only at dawn.

A MAIDEN'S "NO"

"Know ye a fairer land than this
Beneath the heaven's shining sun,
Where all there is of earthly bliss
May surely be by manhood won?"
"Ah, no," the traveler said; "Fair Miss,
I've journeyed far and looked on none."

"Know ye a climate that for health
Is better than South Florida,
Where virgin soil gives greater wealth
And asks less labor for the pay?"
The traveler glanced, perchance with stealth,
At her, but boldly answered, "Nay."

"Know ye a land with bluer skies?
Or one where clearer waters flow?
Where brighter colors drape sunrise,
Or aught to match this sunset glow?"
The traveler closed his steel-gray eyes,
And, turning, simply answered, "No."

"Know ye a land where tree and vine
Will make for man a better lot?"

Know ye an air that's so like wine—
 In short, another favored spot?"
The traveler made impatient sign,
 And said, "My angel, I do not."

"You've questioned me, and I've told truth,
 And I will even further go.
I've seen no maid so fair, forsooth,
 Will ye repay the debt ye owe?"
"Ah, me, thou wandering, gray-eyed youth,
 My answer, like all yours, is No!"

"And I have come from fartherest earth,
 From Russia white and warm Cathay,
To kneel to thee, sole one of worth,
 And at thy shrine due homage pay."
"Oh, turn, brave traveler, from this dearth
 Of love, for I must say thee Nay!"

And am I buried here in woe,
 Where Nature in her beauty lies,
And ye'll not with me forward go
 To make it perfect Paradise?"
"Ah, silly man, dost ye not know
 Two negatives mean—Yes? Arise!"

THE ST. JOHNS, FLORIDA

There is sweeping, wild joy in this life of mine
On thy banks, O broad-flowing river!
Where the wind woos to sleep, and the soft sunshine
Through the tupelo branches shiver.

I dream of the time in the far-away past,
When red-men followed thy courses;
And sigh o'er the legends that tell what trees hast
Sheltered the Cherokee forces.

And the warriors and maids who wooed in thy bowers
Left love marks for later day story,
In the jasmine showers and the white orange flowers
Which ever unfold to thy glory.

I think of the prince who from Spain's martial line
Sought where thy music waves darkle
The wonderful font, wreath'd in wild rose and vine,
Where waters of life ever sparkle.

Thy sunshine and shades were the forest child's hopes,
And they valiantly fought for thee when
There came the pale face to thy green sunny slopes,
Now none the less lovely than then.

'Tis the clime where magnolias perfume the soft air,
Where cypress and myrtle entwining;
Where cardinals wing, and the turtle dove fair
Toward love is ever inclining.

Where the cape-rose whitens the thickets' deep gloom,
And mosses are daintily clinging;
Where cactus flowers and lemon trees bloom,
And mocking birds sweetly are singing.

Where cypress and palm gently sway in the sun
'Neath the breath from warm, placid seas,
And one summer ends when another's begun,
In this land of the vines and trees.

The clime of all climes, where each moment of life
Takes an arrow from sorrow's quiver,
May you always be loved—with never more strife—
For thy beauties, O glorious river!

WERE YOU BUT HERE

I

Were you but here to pick wild flowers with me,
Blue lupin, calopogon, red wild-pea,
Rich yellow orchis in a golden sea,
Pure, waxy blossoms of the sweet bay tree;

II

Were you but here to see the flaunting flower
Of pawpaw, creamy cacti's wealthy dower,
Palmetto's racemes, sweet-briar petals shower,
Low, lovely violets where pine trees tower;

III

Were you but here, I'd gather mistletoe,
With holly leaves down where wild roses blow,
Where jasmine, smilax and fire lilies grow,
Weaving a chaplet for your brow of snow.

IV

Were you but here in April to behold
Magnolia grand, white velvet flower unfold,
Scattering perfume as spendthrifts scatter gold,
Cloying us here with sweetnesses untold;

V

Tall yuccas plumes of milky bells I choose
To mingle with lantana's varied hues,
Crab's eye (Abrus) vine, bringing weather news,
While it its last year's scarlet harvest strews.

VI

Were you but here beside this round quiet lake,
That like a film the quick impressions take
Of stately trees around, the stars to make
Of this a heaven, their own heaven forsake.

VII

Were you but here among great columned pines
With wild flowers all around displaying signs
Of welcome, coral red with green combines,
Among white petaled phlox, blue day-star shines;

VIII

Were you but here where green loblollys shade
The stream that ripples on toward yonder glade;
By fragrant cedars flanked; a retreat made
For sentiment, were you here unafraid.

IX

Were you but here to see blue herons spread
Wide wings to wing from marshy sedges dead
To farthest cypress draped deep and dread,
Where they, in nests of awkwardness, were bred.

X

We have in silence waited—no word said,
And all the woods to silence, too, were wed;
Then life takes courage; first that's heard and read
That of limp sawyers that logs saw and shred.

XI

Up high, the cypress, plume of ardent red,
Above an ivory bill and night-black head
Peeps shyly from a hole. His matted bed
The fox-squirrel leaves to race the limbs instead.

XII

There comes, with stride of royalty inbred,
Lord of dank hammockhaunts—suspicion fled—
The Turkey cock in glittering bronze, full fed
On berries from the saw palmetto shed.

XIII

A saurian searching for his weekly bread
Climbs up the mud where pigs have come and bled.
Aix sponsa whence from where alarmed they sped
Float out in iridescent beauty yede.

XIV

Hoarse calls the frog; so always he has pled;
Silent the gopher's and the wildcat's tread.
Appeals by scores appear, left, right, ahead—
Were you here thru umbraceous pathways led.

XV

Were you but here beneath this spreading oak
Draped in its flowing gray-green mossy cloak,
Those gay-flowered lindens, where bees' humming broke
Into a gentle roar near midday's stroke,

XVI

Were you but here by canopy of palm,
Whose rustling leaves a melancholy psalm
Perpetually sings, a saving balm
When overjoyousness endangers calm;

XVII

Were you but here when orange flowers appear,
Their deep, intoxicating sweetness near
And far thrown on the evening atmosphere—
A love-borne breath from far Edenic sphere.

XVIII

Were you but here the mocking bird to hear
In divers songs, silvery, liquid, clear,
Answered by the cardinal's music dear
As cousinly he shows his plumes so near;

XIX

Were you but here to see chamelions change,
Brilliant butterflies from flower to flower range,
Frail web spiders arrange and rearrange,
Decked with bright diamond dews of morning strange,

XX

Were you but here when first faint streaks of dawn
Bid farewell to the stars of night withdrawn,
Which, lighting yet themselves are paltry pawn
To Sol's effulgence flooding lake and lawn,

XXI

That swiftly touching harpstrings of the spheres
Wakens our world with music human ears
Cannot be deaf to. Every bird, too, hears
And answers with a morning song that cheers.

XXII

Were you but here when falls the noon-tide hush
And warmer currents animation crush,
Until one's thoughts, past all restrainings brush
On zephyrs off to unmapped dreamland rush.

XXIII

Were you but here when up from the southwest
A wee cloud grows until the arch is dress'd
In swirling black; hot lightning rips the breast
Of mourning heavens—a fiery devil-jest.

XXIV

Deep thunders crash to break the wonted rest
Of nature; wild winds sweep in merry quest
Of branch to strip and forest-lord to wrest
From out the soil their power to manifest.

XXV

Rain falls as if a river o'er the crest
Of a great dam in angry volume press'd;
It drives and drifts from every point to test
Each crack, and, oft, inside unwelcome guest.

XXVI

It slacks! Unfolded in the east, possessed
Of hope and love, to all mankind address'd,
A double bow by angel lips caress'd,
Brilliant and beautiful and by God bless'd.

XXVII

An hour! Where seen a cloud? the earth impress'd
By sunny flood; but, leaf and flower now tress'd
In dewey pearls; and air, refined, bequest
To man to find in life's fresh hour new zest.

XXVIII

Were you but here to see the sunset skies
Tinged with a hundred shades of brilliant dyes—
Great Banners which the God of heaven flies .
Glimpsing the beauties of our Paradise;

XXIX

Were you but here when on the evening air
Spirits of Beauty from every sylvan lair
Come to enmesh the senses into fair
Elysian dreams wholly unknown elsewhere;

XXX

Were you but here when gentle night winds blow
Across from waves of Gulf of Mexico,
Till from the æolian pine needles flow
Melody so soft, plaintive, soothing, low;—

XXXI

Were you but here when the full moon looks down,
Of night at once the lovely queen and crown,
Whose floods of dreamy light o'erwhelm and drown
All irritations that the day brought 'round;

XXXII

Were you but here beneath the stars tonight
We would, at least in fancy, take a flight
Across the realms of space to that great light
Canopus, than six hundred suns more bright.

XXXIII

Were you but here, we'd dream new dreams, and build
Our castles near, by waters Peace hath still'd
Whose battlements 't'ie rays of sunrise gild,
Whose chambers are by Love's effluence fill'd.

BEAUTY CANNOT DIE

Across the parallels bright tho'ts come troopin'
Whence frosty figures glow upon the pane
To where in sunny splendor azure lupin
Proclaims the coming of the spring again—
Heralds forth the vernal equinox again.

'Tis one bloom only in the vast procession—
New pageantry as weeks and months go by,
That on a wanderer leaves the deep impression,
While flowers may fade, their beauty cannot die—
Tho' substance withers, spirit cannot die.

And so with kindred, to other realms departing,
Behind leave all the loveliness of life
To lift the shadows and to ease the smarting,
'Til found in verity beyond the strife—
'Til they're regained in truth beyond the strife.

A VALENTINE

I send you some greenery—some greenery to wear,
Entwined, as were roses entwined in your hair,
And if, when I come, I should chance to find it there,
I would know, so I think, what to do.

The story is told,—a mere legend, of course,
That the mistletoe has the magical force
To draw a knight-errant from afar to the source
Of a joy scintillatingly true.

Some say that alone to his eye, 'tis revealed,
For eyes that are lighted by love unconcealed,
Quicken, as flashes on the magnetic field,
And the fire of the stroke never miss.

And, since elder day, when he reaches the shrine,
Where mistletoe branches invitingly shine,
His heart leapeth forth to the pleasure divine
Of the blush to the answering kiss.

A VALENTINE

I gather violets on the slopes
And orchis on the lea,
And read in them anew the hopes
Tho' miles and miles are now between
One lovely maid and me,
My heart goes back to that sweet scene
Beside the sea—and thee.
That grew beside the sea;

I wander down thro' Lovers' Lane
And wish you here today
To walk with me this bowing fane
And cheer the lonely way;
I bind for you a wreath of bays
Embroidered with jasmine,
That shall keep green our love always,
My charming Valentine.

A VALENTINE

The east is full of splendor—
With brilliancy aglow,
As Morning's fairies lend her
Bright colors from the bow;
The rose throws wide its petals,
The pine's long needles shine,
As mem'ry backward settles
To far-off Valentine.

The mocking bird is singing
His many tuneful lays,
The cardinals are winging
In flashing, crimson ways;
The golden thrushes flutter
With scarce a vocal sign,
But all together utter
A prayer for Valentine.

The midday sun is glowing
In a cerulean sky,
The river, calmly flowing,
Breathes a soft lullaby.
The dogwood's pure white blooming
My forest pathways line
And melts the lonely glooming
With thoughts of Valentine.

Here spreads a beauteous carpet
Of violets pearl and blue,
Which have, thro' passion's war, kept
Love's beacons burning true.
There, lovely orchids dainty
Their blushing heads incline:
With those and these, I paint a
Picture of Valentine.

Behold! the sun is sinking—
A gorgeous color scheme,
Whereat the soul is drinking
In ecstasy and dream—
Is eloquently speaking
A language scarcely mine,
And yet, the heart's deep seeking
Spells out a Valentine.

In long festoons, the mosses
Wave gently to and fro

Where the gaunt cypress tosses
Its arms in the moon's glow.
Odors of orange and lemon
Intoxicate as wine;
Night puts another gem on
The brow of Valentine.

The day's winds are in slumber;
Up through the soft, warm night
I gaze, where without number
The stars are shining bright.
More beautiful and clearer
Than stars, those eyes of thine
Which, as they are, seem nearer,
My far off Valentine.

TO VALENTINE

What distance lies between the snow
And semi-tropic land
Where streamlets musically flow
With flowers on either hand?
Shall my mind not go far afield
To where a love had birth,
And to that love a homage yield
As great as all on earth?
There's not an hour in all the day
But what I think of thee;

There's not a flower by all the way
But what I'd pluck for thee—
The pretty violets blue and white—
The yellow sweet jasmine—
Come whispering if they may not light
The path of Valentine.
And why should I not acquiesce
In prayer of flower and vine
That twine and blossom but to bless
My distant Valentine?

IN CAMP IN FLORIDA

Far from the noise and confusion,
The traffic and toil of the street,—
Far from the heartless allusion
To notes I'm expected to meet,—
I'm here, where flowers in profusion
Are spread as prayer-rugs at my feet.

The flowers, and wonderful mosses
Woven in patterns that shame
The skill of adepts in flosses
And wools, for beauty, and claim
The homage I give without loss as
Each musci I'd study and name.

Far from the strivers for money—
Sordid blood-treasure of earth
That's stored, as bees store their honey,
For robbers next in their mirth,
I'm here where the sky is all sunny
And gentle Pegasus hath birth.

Briefly I've joined in the striving,—
Taken my place in the mart,
To find I'm but fitted for hiving
The harm, the hurt and the smart,
From which I shrink for the shriving
Which musical birds grant the heart.

I criticize never the master,
Hoarding as shepherds herd sheep,
Nor sorrow, when Fortune has cast her
Favors on others piled deep.
I merely wish rest where these vaster
Pine forests invite me to sleep;

Here, where the mocking bird's singing
His cheerful, pertinent lays,
Where cardinals brightly are winging—
Flashes of crimson in bays,
With thrushes up yonder clinging,
To make their gold-coated displays.

On atmosphere sensuous, flowering
Jasmine comes over the sense,
While down from the Styrax tree towering,
Blossoms, full ripened, fall dense,
Whitening the ground with their showering
O'er Peace River lowlands immense.

Days pass as dreams pass with dreamers:—
'Tis morn, when the awakened east
Throws up its flamboyant streamers
Of wondrous favors, the least
With Beauty's compared, would outbeam hers
And she find her own praise decreas'd.

'Tis then that the woodlands awaken—
Are filled with echoing song:
The birds, which their keynotes have taken
From heaven, and down here prolong;
A pleasure ne'er to be shaken
Or even interpreted wrong;

With hearts that seem overflowing
With life and perfect good cheer,
Praising the Lord, and not knowing
Existence should be in fear
Of reaping from their Adam's sowing
In the bird world's earliest year.

How glitter jewels of the morning,
Diamonds in rays of the sun
Are petty besides those adorning
The webs the spiders have spun
O'er bush and o'er grass, as scorning
Darkness and toil, until done.

Look on the gems and the weaving,
Mostly admire which you please,
Either's beyond the believing—
Changes that never shall cease:
Those to the spider's work cleaving,
To the beautiful jewelry these.

Gray squirrels incessantly chatter,
Making emphatic protest
'Gainst the invasion,—a matter
Important enough to be prest—
To the intruder; the latter
But envies the happy distrest:

Pretty chaps, they grow confidential
Should one exhibit some tact,—
Advancing in course providential
To make harmonious pact
Instead of killing. My pen shall
No moral put down from this fact.

They come down a tree on a spying
Trip, sharpened, active, alert,
Their bushy tails high-arched, and eyeing
You with trained vision expert,
And suddenly scamper then, crying,
Returning when they've found no hurt.

Likewise with birds, quickly discerning
Danger approaching their door,
They're easily taught, and soon learning
For them you're friendly, and more,
Till, their bridges backward are burning,
They linger, and eat of your store.

And the days! with their perfect o'erarching
Stretch of immaculate blue,
The sun not too trivial nor scorching,
Bringeth in answer most true
The flowers and the fruit to its marching—
Each day giving forth something new.

The orchis that bow in the grasses—
Delicate yellow and pink,
Blue lupins in wide-spreading masses
Day stars just over the brink
Of the hill; then what surpasses
Passion flower as Edenic link?

As sun rays are gathered by lenses
Humid air gathers in night
Perfume of the citrus on senses
That falter, and magnolias quite
Overpower; and here my pen says
These all, with cape-jasmine, are white.

In patience, at eve, and half lying
Far from the crack of the lash,
My thoughts to my own thoughts replying,
Whether sound, silly or rash;
Watching the fire in its dying—
Falling from flame into ash.

Facing the sun in his setting—
Marvelous light in the west;
The evils of earth all forgetting,
The soul in tremulous quest
Goes forth at Fancy's wide letting
And I remain here at rest.

Always a change in its beauty
Ever a shifting of scene,
As varied as richness of booty
A baron brings to his queen—
A palette of color to suit a
Painter who dreams aniline.

Reds that are coming and going
Mark the whole gamut of shades;
The lights into darker are flowing,
The darkest constantly fades,
The gold in brilliancy showing
On edges of blue it embraids.

Wide on the horizon spreading,
Touching the crown of the arch,
Color on color fast treading,
From purple to silver of larch—
Hues of a Tyrolese wedding
Or fanciful mardi-gras march.

Color to color is blended,
Exquisite coin from God's mint;
Fainter and fainter, yet splendid
In gleam, in glamor, in glint;
Fading and fading, is ended
With never of red a hint.

And stars come out in their brightness,
O'erspreading the firmament
Conveying the mind with lightness
Thru realms whence their glow is sent,
Wandering in wonder no mite less
Than in roaming daylight's extent.

'Tis easy to talk of billions
Of miles yon Algol's away,
But well might it be in octillions
Under the limited sway
Of the mind that vastness still stuns
Until put completely at bay.

Problems perplexing make weary
The brain that's taken in quest
By speculation that's mere a
Bale-light that leads 'til opprest
Are all senses beneath dreary—
The dreary deep maze of unrest.

As forces of tempest are lost in
Efforts o'erstrained, so at last
The mind is no longer engrossed in
Grossness of strenuous blast,—
But finds itself happily gloss'd in
The waters on which it is cast.

Smooth river of sleep that flowest
Down to the eternal sea,
Never yet lives he who knowest
How he goes, bondman or free;
Whether the soul go to soweth
Seed on the bank beyond Lethe,

Or, if, as Brahman is preaching,
It falls like a drop of rain
Into the ocean far-reaching
And like that same drop again
Comes back to earth for new teaching,
Experience, knowledge and pain.

With an "if" we are obliged to leave it
As from the beginning it's grown;
Mere "if," and if you believe it
Sprung from a postulate sown
On barrens, and naught to relieve it
From doubts on the chance wind blown

Here, with the towering pines keeping
Watch o'er the camp thru the night,
The camper, child-like, is sleeping,
Bothers of life put to flight,—
Thru leaves the zephyrs are creeping
Intoning a musical rite.

Rest! Dreaming not that you follow
Hound-haunted deer in the chase;
Rest! Without dreams that o'er fallow
Broad turkey tracks you would trace;
Rest! As on hill and in hollow
Darkness all land marks efface.

Soothing the night and its voices!
Soothing the odor of pine!
Soothing the wind that rejoices
Entangled in branch and in vine!
Soothing the stream's music choice as
An anthem subdued and divine.

Sleep! Elfs of night are bestrewing
Your couch with blossoms of thorn!
Sleep! 'Neath the hand that's bedewing
Your bed where you liest lorn!
Sleep! Sleep on in rest that's renewing!
Sleep on, O sleeper, 'til morn.

MAID OF AVON

The sunlight falls in splendor
Among the pines of Avon,
And soft the waters lave on
Verona's shores, and lend her
The subtle charms that move
The heart to thoughts of love.

The south wind comes as spirits
From far Elysian realms,
And blushing cheek o'erwhelms
With greeting that inherits
The passion born of time,
Devotedly sublime.

The oars splash in the water,
Her words ring on the air,
And heaven itself is there
With that fair northern daughter,
While this heart far away
Knows rest nor night nor day. •

The stars in hosts are glowing
From their unmeasured way;
Their lights in glory play
Around this maiden's going—
Orion, the Pleiades
Bless such a one as she is.

The sunbeams light the lowland
Where violets spring up thickly,
And I would pluck them quickly
And enweave them in a band
With lilies white as snow
To deck the maiden's brow.

The aster and the jasmine,
The sweet-briar and the rose,
And every flower that grows,
Secrets for this maid divine
Are ready to unfold—
Sweet secrets, new but old.

Would I were there to gather
The flowers that bloom for her,
Happy if she'd prefer
That I would do it, rather—
Rather than any other
Wiser, better brother.

A VICTIM

I

I came down to this little house today,
Sixteen by twelve, the merest rough-board box
Built by a man as if in careless play,
But yet he was most serious. To my knocks
No answer came, for, with the common clay
His flesh has mingled since I last was here
Ten months ago. I sat upon the step
And looked down on the pretty lake so clear
From which the sunset's ruddy tints have crept
And left a steel-blue color far and near.
Save by the further shore where a black band
Is backed by the thick ranks of towering pines.
But, coming nearer, here upon this hand,
I see, half washed away by rains, the lines
Where he had struggled in the barren sand
To make a garden, 'round which few frail lath
Protected what he vainly sought to grow.

And down the slope, upon that hand, the path
He went with steps that weakly grew and slow
For the pure water of the lake, which hath
Deliciousness that strangers cannot know.

II

I look upon the sunset's fainter shad
And my mind wanders far across the seas
To Fatherland, whose memory never fades,
Where a young man has taken his degrees
From Heidelberg, the highest of his grades,
And with his parchments, and his name as heir
To large estates and an ancestral hall,
And the whole world appearing doubly fair,
Goes back, ambitiously to conquer all,
To find that spendthrifts had stripped all things bare.
But what was that? Had he not wealth of lore
Of that great school, which marks the road to fame?
And with his love—ah, I would not say more
Than that she turned with eyes of scornful flame
From him who wooed when he the titles bore,
And now would wed—'twas a preposterous claim.

III

Perhaps the earth in time will grow enough
In love and goodness so that God will send

Millennial justice to smooth out the rough
And thorny paths his children now must wend.
My old world friend fell at his last rebuff
Which left his life but as the empty shell
From which was taken all there was of worth,
And he turned westward where he felt that hell
Was not so fierce as in his land of birth,—
And one in peace and hope might calmly dwell,—
To the republic, where the people's rights
Are bedded in the fundamental law,
Where honesty burns universal lights,
Where men their fellow men from danger draw
Where all is heaven, and where nothing blights.
Such was the innocence and profound sweep
Of unsophistication which this man
Who, spite his learning, let the dream-gods leap
And frisk before him, a morganic clan;
And while indeed o'er sorrows he would weep,
His eyes a restful haven here would scan.

IV

Thus he precisely was the one to fall
In the first hole across his pathway dug,
And it was ready, as for strangers all
From foreign lands the sanctimonious thug
Stood on the wharf with oily tongue to call
Heaven to witness that for rectitude
He had few equals, in the church's name,