

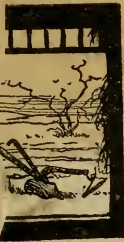
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Poems of
New England
(and) Old Spain



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POEMS OF NEW ENGLAND
AND OLD SPAIN

POEMS
OF NEW ENGLAND
AND OLD SPAIN

By
FREDERICK E. PIERCE



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PREFATORY NOTE

THE author of the following poems was raised on a small New England farm, which he worked and managed from his fifteenth to his twenty-first year. Then he went to college and ultimately became a member of a university faculty. If the academic and rural points of view occur here in unusual juxtaposition, the writer can only say that he has given life as he has found it. The last poem draws its framework and thought from historical reading, but its emotional coloring from the psychology of Puritanism in rural New England. The author has not tried to follow the rustic vernacular as closely as Mr. Frost because in all the present writer's New England poetry the speakers are persons widely read, usually of university training, who are recalling long past experiences on farms. In real life such people would not speak in all respects like typical farmers. Also we believe that the following of the vernacular, good and wholesome as it is, can be carried too far.

Prefatory Note

The aim of a poem is to reproduce, not a phrase, but a mood, the reproduction of the phraseology being merely a means to an end. The mood created by a living speaker results only in part from his language. In part it is also due to his facial expression, tone of voice, and other factors ; and when these other factors are not reproduced something may be required in the language to suggest the general atmosphere.

F. E. P.

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POEMS OF NEW ENGLAND
AND OLD SPAIN

THE STORY OF A SELF-MADE MAN

I stood in twilight near the Self-made Man
Beside De Musset's grave, blueblooded heir
Of all he voiced, and was, and threw away.
The willow tree his wish had planted there
Gave half inaudible sighing; and below,
That face, the guttered candle passion burned,
Spoke marred and haggard. Aliens, yet a-kin,
The Self-made Man and marble image met,
One family's rising, one's descending day,
In glory of twilight both, but round their brows
Ghosts of dead hope for night and ashen cloud.

Atlantic winds from far horizons turned
Soft keys in doors of thought; new ties grew ours,
Of common country, hopes and griefs; and there,
While shadows deepened round those foreign graves,
My worn companion told me all his past.

Where the green ranges of the Berkshire Hills
Roll dwindling through the southern lowlands, wild

Poems of New England and Old Spain

In still and lonely loveliness, he grew,
In old New England's poverty and pride.
There childhood first baptized him dreamer from
Wells deep in woods and mossy, where his valley,
Hushed, beautiful, retired, with hinting voices
Of brooks, and woods intoning through the winds,
Bred visions natural as her herbs and flowers.
Four fir-trees lined the path before his door,
And two great Norway spruces, gloomy and high,
That shed like needles from their myriad limbs
The stern, sad, mystic musings of the North
Round that child head. Dark on the western hill
Against the azure one great pine-tree loomed,
Almost across the sunset, having power,
One might believe, to see and know what lands
That sun arose on through New England's night.
Those trees were teachers, filling infant hours
With moods deep, solemn, incommunicable,
That men remember sadly. Then the spell
Of books wrapped heaven and earth with witchery.
Alone among high, thinly peopled hills,
Through leafy orchards framed with billowing
meadow

The Story of a Self-Made Man

Their broad, white-gabled farmhouse peeped. There
children

Would hail like sails on ocean's rim the page
Bringing them tales of far off towns and times,
And moods and music. Though his boyish mind
Missed half their thought, truths dimly comprehended,
Beauties that lingered half unveiled, and glimpses
Of wider life, the arena and the vision,
Shook all his heart; as when, one drizzling night,
A night that Coleridge might have loved, or Poe,
Each nerve enthralled, he read their writings first,
Raven and Rime, dread chamber, haunted sea.
The room lay still, the household locked in sleep;
The great, dark spruces moaned in night and rain;
The air was vital round with mystic life,
Wild melody and crowding form; and thoughts
More strange than albatross or raven nested
On picture-frame and mirror.—Pure first love,
The treasured volume, virgin bride of youth,
Unspoiled delight, that time renews for none.

So fourteen years went by, humble but happy.
His father's death came then, want, brooding fear.
The light was dark which their small, lonely world

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Had walked beneath, their house's pillar fallen.
Heavily the care of that sad home
Crushed those young shoulders. Thrust from dream-
land's grotto
Suddenly, roughly into day, he stood,
Blinking in that uncomprehended glare
Of sordid pains and plodding scrutiny;
Drudging alone at labor never learned;
None to rely on, none to give advice;
And fear and poverty behind his heel,
Their shadow falling still before his feet.

Stern, lonely, sad, the years that followed now.
Not lonelier Selkirk's island proved than often
That farm he tilled, where times in very truth
God seemed not there to be. Day after day,
While growing skill and hardening body woke
The somber pride New England hardships breed,
He hewed and delved. Hour after hour the wind
Bent the same weed in the same curve; the crow
Hour after hour in jangling monotone
Called from the wood. Or if some neighbor came,
His only neighbor, only one who came,
A white-haired pastor, on whose virtues fate

The Story of a Self-Made Man

In irony laid the woes of broken powers,
The boy grew lonelier. Love had braced, he knew,
Those feeble limbs; and yet that darkened mind,
Forcing his growing thoughts to look on life
Through its own misery and distorted glass,
Made solitude relief, when once again
The fallow brain in dead negation sank,
To tune of creaking yoke and ring, or spell
Of plodding hoof and endlessly turning sod.

Yet glad vacations met him also, days
Of lightening labor, lessening care and fear.
Then through the beauty of that lovely valley,
A Clive through India's treasure-house, he trod,
Where golden-rods like scepters of old kings
Waved thick around, or woods in autumn wore
More wealth than crowned Mogul. Much else was
there:

Pink cones of hard-hack nodding in the breeze
On lonely acres, red, autumnal ivies
Dabbling like blood the cedar's dusky bosom;
Old dooryard trees, portly and neighborly,
And softly garrulous in summer's wind;
Or shaggy knolls of pasture, warm with sun,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Where the shy strawberries blushing wait their lovers.
All these became his friends; and often in them,
Like thoughts round reptile foot-prints found in
stone,*

He wove the intangible, heard spirit voices
Inaudible yet clear as fairy horns.
Grave elders of the night expounded God
From star-illumined, lettered rolls of heaven;
And veiled, unshapen, golden-tresséd hopes,
That lay on far horizons, chin on hand,
Looking through distance, framed his valley. And
often

The friend of other days, no longer changed,
Came like Alcestis back through reason's world,
Kindly and learned. Then round their talk for hours
Ghosts of old saurian monsters walked the hill
Now heaped above their bones, or tragic verse
Kept time a-field to hoes on clinking stones;
Philosophy's long hunt went questing by,
And history called from many a kindred past.

So, wrapped in cloud but golden-tinged, went by
The molding years whose labors none undo

*The foot-prints of prehistoric birds or reptiles in the red sandstone of Connecticut.

The Story of a Self-Made Man

For good or ill, the hardening, deadening years,
That yet had taught delight in labor, joy
In planning and doing and helping God create.
And though his life was always lonely, lonely,
Though charm and knowledge of the changing world,
The sweet free-masonry of our healthy youth,
Dried up within him, while he felt it die,
Yet often on the silent hills he met
What David, Paul, and white-haired Oisín found
In deserts only; drew more near to Him
Who is "alone from all eternity";
Heard seldom the sweet rhythm of speech, but heard
The rhythm of rivers, winds, and sighing trees,
Till thought and word grew timed to rhythm of theirs;
And dreamed high dreams, and vowed with lifted
 hand,
This clumsy plowboy, clumsy even in plowing,
To make his life a proof that drudging poor
Can walk with Milton's mood and Raphael's vision;
And so lived on, and grew from boy to man.

Then patient plans brought liberty at last,
Wide earth before him, vistas, calling voices,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Thronged avenue, foamy sea, and moon-lit trail;
And eager though poor, a glad free-lance,—he came.

Through changing homes and changing work he wandered;

In wintry shacks with mountain hunters heard
Weird elves in winds and gnomes that mine the snow.
Where huge sky-scrapers heave a hill of stone
Above some harbor dark with mast and funnel
He drudged, competed, dreamed. Or westward
where,

A crashing tower, the great sequoia fell,
Dashing to ground the limbs that stars had taught
In days of Charlemagne, the traveler turned;
Or dared Canadian snows; or heard by night
The Texan cowboy lull his drove with song.

Before him, unattained, a dim mirage,
Through hopes deferred and years of drudgery,
moved

The cloud-Jerusalem of poetic thought;
And somewhere between that and life's rough clay
He heard a voice forever praising, chanting
The firm reality, to build and plan,

The Story of a Self-Made Man

And feed ourselves, and justify our being,
Man's dream in harmony with the dream divine.

Then falling on his life a gentle hand
Tuned jangling keys to music. Woman's love,
And all around that name as aureole thrown,
For him had haloed too some sweet girl face
In far off boyhood once. But poverty,
With iron grip that seemed unending, drove—
As part of nursery hope and elfin tale—
The dream from youth and manhood; taught too well
What lonely labor, death of love and charm,
Wait wedded lives where want is bridal guest.
And the grave, nunlike fields and hermit hills
Had grown his only mates and formed his moods.

So died for years the lyric hours of youth,
The lilted loves, the hope on wing to fly,
Yet woke reviving now when blond-haired dawn
Called life to sunnier hopes in laughing May,
Or April hours, when bud and leaf unfolding
Hung delicate as the silken dress of brides.

Now love itself rose out of dreams of love,
As rose its mother from her kindred sea,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

The love of life's late manhood, gravely sweet
As autumn asters bred when winds are chill.
As through a sultry valley from the sea
Cool winds may breathe, and blowing steadily,
Change nothing yet change all, while hot-browed
 plowmen

Feel peace in hearts that ached with longing, so
That gentle presence when unheeded most
Had influence; and when labor's hours were done,
He felt it bringing with caressing touch
Meaning and magic into barren days.

And now he thought the golden time began.
A while to breathe and grow, shake from his brain
The numbing weight and burrowing hand of care,
Learn, think, and have his chance in life,—and then—

“Then”—Others' folly came, and failure came,
The cry of families whom his ruin ruined.
He rose to meet that long expected day
Bowed, penniless, deep in moral debt, once more,
As when a boy, his duty's plodding slave.

Alone at night he fought the question out,
Smelt the damp vine and eyed the burning stars,

The Story of a Self-Made Man

And cried to God: "All others live their life;
And I, who all through golden boyhood made
My life a living lie for others' needs,
Have I no rights, whose humble prayer is only
One fair day's work a day, a little leisure
To give to beauty what others will to sin?"
Against the dark the answering vision rose,
That reason framed and conscience colored, showing
The widow's home, the boy so like himself,
Hoping great hopes that withered like his own
Because of him. To feed the sense of beauty,
Art, poetry, learning, social charm, and friends,
By filching every one of these for life
From that pale boy,—was that to dream his dream?
A sleek, carnivorous tiger soul? Night waned;
The morning kindled like a great resolve
On hills that fronted God; and twelve long, hard,
Soul-withering years went by,—and all was paid.

Once more the summer warmed the drowsing fields
Around his childhood's home, where, worn and jaded,
He found a haven of calm. The grass was green
On paths that suffering feet had trampled bare;
But room and heirloom still were eloquent

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Of bygone hours and friends; yet beautiful
The boy's loved valley smiled to greet the man.
Here all that once breathed want and labor now
Was redolent of rest, of cares laid by:
Green slopes that drowsed beneath an apple-tree,
Their laps piled deep with ripe, forgotten fruit;
Old fallen trunks like Barbarossa, dreaming
Through time and mantled with their beard of briars;
And meadows, pillowed in whose downy depths
The genius of the valley seemed asleep.
Here many a mood relived that childhood's hour
Saw bud and die. One castellated height,
Its rocky ramparts fringed with evergreen,
Rose near, from which in beauty's perfect curve
The far horizon fell. A myriad hues,
Faint, vague, but wondrous as the stormy bow,
Played shifting round it; rosy-tinted clouds
Laughed from beyond it; call of echoes came,
And voices of old thoughts, that all day long
Mused in some haunted gorge among the hills.

Once, lounging all alone in Sabbath calm
In a brown stubble-field where memory raised
A ghost of bygone boyhood plowing, plowing,

The Story of a Self-Made Man

He thought of that untried enthusiast's vow
To make his life a proof that drudging poor
Can walk with Milton's mood and Raphael's vision;
And felt the wings of utterance clipped, but still
The mood, the hope, the glory and vision there.

And now the man those molding forces formed,
To make or mar, in darkening Père Lachaise
Gazed on De Musset, he whom others fed,
Whose days were waste, whose verse the rainbow
gleam

On passion's cataract foaming down to ruin.
Cold starlight bathed the glimmering image. Hard,
Touched with grim humor, curled the lip that weighed
How much in tears the dead had cost the dead;
And grimly sad, in pride of art and race,
The bearded marble mouth returned the scorn.
But moon and mist, in dim, millennial haze
Enwrapping both, made either seem to smile;
And I, who revered both and fathomed both,
Behind the contrast found the kinship too.
The bearded marble mouth seemed saying still,
"Great man, perhaps; but poet, no"*; and yet

*Grand homme, si l'on veut; mais poète, non pas.
—De Musset's "Après une lecture."

Poems of New England and Old Spain

From wiser worlds De Musset's ghost went on:
"Life, that made me great author, blasted man,
Made you more man than genius. Welcome, brother,
'One writ with me in sour misfortune's book.'
Both warring better than men knew have found
The foe too mighty, saved but what we could.
Yet over us time's upward march goes on."

Atlantic winds from far horizons turned
Soft keys in doors of thought; and Bethlehem stars,
That westward lured the wayworn world so long,
Above our own loved, darkened continent
Bent, lamp in hand, to see what face was hers,
If that to come or should they look for another.
Old ghosts of art around the marble moved.
Around the Self-made Man dim phantoms filed,
Resembling yet transcending him, dream forms
Of genius now unborn that yet might be,
Should the dumb, vast, misled but kindly force
Of our untutored race find voice at last.
And Night, who holds the future's mystery, drew
Her curtain close round famous dead in France.

FATHER AND SON

Hark, the great eight-day clock begins on twelve,
The hour when ghost and memory wake, the hour
When all our modern realism fails
To tear the magic robe from life we know
As twenty years I knew these hills and fields.
For me this old, dark, tumbling farmhouse, friends,
Has phantom tenants raised by midnight's call,
That smile a welcome. First one unfamiliar,
Whose past I learned when all was past for him,
Who year on year, denied the life he loved,
Sowed, plowed, and harrowed, broke against his fate
With brooding wrath, and died in middle age,
Goes by and fades, fading before I learn
If that dim other world has given him more
Than bare New England. Then his buried son,
The man I loved for years, comes pipe in hand,
The genial crow's-feet round his eyes, and on him
Dust of the furrow not the grave, and smiles.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

He was a calmer soul ; his father's mood
Smoldered perhaps, but never blazed in him.
He fought through all our Civil War, and lay
Wounded two days among Antietam's dead ;
But came back home to manger, scythe, and plow,
Worked peacefully and married and grew old.

That lilac-scented lane was where he wooed
His wife in girlhood ; there through moonlit elms
The church that made them one spires like a prayer.
They asked no trip in foreign lands to crown
Their bridal ; through the hills they drove together ;
And two glad weeks beneath a roof that's gone
Lived on the crest of that far range, whose dome
Glow's ghostly now beneath the climbing moon.
The time was June ; and all the fields that year
Were daisies, daisies, blanched like wedding veils.
On their white carpet trod his bride. Around them
For miles on miles the laughing meadows crowding
Waved snowy kerchiefs as they passed. And then
They looked abroad from their high chamber, knowing
The wonder of earth, the joy their bosoms found.

They built these walls for married years together.
Some part of her that grew undying, clinging

Father and Son

Around the home she made, with thoughts of her
Haunts twig and withered leaf of all her vines
When winter snows blow through them. She relives
In every tree whose growth they watched together,
Or flowering almonds round their porch, that nodded
His welcome home at night so many a May.
Here Fall by Fall they saw the maple flame
And heap their turf with gold; here Spring by Spring
The myriad-branched magnolia bloomed for her
God's candelabra tipped with spirit fire.

Ten hours a day for years he worked a-field.
But still life's wealth and mystic glory, hunted
Through polar foe or sweltering India vainly,
Walked here uncalled along his furrow. Voices
Went down the branches of the windy woods;
Life's rich aroma poured from breeze-blown buds.
He mowed his meadows, where, like beauty's volume,
Turned leaf on pictured leaf for kindling eyes,
Pink plume and green, lily and queen-o'-the-meadow,
A million grasses of a hundred kinds,
And each a world, above the chattering knives
Kept bowing, bowing. Tired in sweaty heat
He ate beneath some ancient elm whose limbs

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Had shielded sachems in the Indian wars,
And murmured out of immemorial years
Dead rapture, hope, and sorrow. Turf untorn
Since man was born his coultter tore, and heaved
From the dark rest of centuries into day
Life-giving mold, at times quaint fossil shells
More old than man; or down the furrow slipped
Flint arrowheads of buried Indian braves.
And, always changing, through the boundless heaven
The great sun climbed, the muttering tempest rolled,
The swallow skimmed the grass, and fragrant winds
Brought airy syllables from beyond the hills.

Then sorrow came; above the face he loved,
Locking him out, the doors of death clanged to.
Haggard that day he walked familiar fields;
And where all once gave warm companionship
Of calling bird and breathing vine, all now
Was lonely, lonely past the speech of man.
Lonely above him curved the vacant sky
Where God had seemed enthroned; earthy and dead
Lay the dull landscape, where the hollow wind,
A dying emanation from dead worlds,
Went wandering vaguely into nothingness.

Father and Son

Yet that dread, lonely farmer's life, where hearts,
More tired than words can tell, keep vainly heaving
The thought that still rolls back through empty days,
Has its own healing. Stars from wide mid-heaven
Beyond the reach of mortal loss and law
Looked down and signaled comfort. Grave and
 meadow

Were clothed with life, green blade and running vine,
A breathing universe of life, where death
Seemed dead, forgotten, buried under flowers.

And so that man became the one I knew,
One commonplace yet noble. He had built,
Like Dido, and beheld his walls. Alone,
In that calm life where none compete or cringe,
He dreamed his dream till it took flesh and form
And dwelt with men; his dream, those fertile fields
Reared up by him from swamp and underbrush,
Feeding the world and beautiful to see.
Part of himself he sowed there; part of him
Relives when every year his orchards bloom.

An only son remained from married days,
A helpless comfort first and helper soon;
Then full of promise, yet a growing care.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

For hours at times the older man would sit,
And shake his head, and think in that young face
He found a look he knew but never wore.
And more and more as manhood neared, the boy,
Grown sad and restless, leaned on bar or plow,
With idle hand and heart too tense for toil,
Stood gazing past the landscape's burning rim,
Captive, while fleets of flaming clouds went bearing
Columbus visions through the untraveled night.

At last the great deciding moment came.
On yonder hill by that great oak, whose roots
Grip like the talons of the fabled roc
The turf deep, green, and centuries old, they sat,
Father and son. Above the old man leaned
The patriarch tree, mossed thick with memories
Of that one spot; cool through the young man's hair
An ocean wind blew on, that restlessly
Sought for new lands. Before them yawned the valley,
With field of shimmering grain and plunging stream,
Slow moving plow and foliage-curtained home.
Their words to me down hushed and airy heights
Blew with the billowing wind, which mixed and
mingled

Father and Son

Old bygone longings, moods of high and low,
That gave, perhaps, my language statelier ring
Than theirs; but well my spirit heard their souls,
And through them many an ancient anchorite
Or knight that buckled spur, myself as well,
For I, like one, long since had loved my fields,
Yet like the other beaten against the pane
For landscape vast and ruddier life beyond.

The boy kept urging: "Father, let me go.
For years I've helped you; now I'm man at last.
My future calls me; earth and ocean call me,
Vast mines in mountains half a world away,
Great ships with foreign funnels dropping down
In the still twilight, bound for twilight lands."
Over and over the father answered sadly
That choice was free but happiness was here;
Then spoke of all that life had meant for him
In that one valley, peace past understanding,
Calm days, and love of one now buried there.

A silence followed. Both their eyes together
Sought the low ridge where, dark with hemlock
fringes,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

And flecked with marbles white against the green,
The churchyard lay. Far off a farmer's call
Rose dreamily, then a heifer's lazy low.
But clear and mellow through the miles of air
Whistled a distant train; and yet again,
Farther and farther through the echoing hills,
And always hurrying into lands unknown,
The sound rose dwindling. Answering that dying
summons
The boy's deep longing surged in words again.

"It makes my brain whirl round like fever, father.
Like urging friends the blue hills bend and beckon;
And farther, vaster, through a waiting world
Loom lives, achievements, thoughts I never shared.
By night and day I hear their voices calling,
Calling across the misty morning pastures
Through gaps in ranges looking seaward, calling
When birds fly by to Alabama, calling
When stars from Asia glance at us and go.
There men find rapture, find what lives allow;
There new inventions rock the world; and there
Great armies march to wreck old tyrannies,
While here I watch and stagnate. Let me go!"

Father and Son

“Ah,” said the old man, “just as echoes leap
From cliff to cliff and skip the chasm between,
So from dead ancestors old traits return,
And leap the generations. Now I know you.
You are my father’s child, not mine; he burned
His very life out here with smoldering longing.
Yes, you shall have your will. And now your arm.
Come, we’ll go down and light our evening fire.
But if a son should look into your face
With eyes like mine when nothing lives of me
But memories of an odd, obscure old man
Who wasted years among our lonely farms,
Think what in life I found, what he may find
Who shares through you my nature;—and be wise.”

They went their way; and left alone I gazed
From that high summit, ringed with range on range
Of fading peaks, now down the lovely valley,
Then out in distance, where on sea and land
Great nations whispered through the gathering night.
The western glimmer lit when day had died
Like Michael’s falchion waved between that world
And our calm stillness. Ghosts of other years
Began to walk like winds the dewy grass,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

And light their hearth-fires in the twinkling stars.
Now birds of night awoke with ancient trills
Of Asian Eden, singing, "Home is heaven";
Then sang a bird of Southland, "Earth is wide";
And each alternate raised its own refrain;
And each in turn heard echo answer "Ay."

The boy turned soldier, fought in wild campaigns
On eastern islands, clove with fleets of steel
The broad, blue, glittering waters of the West.
Daily, like tread of hunted game in woods,
Before him moved adventure's rustling feet;
The unchanging constellations night by night
Lit changing lands and darkly shifting seas.

The father went his old familiar ways.
He heard the swallow twittering in the barn
That housed his boyhood. Trim in ordered rows
His orchards blossomed, beautiful as clouds.
The cataract sang at night; in marshy runs
The long green flags flapped lazily, dreamily still,
As if man's hurrying hours were canceled there.
On summer nights through meadows damp and dim
The twinkling fireflies moved like fallen stars;

Father and Son

The whip-poor-will shrilled upon some mossy rail;
And nighthawks hunted through the whispering
heaven.

Perhaps the man was lonely; often now
On worn church step or dusty road or lane
He held his neighbors talking of old days,
Or news about his boy; but tranquilly
His life flowed rippling through its calm green world.
Once when the lad wrote home of wounds and praise
He bared his aged breast, and curiously
Eyed bayonet scars from half forgotten fields,
Then pinned the letter next his heart, and went
Among his calves through budding apple-trees.

So years with silent heart and seeing eye
He walked with beauty old but ever new;
Then died, and dying called a friend and said:
“Now sell the farm; 'twas happy ground for me,
But never will be for him who's flown the nest.
Send him the money, send my blessing too;
Say I died proud of such a son.” He kissed
The letter from his boy and fell asleep.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

That blessing never reached the son. He fell
In savage wars on alien islands, lay
Dying of fever, want, and wounds for days.
One burning midnight suddenly he rose,
The reeling phantom of his manhood, stood
Before his father's portrait, blade in hand;
And then, saluting like a soldier, said:
"I've come to say I've done my duty, sir,
The way you told me." Sword in hand he died.

Three pictures hang along the parlor wall.
Come here and see them. First, beyond the door,
The dour old grandsire prisoned all his days,
Who burnt his heart out like a smoldering fire.
From that third frame the bold young victor leans
Whom once a nation praised. And right between—
There, lift the lamp and see the man I knew,
In eye and forehead, face, and soul behind
So like yet so unlike his father and son.

THE FIRST HAY-STACK

He laid its round foundation first in fear,
A nervous, trembling, inexperienced boy.
Responsibilities that men would slight
Weighed heavy on him. Two days he trod it down,
And laid the sweet, ripe hill-grass tier on tier.
Two nights it settled under moon and star.
Returning twice through twinkling, dewy fields
He found it round and firm, a grassy tower.

The third day came, the hired man shook his head:
"You'll never top it like your father did;
You'll leave a shoulder, rot a ton of hay."
"A ton!"—It loomed so big the boy turned white,
And gripped his fork and climbed and took his place.

Then, always narrowing round him while he laid,
And rising higher and higher in fragrant wind,
Seeming to rock but proving firm, and level
With swallow flying low and neighboring tree,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

He felt his handiwork beneath him grow.
The hired man breathed; and slow the forkfuls came,
Ruffled with wind. He trod them down, and high
On his completed work he stood in air.

“Round as an egg,” he heard his pitcher call;
“You beat the old man; here’s your ladder, slide.”
He paused, and cast, before he slid, one glance
From that high post on that high-throned hill-
meadow.

Valleys he saw, and rivers flashing light,
And other hills against the westering sun,
Green, waving corn-field, yellowing oat-field, men
Busy as he, whose lives seemed calling out
In fellowship to him. Four miles around
The town could see his work and know it good,
His, the book-worm, the clumsy, dreamy boy,
Who yet could work, had too his skill and power.

With loving hand he raked and combed it down,
Still redolent from the meadow’s green romance,
His treasure-heap of grass and flower and fern,
Wild, fragrant herb and beauty-haunted blade

The First Hay-Stack

From nine broad acres. Then he rode away,
Eying it tenderly from the rattling cart.

Through milking time his eyes were on it still,
Where high, far off, clean cut against the sky,
It loomed among the smoldering clouds, till night
Made Venus golden right above its peak.

The winter came ; and many a day he drove
His creaking ox-sled through the crunching snow,
Loaded with logs, along that wind-swept hill.
There in the meadow, where round cold drifts clung
The memories of the far off, warm July,
Amid the bleak and lonely landscape rose
The form he made, clean cut and pointed still,
Hooded and cloaked with snow and blown by wind,
Meeting the test of time. A human form,
A friend amid the desolate waste, it seemed.

In March he drove his cattle there, unearthing
With every wisp glad memories of the summer,
The sweet, ripe June grass, clover bud and vine,
And tall dried flower that half the long forenoon
Had nodded friendly while the mower's knives

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Kept circling nearer. So his boyhood's triumph
Melted and faded into boyhood's past.

Yet often now against the afterglow
On some high hill he sees a haystack loom,
With peak across the unearthly twilight, seen
Against the afterglow of boyhood dreams,
Of moods that set, but glimmer and dawn again.

THE FARM-BOY

A young Yale senior, tramping hills that summer,
First met him mowing, where a hillside meadow
Looked up on clouds and down on brooks and valleys.
The boy had stopped to let his horses pant,
And oil the "buck-eye"* under a cool, broad oak;
And there they talked. Yes, both were fond of Burns.
The farm-boy too had plowed his daisies under.
"And Burns has helped me see it all," he said,
"The beauty of meadows, when I'm sick of men."
The senior smiled, kindly, as one who lifts
A lower to his level, "That's not Burns.
The Jolly Beggars, there's your Ayrshire farmer;
For all that's best in literature, we've learned,
Must draw from men, not fields." The farm-boy
thought;
Hard life had made him test such glowing terms.
"Then, saying I were all I'm not, a Burns,
You'd have me write of folks in Horton Hollow,

*The Adriance Buck-eye mowing-machine.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

And not their brooks and hills?" "I would, like Burns."
"What holds at Yale might not in Horton Hollow.
Take old Jim Andrews there, whose hay I'm cutting,
He's kind and honest, but he has hypochondria.
He'll make the talk at work or dinner take
Such dismal ruts we thank the Lord for silence.
He'd cause no love-songs. Hortons all have brains,
But now they've mostly left. 'Lije Horton drinks,
Not like your jolly beggars, but all alone
Among his cider casks on winter nights.
And Jane and Helen Horton live alone,
Each one old woman in a big rambling house,
Good women, so my mother said, but where
Would Burns find Highland Mary? Andrew Weld
Was crushed in falling from an apple-tree
At twenty, when he planned to go to college.
That left him sick nine years and wrecked for life,
Poor, working when he wasn't fit, and brooding.
A fine man once, but now he's like a funeral.
And further north it all is Poles and Jews,
Who're just machines to work and eat and save.
That's life in Horton Hollow, human life.

The Farm-Boy

“But landscape! look and see. I drive out here
When worrying folks have put my nerves on edge,
To placid cows and steers and great calm trees,
And calm winds blowing over tranquil hills,
And it’s like heaven. I lift my head from work,
And see that glorious wealth of color there
In leaves and grasses, brooks and flowers and light.
My father’s dead; but often in haying time
Under this oak I think it seems like him,
A something manly, comforting, and strong,
Better than folks I meet with. Then at night
We smell these fields of clover damp and breezy;
The moonlight makes the far off hills seem farther,
And climbing stair on stair among the stars.
Then, though I know what old Will Warren is,
I see his house up there on Warren Hill,
With moonlit orchards round it, turn to something
Splendid, divine, not just Bill Warren’s farm.
I used to think when little once, the stars
Dropped down at night among his apple-trees;
And saw him mowing, grass one side his bar,
White cloud the other. Poetry may be life;
But life has corners college boys don’t know,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Nor college teachers." Here he whipped his team;
And the bright knives went clicking through the grass,
That flashed and twinkled, daisy, black-eyed Susan,
And fox-tail tall and green, while fresh around him
Cool winds like Homer's wafted hope and health.

THE
NIGHT BEFORE THE AUTO-DA-FÉ

Beneath the never changing night, whose reign
On altering earth brings ancient midnights near,
On shadowy boards where lamps but light the brain,
We stage the play that history wrote in fear.
In ghostly orchestra the winds awake
Wild notes that fraught with world-old wailing come;
On heart and ear soul-haunting echoes break,
Washed up by time from lips for ages dumb.
Here darkened minds debate in terror and pain
What way through gloom the blessed Pharos lies,
Their sum of hope,—eternal loss or gain.
And still as greatness, grief, and folly rise,
With wasted love, love's wisdom voiced in vain,
World-old experience down the wind replies.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

I

Here shall it seem as if two lovers meet under the stars in the place of the next day's execution. The woman speaketh.

Oh love, we chose an evil tryst. I feel
From sight and sound and hush of awe in air
Day's horror haunt the waiting night. Who knows,—
Remembering ghostly tales of nurse and nun,—
But fiends, allowed by God, wait here, to seize
The wicked souls of those who burn to-morrow?
A cloud drove past the moon and holy stars;
And the night wind, that blew from none knows
where,
Like spirit fingers plucked my veil behind.
Then bells among the great cathedral towers
Rang heavy and hollow, as denouncing me,
Who fled a father's house and will, they clanged,
For love that may be sin. Through other scenes
On this dear arm I thought to pass as bride.
My merry maids are stakes in ominous file;
My wedding favors fagots.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

The man speaketh.

Hush! those bells

But rang in love's delightful year, or sounded
Old Pedro's doom, who, foiled in all his hate,
Burns here at dawn; whose forfeit wealth turns ours,
Making love possible. Not fiends but lovers
Grip timid wives who wake to joy to-morrow,
When on our marriage pillows morning laughs.
Look, sweet. The moon but dons her filmy cloud
As brides their veil, and through it smiles at you.
And the night wind, made damp from stream and pool,
Is blowing kisses, kisses everywhere.
The priest is waiting; love is calling. Come.

Here speaketh the night wind.

I am the wind of night, blown hither from far Cathay,
Where I cooled two leopard cubs as they rolled in the
grass at play.
They were warm from their banquet done, and they
frisked in the moonlight clear,
And found love in their mother's purr, that the buffalo
quake to hear.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

And no thought had they of the life that had perished
to make them glad.

I blew by the leopard cub, and I blow by the human lad.

II

*Here shall the voice of a woman be heard praying
before a shrine.*

Pure mother Mary, gentle, good Saint Anne,
Ye two who saved a world by motherhood,
Hear me, a mother. Kin, confessor, friend,
All cry I sin in asking aid of you,
When death is near and other aid is none,
For foe of yours. As if my only boy,
Whom like the Saviour once my bosom bore,
Who loved the poor and kept my age from want,
Were foe to you! Some frightful error here
Needs you to light it, star of Bethlehem.
Oh, if I sin the mother love that sins
And shepherd-like pursues the wandering lamb
Might be forgiven. Still he is my son,
However those wicked books, that demon pens,
I know, had traced, deluded him with lies.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

I found a child once wandering in a wood,
Misled by owlet's hoot and will-o'-the-wisp,
And pitying led it home. My boy is lost
Where none on earth can lead him back; but you,
Sweet Mother Mary, good Saint Anne, oh you
Can save him yet and make him know the truth.
The hours of night rush by; and dawn will bring
The flaming stake, the jeering crowd, and frown
Of stony monks, who say that hour of pain
Is only porch to hell's unending fire.
All power is yours with God and Christ; all love,
Men say, is yours, the undying mother love.
My heart is breaking; hear me; save my son!

The night wind maketh her answer.

I am the night, my daughter; round a million homes I
blow.
My every breath in the gloom is the groan of a
mother's throe,
Travail that earth may endure, may live to be nobler
than now.
And the life that you suffered to give us is burned like
the oak's dead bough.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Oh creed that enthroned the mother where the tears
of the ages ran,
Is this all that you learned from Mary and the bones
of good Saint Anne?

III

Here shall a sick man be heard as if at an open window.

More air, more air! Can night's unplumbed abyss,
That cools wide land and wild, untraveled sea,
Not cool one fevered head? not even now,
When hours decide the hope of all these years?
A bishop's mitre gleams amid the gloom
Beyond me and beyond me and beyond,
Sliding along the moonlight, tempting me,
Eluding still the feeble hand that fails
When health might grasp it. Oh remain, remain!
Am I not learned, encouraged, well approved
In wisdom, toil, and fervor for the faith?
Have I not given the church the lamb I loved,
And watched in Heaven's fold, who stayed not there,
And burns to-morrow, damp with tears of blood
From me, like Isaac offered up of old?

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

What broke my heart should earn a mitre, yea!
Yet on the ascending stair I feel it fail.
Reeling and fainting at the goal, I hear
The racing feet of rivals pass me by.
Nay, courage, heart! this weakness cannot last.
New life will stir with dawn, and all be well
When I am strong, when I again am strong!

Yet how this fever, beating reason down,
And calm-eyed conscience, fills my brain with mad,
Abhorred illusions guilt alone should view.
That seems Hernando, yet his cell's far off,
And he alive, and not till one night more
That ghost can come. But stood its image here,
Bowed on the cross whose faith those lips denied,
Could I not face it, laughing terrors down?
Thou canst not call me traitor, thou who didst
With blasphemy betray the faith of ages.
Had I concealed the pestilent breath in thee,
And made thy friendship more than Christ to me,
Lied not to thee, and made a living lie
Of every vow I took as priest,—oh then
Well might I fear. God's flaming ministers
Might walk my chamber then at night, and call

Poems of New England and Old Spain

My harrowed soul to answer. Get thee gone,
Charred phantom form, reproachful, lingering still.
Thou'rt but delirium. All will yet be well
When I am strong, when I again am strong!

Few days I lose, oh surely only few.
And youth is mine, and many a friend in power.
The climb begun, these feet may clamber far.
The cardinal's hat might crown the mitre soon.
And then,—who knows? for men as low as I
Have found their seat in Peter's chair, and posed
As God's high regent over lands and kings.
This hand that now an ague shakes might live
To shake an emperor from his throne; might live—
And might not live—. Oh God All Merciful,
Forgive my sins and call me not away.
Let me be strong! let me again be strong!

The night wind answereth him.

By your window flutters the robe of the oldest of
priests alive;
I call my sons to confession, and cold are the hands
that shrive.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

Each air that I wake is an echo of a bell that some-
where tolls;
My cowl, like the Chase of Odin, is a cloud that is
thronged with souls.
Out of the night I come, from the dying on land and
sea;
And into the night I go, and the priest goes forth with
me.

IV

*Here shall come a voice as of a great prelate musing
alone in a cathedral.*

Through the wide minster, faint and far between,
The lamps gleam out like truth in error's gloom,
At column's flank or foot of saint. All else
Is darkness, with the hollow dome above
Reëchoing silence to the silent nave.
Now in that hush and dark as hallowed priest
And kingly minister, reflect, my heart,
Before the living die, before we make
The hour's expedient lasting law in Spain.
Four hundred years, propped on the corner-stone

Poems of New England and Old Spain

That bears this massy pile, has God made here
A home for men, asylum from their sin.
Above my head, awful and grand and pale,
Scarce half revealed in the dim shadow, leans
The wounded majesty of Christ. To Him
Must I give answer how I guard the Faith
By which His agony redeems a world.
Out there through wide, immeasurable night,
By town and soaring peak and seas that wash
Their human freight far off on unknown shores,
The hearts breathe placidly that soon must know
Infinite bliss or infinite despair.
Ye darkened millions, pillowed soft in sleep,
Whose dread salvation weighs to-night on me,
You must I answer how I shepherd you.

A mother's holy love with fearful power
In pleading anguish fills a judge's ear;
My own yet rings with it. But what of her,
That other wife, whose child in coming years
Through error's taint may die eternally
If error's priest go free? And what of them,
The unborn millions, who in endless pain
May mourn too late forsaken faith, and cry:

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

“Most happy might we be in heaven now,
Hadst thou, Ximenes, done thy duty then.”

Lo, God, in night, the night of human mind,
I stand; and round my feet the nations throng.
No sun of perfect knowledge ever—no,
Not while the world grew gray inquiring—lit,
Or ever could, that darkened void, wherein
On groping souls deluding planets gleam
Age after age; no hope, no light, no truth.
I hold in gloom the hand of one before,
Who holds in gloom an older hand than his;
And so in living chain we reach to One
Who leads through night to certain day. Though near
Unseen the lion howl, in token dread
The dim gier-eagle drop the straggler's bone,
To quicksands near that gulp and give not back
Low siren voices call the fool, yet safe
Behind that far off Guide our column goes,
Where none may hope but that unbroken file,
That, parted once, would doom the race. Live on
Through Peter, Linus, pope and me, thou chain!

Yet quoth an upstart mob: “Oh world astray,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Let go of hands, and hurrying on alone
Find what the fathers found"; or "Christ was man";
Or "Walk with me by reason's polar star";
And wandering on the wild, their guiding gleam
Enswathed in cloud, they perish each and all,
Whole lands in endless doom. No more of that!
Here in the midst of this great woeful world,
Under the image of that awful hour
On Calvary, the flames beneath my feet,
And Heaven above me, and eternity
Peering disdainful on our nook of time,
In loving hands I lift the crook of fear
To guide my sheep to safety. Forth I go
With will of adamant and heart at peace.

*The night wind sobbeth by the cathedral doors as the
sound of footsteps passeth through them.*

I am the wind of night through eternity walking the
sphere,
Forever telling a truth too simple for man to hear,
Wailing for needless battles and sobbing for needless
crime,
Damp with the tears of ages and sad with the wrongs
of time,

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

Still breathing the same mild lesson that lived in the
Nazarene,
Haunted and broken-hearted by the thousand years
between.

In my bosom I bear traditions that are old as the
earth and sky;
I have seen how truth grew error in the lapse of the
years gone by,
Round many a Calvary mountain where the good
were crowned with thorn,
Where the brave on the cross were lifted and the veils
of the temple torn.
Would ye listen and hear my message, your hatred
would soon grow love;
But my voice is the voice of the wind, and ye hear but
the sound thereof.

V

*Now cometh a voice reëchoing as from the walls of a
dungeon.*

Be bold, my will; one mighty wrench, and then,
Lo, heaven before thee and all pain behind.
Would man not gladly hold his hand in fire,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

While counting one, for life's brief glory and joy?
Yet for each moment this poor flesh can feel,
What never entered heart of man is mine.
Oh trembling soul, nail there thy gaze, hold well
That gleaming hope, and it shall make thee firm.
Think when the square grows black before thine eyes,
And thy racked nerves divide from pain forever,
What light shall cleave the darkness, when thy hands
Are gripped by angels, and thy ears are full
Of welcoming words from martyrs of old days,
Peter and Linus, and all those whose heirs
Polluted that I died to purify.
How will thy senses reel with that great joy!

Then through the echoing heaven by choir on choir
Shall we be borne, and from the Almighty's throne
Look down past filmy cloud and golden star
On life and death, and God's love leavening all.
There at our feet, now beautiful in sun,
'Twi'xt flaming pillars of the dusk and dawn,
Our world shall lie, and muffled now in shade
And moonlight. From the groves of Araby
Our eyes shall range to the wild Northern Sea,
Past mountains cowed with everlasting snow,

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

Vineyards, cathedrals, lakes wherein the sun
Flames, a fire-opal. Voices we shall hear
Where the old note of anguish dies away,
And men are glad and faith is pure. Then we
Shall look into each other's deathless eyes,
And whisper, "From our death their blessings grew."

In churches' twilight choirs we'll walk with men,
Breathing pure fancies through a mind at prayer,
That wonders why they came. Down minster aisles
May we like cooling winds with airy hand
Usher the living into truths of love.
Then children, knowing not what dead are near,
May read our names on page or pane, and ask,
"Who then were these?" while reverend priests reply,
"Martyrs for you and this pure faith of ours."

The sands run on; the faster that they run
The nearer heaven am I. Yea, in the dusk
Methinks I hear the beat of angel plumes,
And voices crying, "Courage, what is time
Beneath eternity?" Above me sound
The keys of heaven; the sweet, glad notes blow down;
And through the dark that voice that from the dark

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Called up creation, cries, "Let there be light."
Now wavering dreamer with the fire before thee,
Be brave; thou diest beneath the Almighty's eye.

The night wind museth with itself.

Out of the night I come, and into the night I go.
I have seen so many a heart put forth through the
midnight so.
They were brave in the strength of a dream; have
they found it or waked to rue?
Or can dream so bravely dreamed through courage
grow something true?
I hope; but I blow round earth, God's footstool and
mortal's grave,
And no voice from the throne tells me of the millions
that dreams made brave.

VI

Now reëchoeth a voice as from another dungeon.

Midnight is past; day comes, and earth has end.
I thought I faintly heard your songs and prayers,
Doomed fellow souls, whom faith assures of God

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And heaven at sunset. No such hopes are mine.
Hollow, unchanged, my oracles reply
In terror's hour as leisure's, No man knows.
Cling on in hope, poor hearts; but mine must wear
Less visionary arms, in sterner mail
Front certain pang and all uncertain doom.
Yet even in flame almost a man might smile
To think my foes, who laughed me down, send me
To win from death the proofs confuting theirs.
Shall I not laugh in his dim realm when they,
With long, chopfallen face and rueful, hear
That grim logician answer even as I?
And something of the bold discoverer's thrill
I feel, and curious even in dread enquire:
What shores draw nigh? in what strange hostelrie,
My soul, sojourn'st thou one brief night from now?

But fearful is the price I pay, who lose
This living, warm, unquestionable life,
To learn what random prize the blind abyss
May give the brave. The irrevocable gate
Being passed, I might lapse in eternal naught;
And the glad hours that were to fill with friends,
Faces of children, laugh of love, and glow

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Of sun and wine and leisure in the veins,
And hounds of thought glad-eyed in trailing truth,
And ever new delight to see the sun
Paint cliff and castle tower with morning fire,—
All these might prove but dead oblivion's price.
Or life continuing void of thought, as herb
And plant endure, in nature reabsorbed,
This whilom eager brain might branch and bud
Amid the woodland, where no joy or grief
Could stir me more, and from some gray old oak
Rustle above my children's children's head,
Unknown to them or me. And conscious life
Instead of love might bare the fangs of fear.
For down some chaos of a shattered brain
With ghosts in endless ages might I walk,
Once loosed from all the laws that guard us here.

Why spread my sails then through that timeless night
When safe and soft my days might laugh on shore?
Why not recant? Because within my soul
Is God, if none be in the gloom without.
Within my bosom burns that lamp of thought
By spirit fathers lit and left to me,
Cleaving our night to truths afar, with pure

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And calm aroma lulling minds of men
To moods of nobler life. Burn still, thou lamp.
Be it pride or duty, love or stubborn will,
I quench thee not with lies but hand thee on,
That worlds made free may think and learn and grow.

Then courage, heart, thou playest a noble rôle.
And after all that dear, consoling dream
Of heaven, unproved, is undisproved as well.
But pin not there thy hopes; and sure thou art
Never in flesh to see the coming men
For whom thou diest, nor will they know thee,
Nor ever hear thy name, nor mark thy grave.
So much for earth. Beyond I only know
Through darkling seas of doubt, from horror's pier,
Unpiloted, uncheered, with chance I go;
But never, come what will, can be condemned
To loathe myself and smirk in cringing fear.
'Tis well. At sunset I shall be with God,
Or else the one true godlike thing that was.

The night wind whispereth to him.

I am the night wind blowing from a western ocean
now,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Where a thousand leagues the waves are unclen by
human prow.

By the ocean currents borne where the whale from the
kraken flies,

Old wrecks float half way down that no longer can
sink nor rise.

Through the vast, dim gulfs below look the white-
ribbed crew a-stare.

Where the living have never been I have blown, and
the dead are there.

But the stars look down above and they quiver as if
alive;

And the ocean winds are a voice, and the ocean cur-
rents drive;

And the coral temples grow on the rock that no
storm overthrew;

And the cliffs of the deep give rest to the wing of the
wild seamew.

Where the living have never been and the lips of the
dead are sealed,

Dimly I glimpsed the truth of a God and His love
revealed.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

VII

*From one side of a moonlit street the children of a
happy family are heard singing.*

Under Heaven's starry towers
Gently slumber lamb and kine.
Gently close these eyes of ours,
Lulled beneath the love divine.
Draw the curtain, quench the flame;
Angels watch till morning light.
Breathe one prayer in Mary's name.
Then we sleep. To all good night.

*Here the wind shall blow pleasant old memories
down the street, but shall wail in passing the square.*

VIII

*It seemeth that one museth alone among rustling
shrubbery.*

And here it is, that lay so long in ground,
Thy marble bust, thou great Athenian soul.
Thy words are on my vellum page; and thou—

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Poems of New England and Old Spain

Art thou not near, whatever lives of thee,
Where newly found thy lineaments and lore
Survive the years, grand polar star. Oh yet,
Plato, thou'rt nigh. Come, trim the lamp with me,
And talk of wisdom hidden long from fools.
What thought moved once the brow men modeled
here?

Ah, pour it forth till charmed by thee I feel
Oblivion wrap my fallen age, and them,
The priestly crowd, to whom I vowed but now
Implicit faith in what I know a lie,
Blaspheming nature. Let me lave my soul
Free from the canting slime I wallowed in,
With thee in pitying, calm disdain behold
Man's world, this great kaleidoscope of creeds,
Changing and childlike, laughable, terrible.

Should I have lied? One long revered by me,
One filled with learning, warm with love of men,
Lied not—and burns to-morrow. Mourned of none,
Among the madmen, doomed and those who doom,
A lonely martyr he for truth unchained
And godlike doubt. Had I believed as he
My death would raise the race, I might have died.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

But age on age the wise and good from cross
And flame and gallows-tree have cried; and still
The hoary fiend whom they an hour dethroned
But donned the new deliverer's robes and reigned.
And so I lied and live, and talk with you.

How beautiful is the night that welcomes you
From that long sojourn in time's wreckage. Fair
Gleam down the stars as on Pentelicus,
When you by their soft torches did derive
The mighty lesson years have kept so ill.
You seem in age; those cheeks are guttered out
By burning thought as tapers by their flame;
Yet calm serenity is on that brow,
As if your musings while you still were man
Had clasped eternity in single hours.
Your race did build the Parthenon, and there
Held dual worship, where the crowd revered
Athena, and your peers the beautiful.
So I in dim cathedrals built by me,
Behind mock saints to whom my mockery prays,
Enthroned your ancient vision and revere.

Dread, dark Hereafter, word whose witching sound
On siren isles has drawn deluded lands,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Wait unexpounded through our human night
And nation's nonage; vex the world no more.
Enough for me that thus, transcending time,
I live at will in Plato's day, and view
From peaks of thought far off millennial suns.
He who imagines half has conquered death.
Thou didst converse with me in Academe,
Thou graven face; and thou and I this hour
Feel dimly thoughts that kindred minds unborn
May shape around our chiseled brows. All hail,
Undying vision, more than mortal mood.
That sound among the rustling leaves may be
The step of Death; but let it. Thou and I—
Have we not fathomed eternity to-night?

The night wind moaneth in the shrubbery.

I have blown by the groves of Ganges, I have blown
by the mouths of Nile,
By Balbec and great Palmyra where the gods were
throned erewhile;
But their names were unknown and their works over-
thrown, and their priesthood dead;
And the grape that grew wild on their ruin fed those
whom they never fed.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And the same old joy of loving, and the same old
hunger cry,

And the waste of life's rich meaning lived on though
the gods might die.

By the shores of eternity flying I have asked for what
none would tell.

From the bounds of the infinite blown I but whisper
a finite spell,

The spell of a world made happy, of a heart and a
mind made free,

I have sung in men's ears for ages as I danced with
the surging sea.

But the heroes who heard it are dead, and the sages
who heard it are dumb;

And dark are the years behind me, and dim are the
years to come.

IX

*Here speaketh a voice as of a great queen at her
chamber window.*

All day my woman's limbs wore armor, love.

All day my woman's tender soul has worn

The monarch's iron mood, and longed for night,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Whose dewy hands unarm the weary will.
Only a clinging wife is she whose frown
Defended realms at noon; and thou, my prince,
Be lover, man, and husband now for me.
The stars that chronicle the reigns of kings
Are gazing down, and grave with burning pens
Our deeds among their keen, enduring orbs.
They write and tell us nothing; praise or blame
Is there forevermore in angel eyes;
Yet we cannot decipher it, nor know
If praise or blame be there, that coming time
May read on earth, and God in heaven now.

Whence fell this dark and dreadful melancholy
On me, who rode with men against the Moor?
Have I done evil? All our realms rejoice,
Our great united empire, one in faith.
"Who owns the region owns religion there";
Or schism and civil war would rend it. You,
Glad Spain, win peace on earth, in heaven salvation.
Perfumes of blossom rich on vine and tree,
Or flower in cloister garden, bear the breath
Of grateful people down the fragrant night.
Only among the trill of happy tones,

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

And gliding wave and lover's glad guitar,
The nightingale keeps singing mournfully.
Would he were still; our dread imperial power,
Launching the force whose workings none may weigh,
Can silence not that low, insistent tone.

The blessed night is calm and full of faith.
The stars are altar-lamps; the trees bow down,
And tell their rosaries in drops of dew.
As mothers eye their sleeping babes, to-night
I watch the land I love, and fold its arms
Around the cross whereon the Saviour died;
Even I, who made my land's religion pure.
And thinking thus I was most glad, until,
Like memories of a friend's forgotten prayer,
That says it was but tells not what it was,
I heard the nightingale as now it mourns.

To-morrow law must lay its iron hand
Where love has failed. Oh Christ who cleansed the
 temple,
Bring comfort to thy child, that loved too well
Thy enemies, and saddening signed their doom.
Throw guardian arms around me, husband, king,

Poems of New England and Old Spain

Drive off the dreary mood that music woke.
But now I thought a foot was on the grave
Of that sweet fame and love from coming years
That should be mine. I know 'twas but a dream.
Embrace me, praise me, charm that mood away.
Among the stellar fires Orion treads
As he shall tread for æons yet, and hear
The ages judge the irrevocable past.
Why should I shudder? why be haunted now
With prayer for ill-timed clemency refused?
I should be glad as mother, wife, and queen,
And Christian lady. Only sad, so sad,
With grief so old yet never understood,
Below my window sang the nightingale.

*The wind blows to the listener the song of the
nightingale.*

I sang to the beautiful rose, and its petals grew wide
to hear;
But it learned not the song that I sang, though it
thrilled that my music was near.
I sang to the heart of a queen, and it opened to let
me in.

The Night Before the Auto-da-fé

I sang at the door of her thought, and it barred me
out as a sin.

So I sing in the night of the ages alone till the dawn
return ;

And the beautiful women weep, but my meaning they
never will learn.

X

*Here shall come a sound as of guards before prison
gates, and words as of monks conversing.*

That was a fearful scene, wild Indian form
And foreign tree and quivering wind-blown fires.
Our brother died there burned by heathen, yea,
By those to whom in love he bore the truth,
As always that great errand ends on earth,
A holy martyr. Through the flames he saw
Angels descending, and the white-robed saints,
Who bore an aureole for a kindred brow.
So pass to joy the blessed of the Lord.
Hark, peace. From those condemned unhallowed
hymns
I hear, and prayer that never Mary willed.

Poems of New England and Old Spain

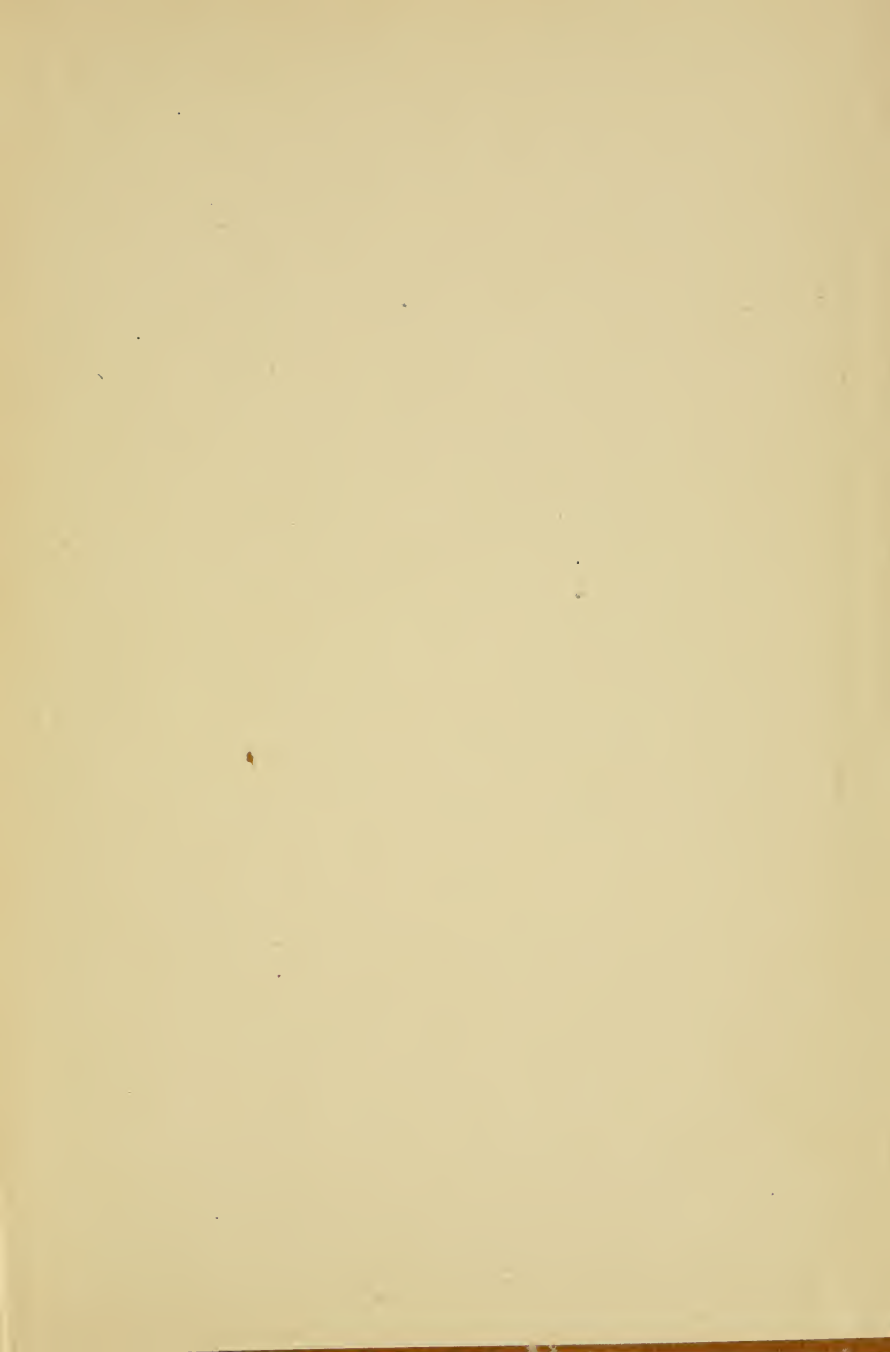
For them already yonder angry dawn
Brings wrath divine and Holy Church's doom.
Long may they suffer for their heresy.

The night wind speaketh wearily.

Out of the night I come, and into the night I go,
For the dusky caravans move, and the mountains
begin to glow.
And the sun is so far from man he will laugh as he
climbs the sky;
And man is so far from man he will laugh while his
brethren die.
And the love-driven hates foam on to the goal that
none yet discerns.
Into the bosom of night the child of the night returns.









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