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THREE VISIONS

AND OTHER POEMS

BY
JOHN A. JOHNSON



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No 1

PREFACE

THESE little excursions to Mount Parnassus have been taken in the short and infrequent intervals of a long and strenuous business life—a business life that began a half century ago, and has yet, like Noah's dove, found no resting place. To the reader, whether pleasure-loving youth or gentle maiden, tired business man, or mother rocking the cradle, gentleman of leisure, or one of earth's toilers, this foreword: If there comes to you one-half the pleasure in reading that I have found in writing these lines, I shall be abundantly satisfied.

JNO. A. JOHNSON.

Covington, Ky.,

September 10, 1912.

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THREE VISIONS

THREE VISIONS

I

LONG years ago I met her first, and then
The bloom of youth's fair spring divinely tinged
Her fair and rounded cheek;
Her eyes with lashes drooping low were fringed;
Her lips shamed e'en carnation's ruddy hue;
Her hair seemed like to sheaves of golden grain,
That oft I've seen the sturdy farmer bind
In summer's glowing heat;
Her voice thrilled me with wondrous power then,
And echoes even yet in memory's halls;
Her form so light, so slender, that it seemed
More fit for treading the ethereal realm.
All these do I recall, but more than these:
That girlhood's fondness, tender trust and faith,
Which formed of me a hero, and which made
Her seem an idol that I placed on high,
And then fell down and fondly worshiped it
With all the strength my boyish love possessed.

II

Once more I saw her by the deep sea's shore,
Where wave on wave succeeding ebbs and flows,
We walked upon the beach and listened oft
To merry bathers' shouts;

Three Visions

Or wrote our names, or erring footprints made
Upon the white and glistening sand, that soon
Was washed all smooth again by rippling waves.
Oh! little did I think that on her heart
My name was writ so faint, a few short months
Would rub it out and write another's there.
We climbed the steep and rugged cliff with hands
Clasped tight, and thought how pleasant thus
 't would be
To climb the hill of life.
Or, as we upward turned our way to where
In lofty tower the faithful beacon burned,
To me she seemed the light that o'er my way
Shed lustre, warmth, and consolation rare,
That made life seem a dream and earth a heaven.

III

I saw her yet again, this time the last;
The years which had flown by since first we met,
Brought not to her that wisdom which it ought;
For fickle was her heart, her vows as air,
And truthful seemed the words she used to sing
So sweetly. "Trust her not! Beware!"
'T was in her far-off home I saw her now,
A mother's pride, a father's darling joy,
As through the house all day her sweet voice
 trilled
Some old familiar song.
To me it sounded far more soft and sweet
Than all the carols of the forest birds.

Three Visions

To other friends she still remained the same,
Light-hearted, gay, and kind; to me, how changed!
Another's picture on her heart was stamped;
Another's voice was sounding in her ear.
So coldly bade she me "farewell," and then
We parted and I saw her never more.

Three Visions

"ONLY A DRUNK"

ONLY a drunk," with his garments all tattered,
Telling a story of want and despair;
Over his temple the rude winds have scattered
Long straggling locks of thin, silvery hair;
Bleeding and bruised by his fall where they found
him,
Face like the hue of the ashes when cold,
Helpless he lies in the strong arms around him,
Homeless and friendless, and wretched and old.

"Only a drunk," yet the mother who bore him
Smiled as she patted his fair, dimpled cheek;
Kissed him so tenderly, bent fondly o'er him,
Watching his slumbers, not daring to speak;
Called him her darling, her pet, and her beauty;
Praised his red lips and his bright, reguish eyes,
Thinking of him made a pleasure of duty,
Each day's return brought to her new surprise.

"Only a drunk," yet a father's heart bounded,
Looking on him as his pride and his joy;
Listened to hear while the praises were sounded,
Of his light-hearted and beautiful boy;
While by his side he would oft sit and ponder,
Picture the manhood of such a fair youth,
Never once thinking how soon he might wander
Far from the pathway of virtue and truth.

Three Visions

“Only a drunk,” yet society gave him
Honor, position, and riches in store;
E'en as he fell, stretched a hand out to save him,
Gave and forgave much, yet still would give
more;
Friends he had once, tho by all now forsaken,
Home, credit, influence, power for good—
Gone like the leaves which the chill winds have
shaken;
Only a wreck where a palace once stood.

Gone is the blush of his childhood's fair morning,
Gone, all the brightness of youth's glowing day,
Gone past redemption, and gone without warning,
Manhood's proud strength and left only decay.
Out from the arms of the dear ones still pleading,
Low with the brute in the mire he's sunk—
Food for the jest, as still downward he's speed-
ing,
Not e'en a man now, he's “only a drunk.”

“Only a drunk,” yet the Savior so holy,
That which was lost, came to seek and to save,
Wept o'er the prodigal, pitied the lowly,
Rescued the thief when in sight of the grave;
Told of the joy which the bright angels cherish,
As they look down from the mansions above,
When they behold one just ready to perish,
Caught up by the grasp of an infinite love.

Three Visions

“Only a drunk,” but there ’s hope while life lingers,
Up, up to his rescue; still, still there is time;
Weave bands of love with kind Charity’s fingers.
Hold him to heaven with a faith that ’s sublime.
See from on high how the Savior is reaching
Down to redeem him from Sin’s dreadful taint;
Mercy and grace for him still are beseeching,
Sinner he has been, but may be a saint.

Walking through the streets of a crowded city, my attention was attracted to a crowd gathered around a patrol wagon opposite. As I drew near, I saw the limp and helpless form of a man being lifted into the wagon by the strong arm of the police. The man was old, poor, wretched-looking and dirty, and thinking some accident had happened, I inquired of a man standing near, “What is the matter?” The man addressed turned toward me, and with a laugh replied, “O, it ’s only a drunk.” The words and the face haunted me until evening, when I sat down and wrote the poem.

—THE AUTHOR.

Three Visions

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

PART I.—THE SHEPHERDS

ON Judah's hillsides dropped the dew,
As day was giving place to night;
And while the sunbeams fainter grew,
The stars shone forth with richer light—
Just as from one dissolving view
Another comes, more grand, more bright.

The murmur of the distant rill,
The breeze that lulled the birds to sleep,
The gentle cropping on the hill
Where browsed the herd along the steep,
No sound beside; all else was still
As if within some cavern deep.

When lo! a light shone in the sky,
A light that ne'er was seen before;
And now the wondering shepherds spy
An angel swift from Heavenly shore,
With graceful form and bearing high,
And dazzling brightness covered o'er.

While prone to earth the shepherds lay,
The angel's words assuring came:
"Fear not; to you is born this day
A mighty Savior; in His name
Shall all men trust—no longer stay,
You may His mercy freely claim."

Three Visions

Then soon a host, on bended wing,
Of angel songsters swelled the strain:
"Glory to God!" they joyful sing;
The hills re-echoed the refrain:
"Peace and good will to men we bring,"
They sang, and soared away again.

PART II.—THE MAGI

I see from the ancient city,
Coming over the hillside steep,
And down through the verdant valleys,
Where Nature lies asleep,
A group, with camels laden,
Whose toilsome way they keep.

A group of weary travelers,
With age and sorrows bent,
Whose faces are deeply chiseled
With many a seam and rent,
That tell of the study and labor,
In which their lives were spent.

They talk in earnest whispers,
As they look above to the star,
Whose light they have closely followed
From their homes in the East afar—
Of the Babe, who, the Fates have told them,
Shall ride in a royal car.

Three Visions

On many a Jewish city
That shining star looked down,
But still went on before them
Till it came to David's town,
When it ceased its onward journey,
Having found the Heir to the crown.

And the hearts of the Magi brightened,
And the toilsome pathway seemed
To grow smoother as they hastened
To greet Him of whom they dreamed;
The Babe, whose eyes first opened
Where that gentle starlight streamed.

PART III.—THE KING

Where the silken hangings lay,
And the golden tassels play,
Sat the King;
From his brow has passed the light,
Dark it frowns, as shades the night
Everything.

Why so lone, so sad, so still?
Does not to his monarch's will
Each one bow?
Sits he not in robes of state?
Is he not so rich and great
Even now?

Three Visions

'T was but late the Magi bent
Suppliant forms, and while he lent
Careful ear,
Told they of a King to be,
Whom from far they came to see,
Bringing cheer.

Told they of a shining star,
Which they followed from afar,
Till it brought
Words of prophecy to mind
Long forgotten, how to find
Him they sought.

Then the monarch bade them go,
Find the child and come and show
Where He lay;
Saying he would worship there—
Thinking only how to snare
And to slay.

PART IV.—THE BABE

A roadside inn; no room for more;
A rock-hewn cavern, an earthen floor;
For the infant Christ a rock-hewn bed;
And a rock-hewn sepulchre held when dead;
As from the rock at the stroke of the rod,
Came the healing streams for the people of God,
So from the rock came Him who died
That the world might be cleansed in the crimson tide.

Three Visions

A loving mother in humble dress,
A kindly father her heart to bless,
And meek-eyed children wondering stand,
Touching the infant's dimpled hand,
Where the ox his food from his master takes,
And where his burning thirst he slakes,
There Jesus, the bread that was broken for all,
And the water of life, was laid in a stall.

No jewels, no sceptre, no princely gown
Are waiting the royal Babe to crown;
No cannon its deep-toned thunders sound,
To waken the echoes the hills around;
No martial music, and no marching tread;
No banners are flaunting overhead;
But an anthem is ringing in heavenly choirs,
And a welcome is shining in heavenly fires.

"Glory to God," the angels sang,
While the mighty arches of Heaven rang;
"Glory to God," the soft leaves stirred;
"Glory to God," the shepherds heard;
"Glory to God," sang the starry spheres,
And the deep voice came to the Magi's ears;
And earth's gates past, the ransomed throng
Are singing the same triumphant song.

Three Visions

THE MILESTONE

A TRAVELER on the dusty road,
Tired and footsore with his load,
Marks with delight a sunken stone
That by the roadside still is shown;
And as the sight new vigor brings,
Lifts up his weary head and sings,
 Another mile-stone past.

Thus often on life's weary road,
When trouble bows, when sorrow's load
Seems heavier than our souls can bear;
When hearts are crushed by dark despair,
Then as each year draws to a close,
We gladly sing 'mid winter's snows,
 Another mile-stone past.

But ah, when pleasures crowd the way,
When life is young and bright and gay,
Each moment some new charm receives,
And every flower some sweetness gives,
'T is then we sadly turn the eye,
And murmur low as we go by,
 Another mile-stone past.

Will Time not stay his rapid wing?
Will youth no more its freshness bring?
Must gentle spring and summer fade,
And autumn in its grave be laid?

Three Visions

On pleasure's wall must still appear
The hand, and write in letters clear,
Another mile-stone past?

Yes, when we hear the natal bells
Ring out their merry peal, it tells
The fated number of our years;
Each mile-stone past 'mid joy or tears
Leaves of the number less to count,
And all too soon we'll tell the amount,
And then shall see "the last."

Three Visions

THE ANSWER

GENTLE maiden blithe and free,
You have sung
Song more precious far to me
Than the tongue
Of the minstrel could have stirred,
Sweeter than the voice of bird,
Or the tinkling bells I heard
When they rung.

Maiden with the darkening eye,
By your art,
Buried deeply though they lie
In the heart;
You can see the hidden springs,
Where the bright and mournful things—
Poised on light or drooping wings,
Take their start.

When her mites the widow gave
At the door,
He who came mankind to save
Said 't was more
Than the wealth the rich had brought;
To their plenty, theirs was naught;
She gave what her hands had wrought,
All her store.

Three Visions

So on this, my natal day,
Happy thought;
You have sent, though far away,
What you wrought;
'T was a prayer, a wish, a sigh,
And I've laid them gently by;
Loving words will never die,
We are taught.

Maiden fair, thou gavest me,
Much of bliss,
And I freely give to thee
Only this:
Thanks for a wish so kindly made;
Thanks for a prayer devoutly prayed;
Thanks for a sigh that outward strayed,
And—a kiss.

Three Visions

"IGNOTA PULCHRA"

("The Fair Unknown")

WITHIN a golden circlet bound
A picture lies;
A loving face, half turning 'round,
Its beaming eyes
Looks on me, while my thoughts are drowned
In glad surprise.

Not fairer is the stone, I ween,
That shields it o'er—
Not brighter is the golden sheen,
A goodly store—
Than is the face I've never seen,
But yet adore.

Two starry eyes, so bright, so clear,
They glisten so—
If bent on me those glances dear,
Full well I know—
I'd gaze and gaze; indeed, I fear
I'd never go.

Two cheeks touched by a Southern sun,
Of rosy hue,
Like blushing clouds when day is done,
Held up to view;
Which Phoebus' lances, one by one,
Are darting through.

Three Visions

A mouth so small, so firm, so neat,
 Is pictured there,
As if 't was formed for kisses sweet;
 I must declare,
I 'd travel far those lips to greet,
 If I knew where.

Just as the starry worlds of light
 Are still unknown,
Except to Him who sits in might
 Upon His throne,
And guides, controls, and judges right,
 Supreme, alone.

And where the blushing clouds that lie
 On Nature's face
Are shaped and fashioned in the sky
 To bless our race,
We can not learn; we need not try
 In this brief space.

So are these eyes that sparkling shine,
 Unknown to me;
So are these cheeks I 'd touch with mine,
 Still strange to be—
Although that face and form divine
 I long to see.

Three Visions

“LA CHARITÉ”

(Charity)

SOVEREIGN of all the virtues rare,
With thee nor Faith nor Hope compare;
Hope looks beyond and Faith above,
But earthward turns the glance of Love.

Faith's hand clasps tight the golden strand;
Hope's finger points to th' heavenly land;
Love's hands are open, quick to bless,
Remove despair, relieve distress.

The arms of Faith and Hope are bold
To guide the helm, the anchor hold;
But Love its sturdy strength will lend
To each one whom it calls a friend.

Faith stands erect, as on a rock;
Hope forward leans to meet the shock;
Love bends its supple, yielding form,
While o'er it vainly blows the storm.

Faith moves with slow and steady tread;
And sanguine Hope leaps swift ahead;
Fleeter than Faith, than Hope more strong,
Love runneth best, it runneth long.

Sovereign of all the virtues rare,
With thee nor Faith nor Hope compare;
Faith may grow weak, and Hope grow cold;
Love will be young when time is old.

Three Visions

MY LATEST FRIEND

MID other scenes, in other lands,
I've met kind friends and clasped
their hands;
Yet none of all can I commend
As you, my dearest, latest friend.

'T is not the witchery of that glance,
That sparkled oft at me askance,
I know its power, I feel it still—
'T is something lies behind—the will.

'T is not the smile that lurking lies
Between the lips I dearly prize;
'T is something purer—still above
The glance or lips, 't is truest love.

'T is not the beauty of that form
That sends the blood thro' pulses warm;
More pleasure still than this I find
In reading oft your matchless mind.

'T is not the form, the eye, the smile,
That does my senses so beguile;
'T is something that inspires the whole,
The crowning glory, 't is the soul.

The interest always shown in me,
The tender, watchful sympathy,

Three Visions

That smiled when I was glad, and cried
When sorrow came with me to bide.

'T is this, dear girl, that brings the sigh,
When still to say "Farewell" I try;
Fate wills it so—Fate brings this pain;
We' ll conquer Fate—we' ll meet again.

Three Visions

LINES AT MAMMOTH CAVE

LET Prentice tell in glowing song
The wonders of the cave;
Its misty aisles, so dark, so long,
And silent as the grave;
But better far I love the trees,
And Nature's loftier aisles,
Where through their leafy canopies
The sun looks down and smiles;
And the murmur of the gentle breeze
That weary man beguiles.

Three Visions

THE TEMPLE OF FAME

I

HIGH up on the banks of the Danube there stands
A temple; 't was built by King Louis' commands,
In honor of Fame; the "Walhalla," 't is called,
And after the ancient Parthenon, it's walled
Sides, porches and columns and pediment rise,
Dark forests below, and above, the blue skies.

II

No house is in sight, and no smoke thinly curled
From some cottager's hut, tells you aught of the
world;
In grandeur it stands, while all nature around
Is silent and hushed as on enchanted ground;
With statues and busts, and the names of the
dead,
Carved, sculptured, beneath, all around, overhead.

III

No sectional pride in this temple has birth,
For ages 't is built, and the great of the earth,
Whatever their kindred, their color, their tongue,
In marble still live and their praises are sung;
The poet, the statesman, the warrior, the sage,
The knight of the field, and the prince of the
stage.

Three Visions

IV

A temple I see—not by Danube's broad stream,
All built up before me in Fancy's pale gleam;
With columns of bones, and with windows all stained
And spotted with tears; to each pillar is chained
A captive of war—and its darkly dyed floor
In color reflects but the hue of the gore.

V

Another I see, still more gloomy and pale,
From its marble walls sounds the widow's sad wail;
The vine's leafy tendrils with fruitage so fair,
Here climb around tombstones all gleaming and bare;
Lost hearts and lost fortunes are buried beneath
This temple of Bacchus, this chamber of death.

VI

The temple of Fame that the scholar uprears
Has no tendrils of grape and no glitter of spears;
Its floors and its windows are covered with dust,
Its wood is but mould, and its iron is rust;
The temple is built when the scholar is gone,
Like cages all finished, the bird having flown.

VII

The miser his temple of gold lifts on high,
With colors that sparkle and dazzle the eye,
Whose columns are bars and whose ingots are chains,

Three Visions

The temple a prison, where man, for his pains,
Finds faculties bound and his soul rudely riven,
From love, home, and happiness, freedom and
Heaven.

VIII

A temple men build, neither marble nor gold,
No stains on its floors, free of rust and of mould,
Its pillars are Faith, Hope, and Brotherly Love,
Foundation on earth and the cap-stone above;
This temple of fame will stand firm and be bright,
Time's limits all past – in eternity's light.

Three Visions

"THE FLOWER AND THE BUTTERFLY"

(Translated from the French.)

THE flower to the butterfly was saying,
Pray do not flee;
Our fates, how different, while I am staying,
Thou goest from me.

We live, we love, far from the knightly hall,
We plight our troth,
And each so like the other that men call
Us flowers, both.

The air upbears thee, but earth's chains enfold
My feeble feet;
The while I would encase thy wings of gold
In perfume sweet.

Thou flittest all the day in fragrant bowers,
So gay and glad;
While I my shadow watch thro' weary hours,
So lone and sad.

Thou goest, thou returnest, lightly scorning
My anxious fears;
Remembering not that each returning morning
Finds me in tears.

United let us live, I thee implore,
My radiant king;
Take root like me, or let me like thee soar
On gladsome wing.

Three Visions

LESSONS OF LIFE

WE have passed from out the portals, bright and
gay,
Of our Alma Mater dear;
And the weary, toilsome studies of the day,
And the things we used to fear—
Frowns and rods we fondly hoped had passed away,
Nevermore to see or hear.

As we stood there on the threshold, if we knew
What the future had in store,
We would find the words of wisdom were too true,
That our school days were not o'er;
But that in the school of manhood, just in view,
We must study evermore.

Some of us for ten and twenty years and more,
In this harder, sterner school,
Have our lesson conned, made failures as before—
Oft been late—against the rule,
Had our whippings, frowns, and lectures, trials sore,
Sat upon the dunce's stool.

Father Time, the stern old teacher, adding one,
Makes six school-days in each week;
From our holidays subtracts he, and when done,
Cares not for the paling cheek;
Multiplies our daily burdens as we run,
And divides the joys we seek.

Three Visions

But these school-days will be over by and by;
Our great Teacher then will call
Each of us to stand before Him in the sky
To be judged; oh may we all
Pass examination nobly, and on high
Welcomed be to Heaven's hall.

Three Visions

THOSE BATTLE FLAGS

WHEN they send us the tears of our widows,
And the anguish of those who have bled;
When they wake from their quiet reclining—
The hosts of our warrior dead;
When they fill up the war-wasted faces,
When they gather, all covered with scars,
The limbs that were lost in the struggle,
Then we'll send back the "Stars and the
Bars."

When we send back the gyves and the fetters,
The lash and the block and the yoke;
When we give up the pen of the hero,
That made men of brutes with a stroke;
When we gather from hillside and valley
The dark-skinned, both mother and son,
And give back the slave to his master,
Then we'll give up the colors we won.

When we tear down the homes we've erected,
To shelter the feeble and maimed;
When our love for our country grows fainter,
And the sons of their sires are ashamed;
When we unlearn the lessons of duty,
By our patriot forefathers taught,
Then we'll send back the dust-covered trophies
That our blood and our treasure have bought.

Three Visions

We 'll not give up the flag that they flaunted,
When treason's war raised its loud din;
We have love for the penitent sinner,
But we 've nothing but hate for the sin.
Put them back, till the dust, as it gathers,
Renders misty the blue and the gray;
Put them back till the worm and the canker
Have eaten their blood-stains away.

By the memories of Monmouth and Concord,
By the bones of the loved Washington;
We have but one flag and one country,
And our motto is "Many in one."
Then send to our brethren, once foemen,
For their feasts of Minerva or Mars—
If they need them, send banners unstinted,
But send them the "Stripes and the Stars."

During the administration of President Cleveland, the first Democratic President since the Civil War, a movement was set on foot to send back to the Southern States the battle-flags captured by the Union troops from the Confederates, which were stored principally in the archives of the various Northern State capitols. The movement was premature, and a storm of indignation was aroused which prevented the project from being carried out. Under the influence of the excitement, and with the memory of the Civil War fresh in my own mind, the above lines were written. Years afterward, having personally visited many of the battlefields where the "Blue" and the "Gray" mingled in harmony, and after attending reunions of the Confederate soldiers in the South, where I was received most cordially, my own opinions changed, and not only mine, but the feelings of the general public also changed, so that when later the same action was suggested, it met with no objection scarcely, and many, if not all, of the battle-flags were returned. As representing faithfully the spirit of the time, however, the above poem has been retained in the collection.

Three Visions

FOUR DAYS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST

A Dialogue. A. D. 29.

BY THE ROADSIDE

Mary.—

HAVE I seen Jesus? Yes, and well recall the day,
When from the lanes and hedges came a pressing
crowd

Of mothers, with their infants carried in their arms,
To see the Rabbi and to ask that he might bless.
I saw the crowd and, curious, too, I pressed myself
Up to the front rank of the mass that I might see,
When, with rude hand, they pushed me back among
the throng,

Unnoticed—no, not quite; for, seeing what was done,
This Jesus called me by my name to come to Him.
I wondered much how He knew me, and halting still,
And yet drawn on by impulse strong as steel I went.
He was a noble Man, so kind, so gentle like;
His eyes so blue, so deep, and full of meaning, too,
I wondered what they still kept saying to my soul;
For as I looked and looked and could not turn away,
I thought they spoke, and all their burden was of love.
He put His arms around me, and His voice was low
And musical as is the gentle summer wind;
And when He said, "Forbid them not at all,
But suffer them to come to Me," and spoke of joys
Within His Father's house, prepared for all who come,
Although I knew not where His Father lived, I thought
I fain would live with Him forever, anywhere.

Three Visions

IN THE TEMPLE COURT

Reuben.—

I stood within the Temple Court when He passed in,
The men they called disciples with Him; looking 'round,
He noticed there the noisy crowd, the busy mart,
That looked as if old Noah's ark had there discharged;
Confusion worse confounded reigned; the bleating
sheep,

The cries of birds, the noisy din of those who sold,
Who cried aloud, "Come up and buy, Come up and
buy!"

All this was in the place, where erst my father taught
No impious foot had ever dared to lightly tread,
But where, with bated breath and slow and solemn step,
The pious fathers went to be alone with God.

With kindling eye this Jesus saw the careless horde
Of greedy merchants who infest the sacred place;
Then raising up His head, as if from loftier height,
To pour the brimming vials of His wrath, He cried,
"Make ye My Father's house a den of noisy thieves,
That once was called a house of prayer and reverent
praise?"

You should have seen Him then, His head erect and
proud,

His form majestic seemed to tower over all,
And from that deep blue eye there poured such beams
of light,

As only can be seen when lightnings flash across
The vaulted sky, or when from rift in summer cloud
The pleasant sun shines through; His voice, before so
kind,

Three Visions

Now echoed thro' the place like thunder's solemn peal,
As He repeated to the throng the one word, "Go!"
And as they waiting stood, He seized from off a block
A herdman's scourge, and as one drives the timid sheep
That rush upon each other's heels, He drove them out.

AT BETHANY

Martha.—

Is it of Jesus that you speak? Then let me tell
What I have seen and heard of that strange Man or
God.

You both do know I live in Bethany's quaint town,
A little, quiet place among the hills, removed
As far from this tumultuous crowded city's walls
As if it were upon some other planet placed.
Near by two maiden sisters and their brother dwell,
Mary, Martha, and Lazarus their names are called.
So knit together in the bonds of love are they,
It seems as if one heart in their three bodies dwelt;
Their home though poor is neat and scrupulously clean,
And every time I pass that way, I love to look
Upon the tidy scene. And here this Jesus came
As if He would avoid the busy, thronging crowd,
And rest Himself awhile in their sweet hillside home.
I've seen Him oft at close of a midsummer's day,
Sitting without the vine-clad door, and talking low;
Beside Him sat the brother, Lazarus, wrapt in thought,
The while he listened to Him; and close by His feet
The gentle Mary sat, her hands upon His knees,
Her soft, dark eyes upturned to His, and drinking in
His every gesture, every look and gentle word.

Three Visions

I listened once to hear what He might say, His talk
Was of His far-off home, His Father kind and good,
Who stretches forth His arms to all who choose to
come;

He spoke of golden streets, of rippling crystal streams,
Of pearly gates, and waving palms, and shining robes,
It seemed to me so like the fairy tales of old.

Or castles that we build, too beauteous to be true.

But passing by one day the door of Lazarus' home,

I saw the tell-tale signs of woe, and asking there,

I found the brother loved so dear had died, and then

From out that home I saw the gloomy mourners come,

Filling the air with doleful cries and piteous wails,

While sturdy neighbors bore his body to the tomb.

But Jesus was not there, for though I sought Him long,

Yet came He not at all, at which I marvelled much.

'T was four days after that He came, and seeing Him

Approach the door, I drew me near to hear Him speak.

The sisters, when they saw Him, moved by memories

sad

Of him who was their brother, now, alas! no more,

Fell on His neck and sobbed and cried aloud in grief.

And then, His arms enfolding them in kind embrace,

While whispering gently words of hope and love and

cheer,

With head bowed down, and throbbing breast, He

also wept.

Then turning 'round, He bade them show to Him the

place

Where they had laid him, and they thought who heard

Him speak,

Three Visions

He goeth to the grave to weep awhile alone.
The tomb was reached, and when the stone was rolled
away,
We saw within the body wrapt in grave-clothes tight,
And from the open door the sickening vapors came,
On-rushing like the trail of the death angel's robes.
Then looking upward into Heaven with holy faith,
Jesus, with loud voice called, "O Lazarus, come forth!"
And, mighty wonder, Lazarus stirred, he oped his eyes,
Stretched forth his hand, they loosed him, and he
walked forth free.

ON CALVARY'S MOUNT

Samuel.—

At early morn, with comrades joined, I hastened out,
And followed with the crowd of priests and rabble rude,
To get, perchance, a sight of those condemned to die.
The robber chiefs I knew at one swift glance, for they
With reckless courage held their bearing proudly high,
And brawny arm and hardened visage plainly told
Their trade of warfare, lust and unrepentant sin;
But, last of all, a meek-eyed Man, with sorrow bowed,
With lines of care upon His cheek, and head low bent,
Proclaimed no cruel, lustful man, with crime deep dyed,
But guiltless man, by guilty fiends condemned to death.
His lips moved ever and anon, as if in prayer,
And when the mob reviled with jeer and ribald shout,
Although His comrades sent back bitter curse for curse,
He answered not a word, nor changed in aught His look.
At length, arriving at the dreadful place of skulls,

Three Visions

Golgotha's mount, they halted, stripped their bodies
bare,
Laid them outstretched upon the gnarled and rugged
wood,
And then the dismal clink of hammer on the nails
Bespoke the quivering flesh, rent sinew, bleeding vein.
With every stroke the air was filled with mingled groans,
And sighs and curses that the cruel pain wrung out,
At which my blood was chilled, my heart grew faint
and sick.

I hid my eyes, and when I dared to look again,
Clear cut across the dark and ever-darkening sky,

I saw three crosses rise; on either side the thieves,
And on the center cross the faint and bleeding form,
Still graceful, though in agony it writhed, of Him
Whom Moses, in the Law, and prophets all foretold.
His forehead bare a crown of piercing thorns adorned,
And from each needle-point a stream of blood flowed
down.

Along His paling cheek; and from each outstretched
hand

The warm and crimson current drop by drop fell down.
I could not longer bear the sight, and hastened home;
But something stronger than my fears kept drawing me,
Until about the noon-tide hour, to Calvary's steep
Again I bent my way. Those three long, cruel hours
Had made sad havoc with the bruised and mangled
forms,

And often when the pain was too severe to bear,

Three Visions

A fainting spell would seize them, and it seemed indeed
As if they could not longer live; but then again
The vital spark, as loth to leave, would still come back.
And now the sun, that had at intervals shone forth,
Withdrew its gladdening light, and darkness fell o'er all,
So deep, profound, that scarcely could I then discern
The uplifted cross, and when the soldiers moved about,
They seemed like brooding spirits of the silent dead,
Or like the dark and gloomy shadows of the lost,
That haunt the lower world. The rude and noisy crowd
Was hushed to silence now; a fearful awe oppressed

And held me mute and spellbound to the dismal place.
For three long hours the darkness, like a dead man's pall,
Hung o'er the solemn scene; low rumblings in the ground
At intervals were heard, and then upon the air
A cry broke forth, "'T is finished!" and the earth
awoke,

The sun came forth, the crowd assumed its wonted
mirth,

And when we turned our eyes upon the central cross,
Hung down the pale and stiffening body of the dead.
'T is finished, yes, the pain, the blood, the anguish sore,
The scoffing crowd, the brutal guard, the darkened sky;
All, all of these were nothing to that form so still.

'T is finished, how that cry still rings upon my ears
With fearful meaning. Is it true that something more
Beside the pain and suffering sore is signified?

My father has oft told that in our ancient law,
Are prophets' visions, words by scribes not understood,

Three Visions

In which a spotless Lamb must be to slaughter led,
An offering lifted upon high—a Shiloh come.
Can this be He, the long-expected Lamb of God?
The wondrous plan that from creation's birth was
formed,

Is it at last complete, and has Messiah come?
O, I would give the world to know, and yet I think
It must be so, and that ere long in kingly form,
This Jesus slain will from the dead, like Lazarus, rise,
And sit upon His throne of judgment evermore.

Three Visions

IN MEMORIAM

To M. L. S.

'T IS but as yesterday since first I knew thee,
Time flies so sweetly when with those we love;
Thy gentle smile still lingers in my mem'ry,
And thy sweet voice goes with me where I rove.

But thou wilt ne'er return my heart to gladden,
Thy lovely face no more shall I behold;
In later years the thought will only sadden,
When I recall the happy days of old.

But though I mourn the loss of such a treasure,
That to my eyes on earth will ne'er appear;
One hope, a radiant beam, still gives me pleasure,
'T is this, I'll see thee, though 't will not be here.

Yes, tho' it may be by our God forbidden,
That thou shouldst come in earthly form to me,
The Psalmist's comfort in my heart is hidden,
'T is written there that I can come to thee.

The summer's sun smiled sweetly on thy pathway,
And autumn filled thy lap with choicest flowers;
December's blast has nipped the fruit thus early,
That it might ripen in celestial bowers.

'T was only for a time that it was given
For us to hear thy thrilling, sweet-voiced song;

Three Visions

But now redeemed, thou 'rt gone to sing in Heaven
The Savior's praises with the happy throng.

If 't is permitted to the angel spirits
To visit earth unseen, and with us dwell,
Oh Mary, every hour be 'round me, near me,
And guide me gently, safely, guard me well.

When tempted, tried, in sickness or in danger,
Comfort and cheer, and lead my feet aright;
And when across life's dark and stormy billow,
Be thou my guiding star thro' all death's night.

Three Visions

LOVE'S RETURN

IT was in the early spring-time,
And the sun was shining fair;
Brooks were rippling, birds were singing,
Flowers blooming everywhere,
When I saw a little stranger,
Strong of limb and fair of face,
Playing gaily in the sunshine,
Full of gentleness and grace.

Played he ever 'round my dwelling,
Darting here and hiding there,
Wondrous eyes upon me turning,
While he sang a merry air;
Long I looked, and pleased, I listened,
But, ah me, 't was mortal sin;
Shall I ever be forgiven,
For I never asked him in?

Summer's flowers had bloomed and faded,
Autumn came with thoughtful mien,
With her robes of gold and scarlet,
Richer beauty ne'er was seen;
And the sun beamed down so gently,
Through the still and fragrant air,
While a thin and shadowy mantle
Seemed to wrap all nature fair.

Three Visions

When again the little stranger
Trembling stopped before my door,
Quick I seized him, unresisting,
Bade him welcome o'er and o'er;
And into his ear I whispered,
While I gave a fond caress,
"Will you stay, Love?" and he answered,
"For how long?" "Forever." "Yes."

Three Visions

"VEILLONS AU SALUT DE L' EMPIRE."*

("We are watching o'er the safety of the empire.")

WE were watching o'er the safety of the nation,
When we left our homes and firesides at the call
That went ringing over hilltop and through valley,
That the nation's guards were needed, one and all.

When the gentle words of chiding wafted over,
Were not heeded by the tyrant 'cross the sea,
And the fierce and burning words of fate were uttered,
That our suffering Cuban brothers must be free.

We were watching o'er the safety of the nation
As we marched away beneath the Southern sun,
While before us floated free the starry banner
That we vowed to keep or perish every one.

When we lay within the fever's deadly vapor,
And the days to weary months had rolled away,
Till the hope deferred so long became a burden,
While our brothers held the Spanish foe at bay.

We were watching o'er the safety of the nation,
Doing duty without murmur where we lay;
Though the trumpet never called us to the conflict,
Though the shout of victory never cheered our day.

We were watching o'er the safety of the nation,
When the lightning flashed its message once again,
And obediently we turned our faces homeward,
When all broken was the tyrant's galling chain.

Three Visions

We are watching o'er the safety of the nation,
While we labor in the humble walks of peace;
For we 're ready, aye, to do or even suffer
That the poor, down-trodden ones may find
release.

And our hearts beneath our workmen's frocks are
beating
Just as firmly for the flag as e'er before;
And we 'll prove our love of country when we 're
needed
On the battle-fields, as did our sires of yore.

*The title of this poem is the title of a very popular song in France during the Napoleonic wars more than a hundred years ago. This poem is respectfully dedicated to the First Regiment of Infantry, Ohio National Guard, that volunteered, to a man, at the opening of the Spanish-American War, was the first regiment to report at a State capitol ready for duty, and was only prevented from going to Cuba and winning fame by an unfortunate accident to their transport at Port Tampa, Florida.

Three Visions

LONG, LONG AGO*

SORROWFUL scenes do I recall,
Dark shadows flit across the wall,
As I sit in the dull and flickering light
And think of one dark, cold, winter's night.
Long, long ago.

In a proud steamer's cabin stand
Bridegrooms and brides, a happy band,
While to the music's charming sound
The merry dancers circle 'round.
Now swift, now slow.

The scene is changed; the dance and song
Are hushed; and now the gathered throng,
With cheerful hearts and faces bright,
Are bidding all a kind "Good night,"
In voices low.

A moment's space, and then the shock,
As when a ship strikes hidden rock,
The curse, the shriek, the groan, the prayer,
These are the sounds which fill the air,
With deepest woe.

And now the bursting flame shoots forth
Like the changing light in the far-off north,
Enthroned on high, in royal car,
The "fire fiend" wages fearful war,
Above, below.

Three Visions

But soon, too soon, the work is done;
The boat that at the set of sun
Was riding proudly on the wave,
Is sinking in its watery grave,
 Like falling snow.

Out in the cold and darkness now
I see a fair and snow-white brow
Floating away on the running tide,
Where the willows fringe the river's side;
 'T is one I know.

These sights and sounds do I recall,
These shadows fit across the wall,
As I sit in the dull and flickering light,
And think of that dark, cold winter's night,
 Long years ago.

*The above lines were written on the steamer bound for Louisville, Kentucky, while passing the scene of the terrible disaster of December 4, 1868, when the Steamers "United States" and "America" collided near Warsaw, Kentucky, took fire, and both burned to the water's edge. Many lives were lost, among them two near relatives of mine. I had, myself, intended to sail on the "United States" that day, but at almost the last moment was providentially prevented.

Three Visions

"THE LETTER"

(*To a Friend in Europe*)

LONG and anxiously I waited,
L While my patience oozed away,
Waiting for the promised letter
That I thought had gone astray,
When at last the missive reached me,
Reached me just the other day.

In it I was glad to notice
That your health you still retain,
While from city, hall, and castle,
Knowledge of the world you gain;
That into your mind is pouring,
Like the falling drops of rain.

And your spirit, still unflagging,
Though misfortunes you befell,
Prompted you to take it easy
In the story told so well
Of your visit to the city
In the south of "France la Belle."

While I read and read your letter,
Other scenes came up to view,
And in spirit I was taken
To the old world from the new;
And thro' Roma's ruined arches,
Side by side I walked with you.

Three Visions

Through the streets we rambled slowly,
Listening to the music sweet
Of Italia's sons and daughters,
That our willing ears would greet,
Wondering at the ways and costumes
Of the people whom we'd meet.

Past the Forum's ruined columns,
Long the Appian Way we trod,
Through the dim and dreary arches,
Where the followers of our God
In the Coliseum's circle,
With their life-blood, stained the sod.

Trajan's Column now detained us,
'Neath St. Peter's dome we stood;
Capitol rock and Vatican chambers,
Sculptured marble, bronze, and wood;
All these sights so rare and beauteous
Drew us many a weary rood.

But from this delightful dreaming
Turned I to my task again;
Left the pencil sketch of fancy
Wondering as I took my pen
Whether you would like to have me
Tell you how and where I've been.

First, or, as the Latins say, "imprimis,"
I have not been sick a day

Three Visions

That would keep me from my business,
Or from Pleasure's flowery way,
Since you left us in the springtime,
In the blooming month of May.

Next, my time and how I've spent it,
If to tell you all I tried,
It would prove but prosy reading,
And would weary me beside;
So a little trip I'll mention,
Happening since you crossed the tide.

Time was closing up his ledger
For the week that just had gone,
Adding up the debit, credit,
Before Sunday 'gan to dawn,
When a new account he'd open
With the balance carried on.

That I took up my departure
For the island in the lake,
Rendered famous by a battle,
Called, for gallant Perry's sake,
Well—no matter—you can guess it
Without making a mistake.

A companion was not wanting,
For my brother went with me,
Went to view the lovely island
In our mighty inland sea;
So with pleasant conversation,
Passed the time right cheerily.

Three Visions

All the usual stops and stations,
Those delays that dangerous are,
Heated axles, fiery journals,
Made our coach a smoking car,
Cows on track and sheep run over,
Our enjoyment did not mar.

“Put-in-Bay” at length before us
Rose, like Venus, from the wave;
Landed we, then after dinner
Sallied forth to Perry’s cave.
Smoking, bathing, promenading,
Flirting, what more could we crave?

Four o’clock the bells were striking,
When I hied me to the boat;
But I found, to my discomfort,
She already was afloat;
Gently gliding, proudly riding,
While my heart rose to my throat.

For I must be back by Monday,
Business must be done, I knew;
So I hurried to the shore-beach,
Jumped into a light canoe,
Told the boatman he must put me
On the steamer, full in view.

Flashing from his faithful paddles,
Rose the spray-drops in the sun,

Three Visions

Till his virtue was rewarded
When his patient work was done,
As I from the deck of steamer
Tossed the guerdon he had won.

Judge you, then, how it surprised me,
As I searched the steamer 'round,
That my brother, who had parted
From me on the island ground
But an hour before, was missing,
Could not anywhere be found.

Quick I traveled home without him,
While to him my thoughts would tend,
Knowing that he had no money,
Wondering where he 'd find a friend;
But I knew that One above us,
In all danger would defend.

All our anxious fears were scattered
When on Tuesday morn he came,
Having found a friend who lent him
Scrip enough to bring him "hame,"
Looking tired, abashed, and dirty,
But in spirit still the same.

Now, friend B—, I know you 're weary
At my rough, untutored lay;
So I 'll bid you a "Good Evening,"
Wish you joy both night and day.
Do n't forget—be sure and write me,
Same old number on Broadway.

Three Visions

THE PASSING YEAR

THE year has gone, you say. Not so.
The memory of its presence lingers,
As if old Time, whose nervous fingers
Are ever pushing out of sight
The moments that have ta'en their flight,
Had somehow failed, forgotten quite,
And so 't is with us still, I know.

The year 's not gone; its bright-hued tints
Still freshly gleam, as thro' the ages
The delver turned up hidden pages
Of color gleaming on the walls
In old Pompeii's storied halls;
So this, too, stands, whatever falls,
On which to-day the sunlight glints.

Not gone! O no! The distant scene
With autumn's fiery hues are glowing,
And thro' the misty haze is showing
Two paths, that from the long ago
Had kept apart, as if to show
How lives may come and pass and go,
Nor each the other touch, I ween.

The year 's not gone; I know 't is here,
For hearts and paths have come together,
All in this glowing autumn weather;
No longer shall we tread alone

Three Visions

The path henceforth with rapture strewn;
For love at last has found its own
Within this year, this glorious year.

The year's not gone. Dear Love, we'll see
Its pleasures thro' all time extending,
And thro' eternity unending
Its love and joy, its peace and bliss.
Each fond embrace, each rapturous kiss
Will fresh and fadeless be, I wis,
For you and me, for you and me.

Three Visions

“GRAZIA”

(Thanks)

FOR the gift so nice and white and warm
To be worn when blows the wintry storm;
For the words so apt and bright and fit,
That bespeak a mind of grace and wit;
For the act that followed one rash word,
That revealed a heart with honor stirred;
For the smile that lurked 'neath darksome eyes,
And the thought that planned the great surprise;
For all these, my thanks; this, too, I 'll say,
'T is a Godlike act one's debts to pay.

Three Visions

"THE AWAKENING"

(Genesis 2: 7-22.)

"ISH" (Hebrew, "THE MAN")

I SLEPT. The day had passed so quick away,
While I had trod the plain and mountain high;
Searched in the narrow dell, stood by the brook,
Run with the deer and watched the eagle's flight;
Tasted the pleasant fruits, smelled odors sweet,
Revelled in sights and sounds and feelings strange;
And as I looked upon the grassy field,
The gorgeous flowery bank and babbling stream,
The mossy crag, high mount, and forest wide,
The thought thrilled thro' my heart, "All this is
mine."

And yet, with all the joy of bounding life,
The sense of freedom, power, massive wealth,
There was an undertone, a sad refrain,
That echoed and reechoed through my heart.
I saw the lion with his lordly mate,
The stag, with gentle doe in bosky dell,
The bird that twittered on the leafy branch,
Still calling to his love with tender voice;
And all through nature everywhere, it seemed,
One never-changing law benignant reigned,
"That each created thing should have a mate,"
Whilst I in brooding silence lived alone.

Three Visions

"ISHA" (THE WOMAN)

I waked. The sun's bright rays were peeping
through
The leafy bower where I laid me down.
I heard the hum of bees, the lark's clear note,
And all the myriad sounds that greet the dawn.
The deep, unbroken sleep that comes to youth,
Had lulled and soothed my spirit, and had toned
Each nerve and muscle to its proper key,
And thro' each winding vein the blood pulsed free.
I thought I could detect an odor sweet,
More fragrant than the rose or violet fair,
And felt a warmth that came not from the wind,
That rustled in the leaves above my head;
And in my inmost consciousness I felt
Some other creature shared my downy couch.
I looked, and lo, a form lay by my side,
A form like mine, and yet 't was unlike, too;
The skin more fair, the hair more long and fine,
The muscles softer, curves more round and full,
In each line beauty, in each movement grace;
It seemed an angel from the realms above.
I moved not, lest the vision should depart,
And then with trembling accents thus I spoke:

"ISH-ISHA"

"O beauteous being, who and what art thou,
And whence and wherefore hast thou come to me?"
The eyes that erst were closed now opened wide,

Three Visions

And from their depth there shot a glance that
pierced

The inmost center of my very soul.

And though I called the beasts and flying birds,
The trees and flowers, and the star-gemmed sky,
By name, yet could I not with word describe
The meaning of that glance so wondrous kind.

And then she spoke: "Whence I have come and
how

Are secrets by the Infinite concealed;

But this I know, this tell-tale blush that now

My cheek o'ermantles, and this heaving breast,

This tingling at my finger-tips, all tell

If lips do not, that I am made for thee;

And whatsoever the changing seasons bring

Of sunlight or of shadow, night or day,

I here abide beneath thy sheltering arm;

For soul and body, I am thine, all thine."

She paused, and as I clasped her to my breast,

I murmured, "All the world is ours, but thou,

Of all created things, art *mine*, all *mine*."

Three Visions

“A WISH”

THAT my love might be free from anxious care,
And turn aside from the toils that wear,
Just to rest awhile in some bower fair,
Is my wish to-day.

That my love in the depth of her auburn hair,
Only a crimson rose might bear,
With its fragrance sweet and its color rare,
Is my wish to-day.

That in sweet communion I too might share,
In that peaceful and happy shelter, where
She waits to greet me and hear my prayer,
Is my wish to-day.

That hidden away from the world's bright glare,
With all our inmost thoughts laid bare,
We might plan, advise, and counsel there,
Is my wish to-day.

Three Visions

"THE ARMY OF TWO"

"ARMS and the man I sing, who first from Troy,"
Thus Virgil's phrase, of old Anchises' boy,
Begins; and truly wheresoe'er we look
In Greek or Roman, Gaul or Saxon book,
Whene'er the poet takes his facile pen,
It is to register the deeds of men;
And what the muse of history records,
Is sure to be the actions of the lords.
The cause of this we can not fail to view,
For men are poets and historians, too;
And yet the woman should, in every race
Among the brave and noble find a place;
For e'en amid the battle's charging throng,
Tending the wounded thro' the watches long,
Braving the midnight blast and forest gray,
Bringing the news that helps to win the day.
Woman, lovely woman, side by side
With man, has fought and suffered, bled and died.
And so it is my purpose to relate
How long ago, within the old Bay State,
Two plain New England maids of sturdy stock,
Who lived not far from famous Plymouth Rock,
Deceived the foe, and won a victory, too,
And yet they never wore the "Buff and Blue."

'T was where the lighthouse, with its single eye,
Sends its bright beams athwart the eastern sky
To warn the mariners when afar they roam,
And shine a welcome when they turn toward home;

Three Visions

That these two maids, with heart and purpose true,
Filling the roles of mother, daughter, too,
The while the father kept the beacon light,
Did all the chores, and made the household bright;
Busy with work when days were short or long,
And making night re-echo with their song.
But e'en this peaceful home, with all its charms,
Was not relieved from dreadful war's alarms;
For more than once the British forces came
And brought distress and left a path of flame.
And so a troop of minute men came down
To quarter there and guard the nearby town.
'T was while they staid and watched, day after day,
And marched and drilled, to pass the time away,
That these two maidens, also watching there,
Discerned among the troop a gallant pair,
To whom they lost their hearts, as maidens will,
And in their presence felt love's strange, sweet
thrill.

One was the fifer of the little band,
The other played the drum with skillful hand,

And as each evening at the set of sun,
When drills were o'er and household tasks were
done,
They walked together on the pebbly beach,
The maidens fair besought the lads to teach
Them to play the fife with fingers free,
And how to beat the drum right merrily.
The lads complied, no sooner did they ask,
Than they began the truly pleasant task.

Three Visions

And if sometimes, while gallant Nathan taught
Abbie to fix her lips just as she ought,
And showed her plainly so she could not miss,
'T was just the same as to prepare to kiss;
And if young David, teaching Becky tricks
That drummers use who handle well their sticks,
Held both her hands and moved them too and fro,
And now and then forgot to let them go,
Why, we more staid need not make any noise,
For girls are girls, and likewise, boys are boys.
It happened that the troop one luckless day
From captain down to drummer, was away;
And while the maids their ready needles plied,
And looked from time to time out on the tide,
They saw, to their amazement, swiftly sail
Around the point, and almost within hail,

Let go her anchor just beyond the bar—
O, hated sight, a British man-of-war.
They dropped their needles, and the color went
From out their cheeks; they knew too well it meant
Pillage and ruin, and a fate far worse
For them than I can now repeat in verse.
A moment thus they stood, then Becky spoke,
As o'er her ashen face a strange light broke,
With trembling lips, "We have the fife and drum;
If we should play perhaps our men may come."
And so behind the lighthouse' rugged walls
They played the well-learned, often-practiced calls,
Beat with firm hand the steady, stirring roll
That rouses courage in the soldier's soul;

Three Visions

Sounded "Assembly," and with might and main,
Played "Yankee Doodle" o'er and o'er again.
Meanwhile, from off the ship out in the bay
Two boats were cleared and, getting under way,
When suddenly the very air seemed filled
With martial music that their senses thrilled.
All was so still before that they had dreamed
No enemy was near, but now it seemed
As if each bush and crag and rugged tree
Concealed a foe with deadly rifle free.

And so they stopped, with eyes turned to'ard the
deck,
And waited their commander's nod or beck.
He also heard that sound and knew full well,
At Lexington and Concord how they fell
Beneath the fire those sturdy farmers sent
Behind their strong but homely battlement.
He muttered, "Plague upon the Yankees," then,
"We'd better save our honor and our men."
Gave the recall, the big ship sailed away,
And so was won the brief and bloodless fray.
The maidens laid their warlike tools aside,
And to their humble tasks again they hied,
Well pleased to find that battles may, in fact,
Be won sometimes by simply woman's tact.
All honor to the gallant soldiers, all,
Who quick responded to their country's call;
To them award the meed of loving praise,
Enshrine their names and crown their brows with
bays;

Three Visions

But if in time to come you chance to hear
Of Warren, Putnam, or of Paul Revere,
Remember the New England daughters true,
The brave, victorious army of "the two."

A true incident of the War of 1812.

—THE AUTHOR.

Three Visions

THE HOME COMING

WHEN the day of toil is over and the night begins to
fall,

When the stars of Heaven glimmer, and the birds have
ceased to call;

When the cash has all been counted, and the books are
laid away,

When the shops and stores are closing to await another
day;

Then the housewife, supper ready, tidies up with
brush and comb,

Looks her sweetest, brightest, neatest, for the husband,
coming home.

When the days have grown and lengthened into weeks
and months and years,

When, with many a dismal heart-ache, eyes are wet
with falling tears;

When at last the looked-for letter comes, with words of
comfort fraught,

When the promised hour is bringing him who at her
feet was taught,

Then the mother, eyes upturning to the blue in
Heaven's dome,

Breathes a prayer of deep thanksgiving, for her boy is
coming home.

When the suns have set and risen over many a weary day,
When with ceaseless longings, dreamings, all the hours
have dragged away;

Three Visions

When the constant, loving letters suddenly have
ceased to come,
When the heart beats high with rapture, like a steady-
rolling drum;
Then the maiden softly whispers, "That he never more
must roam,"
As within the arms she nestles of her sweetheart
coming home.

Three Visions

“NOËL” (CHRISTMAS)

(Translated from the French)

THE sky is black, the earth all white,
Ring, joy-bells, ring, to tell the race
“A Savior’s born.” The virgin bright
Turns on the Child a smiling face.

No costly curtains draping there
To shield the Christ Child from the cold;
But hanging from the rafters bare,
I see the spider’s web unfold.

Low in the manger’s straw He lies,
This wondrous Babe of Heavenly birth;
The dumb brutes gaze with wondering eyes,
Their breathing warms His bed of earth.

The roof, with snowy mantle’s crowned,
The skies their sombre colors lose,
While shepherds hear the glad, sweet sound—
The angels’ song, “Good news, good news.”

Three Visions

"THE WRECK OF THE FRISCO"

CANTO I

THE old man sat in his easy chair,
With his kindly face and his silvery hair;
While a child close by, with his blocks and books,
Was playing away with such downcast looks,
That told how he grieved, that the day was drear,
And how much he wished it was bright and clear;
When at last a thought came into his mind,
And he turned and asked of his grandsire kind,
"Do you know what day was most dark to you?"
"Yes, my child, 't was Christmas of '52."
"O, a story then; pray tell it to me,"
And he clapped his hands in childish glee.
"Sad story, indeed," thus the old man said,
"For it brings up faces of those long dead;
But I'll tell you now, though it cost me dear,
For after awhile I will not be here.
And I'll try to show in my own plain way
How dark to me was that fateful day;
When my wife and child were both lost to me,
As the 'Frisco' sank far away at sea.

CANTO II

"'T was a bran-new ship and a gallant crew,
With a brave old man for its captain, too;
All the sky was clear and the wind was still,
And the sea as calm as a purling rill,

Three Visions

When the good ship sailed out of New York Bay
On the morning fair of that winter day—
Just a thousand souls, and a few beside,
As we sailed away on the full-flood tide.
Soldiers and sailors, some white and some black,
Gamblers and merchants, a singular pack;
Sinful and saintly, the young and the old,
All sailing away to the land of gold;
Sailing away while their hearts beat high,
O'er a glassy sea 'neath an azure sky;
All passing the time with jest and song,
With never a thought of fear or of wrong;
Dreaming of riches in masses untold,
That waited for them in the land of gold.
How little they thought that their sun had set,
And the gold they sought would be waiting yet.

CANTO III

“Out of the Southland and straight in our path,
Sounded the voice of the storm king's wrath;
Out of the Southland the black clouds unfurled,
With pale light beneath from the underworld;
Out of the Southland the sea horses came,
With their breasts of green and their eyes of flame;
With their curling manes, all of snowy white,
As they galloping charged to the left and right.
Deeper and hoarser and growing more loud,
Came the storm king's voice from the inky cloud;
Fiercer and stronger the lightnings flashed
From the serried lines that upon us dashed;

Three Visions

Higher and higher the seas were piled,
Filling each heart with an anguish wild.
Now down in the hollow where fishes play,
Now up on the crest where the white foam lay;
Reeling and staggering to and fro,
Falling and rising with each cruel blow;
Creaking and straining thro' every part,
From the outer rim to the inmost heart.

CANTO IV

“Morn dawned at last—it was Christmas morn,
The day when the blessed Christ was born;
The day when the children wondering see
What Santa has brought, with music and glee.
But with us, thro' the night, not a soul had slept;
There were some who cursed, there were some who
 wept;
And from many of those who were gathered there
Was shouted or breathed this one Christmas prayer:
‘Speak the word, O God, and calm this strife;
Take away aught else, only give us life.’
I left my wife in tears, like the rest,
On the cabin floor, with the babe close pressed,
For a moment, to see what the morn had brought,
If with ray of hope or of comfort fraught;
But wilder and wilder the rough winds blew,
With no rift in cloud to let sunlight through;
Like statues of stone the grim sailors stood,
Clinging to iron or rope or wood;
Their only hope was that the ship was new,
And by help of God, she might yet pull through.

Three Visions

CANTO V

“Carefully clinging to rail and to spar,
And looking away o’er the sea afar,
I saw to the windward and coming nigh—
Towering up to the vaulted sky—
Not a wave, but a mountain toppling down,
Like an avalanche on an Alpine town.
Then I took firm hold and I held my breath,
For I knew I looked in the face of death.
The mountain fell, and the mighty shock
Stopped the ship in its course like a hidden
rock.

The masts and the spars, all of toughened oak,
Like a reed in a giant’s fingers broke.
The rushing cataract downward burst,
Quenching the furnace’s fiery thirst;
Stopping the engine’s stroke, where then
Was the strength of steel or the skill of men?
Aft on the deck where the cabin stood,
There was only a fringe of splintered wood;
And the friends I had left and my wife and child
Were all swallowed up by the ocean wild.

CANTO VI

“O, the horrors that followed that day of woe,
It is hard, my child, for me to show.
Every one of the crew but the captain brave
Had been swept away by that tidal wave.
Hunger and cold and fatigue and thirst
Were thinning our ranks from the very first;

Three Visions

Insanity stalked all the decks between,
And the demon drink, with his horrid mien;
While the fever, too, took its awful toll,
As we day by day called the shortening roll.
With each coming dawn we were occupied
In casting the dead o'er the vessel's side;
While the waters deep in the vessel's hold
Were only with constant work controlled.
O, those days of darkness, those nights of gloom,
As we stood or lay in that living tomb,
Should I live to old Methusaleh's age,
I can not efface from memory's page.
But we worked away while the hours flew past,
Thinking surely each one would be the last.

CANTO VII

“One day—’t was the tenth, as I now recall—
As we stood on deck and were watching all,
‘A sail! A sail!’ shouted one at my side;
So we looked far away, and we there descried
A clipper ship close reefed and trim,
As she sailed out on the horizon's rim.
We waved and we shouted, with voices hoarse,
But the ship sailed on in her steady course;
Our voices were drowned in the tempest's roar,
We thought as we turned to the pumps once more.
Next morn as we looked o'er the waters grim,
A clipper ship, close-reefed and trim,
Stood out again 'gainst the darkened sky;
But nearer this time, as she passed us by.

Three Visions

High up on her mast a board was placed;
In letters of white some words were traced,
And the legend was this: 'Be of good cheer;
I will save or sink with you, never fear.'
We shouted and laughed, and we danced and
 sung,
Repeating the words with a grateful tongue.

CANTO VIII

"How their light shone out when no sunlight
 streamed;
How they burned at night when no starlight
 gleamed;
When our eyes were shut we could plainly see
Those letters of light blazing full and free,
Like the fiery message that Daniel told,
On Belshazzar's walls, in the story old.
These words, not of death but of life, were given,
And they came to us like a voice from Heaven.
So with hopeful hearts two more days were passed,
And the ship came back, this time 't was the
 last.
Life-boats were lowered, and they took us then,
All that were left of us, three hundred men,
To comfort and safety in England old,
And we never saw the land of gold.
Give honor to Creighton, it was his due,
All honor to each of the 'Three Bells' crew;
They were heroes all, both true and brave,
For they heard our call, and they came to save.

Three Visions

And may you, my child, never have to bear
The burden of hunger and want and despair
That came to me," and his voice was low,
"When the 'Frisco' was wrecked in the long ago."

The recent wreck of the "Titanic," with its terrible loss of life, recalls to the memory of the older citizens some of the terrible ocean disasters of the long ago, among which the wreck of the "San Francisco" stands out prominent. The story of the wreck I heard from the lips of one of the survivors, who was none other than General Thos. L. Young, Ex-Governor of Ohio. The "San Francisco," a side-wheel steamship built by the Aspinwall Brothers, of New York, to ply between San Francisco and Panama, set sail from New York on her maiden voyage, December 21, 1852, bound for San Francisco, via Cape Horn. She carried five companies U. S. Artillery, one hundred colored men, and five hundred first-class passengers, constituting, with the crew, one thousand and sixty souls, all told. On the 24th of December they encountered a terrific storm. Piston-rod and rudder chains were broken, rendering the machinery useless. The masts were carried away, and seams were opened in her sides, letting the water into the hold, and for thirteen days the vessel drifted at the mercy of the storm, only kept afloat by the heroic efforts of the passengers, who kept pumping day and night, the crew having been swept overboard. The incidents recorded in the poem are all true. On the 10th day she was sighted by the ship "Three Bells," of Glasgow, Captain Creighton commanding, but the sea was running too high to lower a life-boat and the "Three Bells" was almost out of provisions, so she sailed around them for three days looking for another ship and waiting for the storm to abate. On the third day she came back with another ship, "The Antarctic," and together they succeeded in saving all that was left, namely, three hundred and eighty-eight persons out of the one thousand and sixty. This was not accomplished, however, until after six of the life-boats were sunk with their crews trying to reach the wreck. Quite a number of the rescued died before reaching port, from starvation, fever, and exposure. They were taken to England and were sent back to the United States by James Buchanan, Minister to England, in a steamer specially chartered for the purpose. Captain Creighton was presented, by the Chamber of Commerce of New York, with a handsome sum, and Congress built for him a new ship as a reward for his meritorious conduct.

—THE AUTHOR.

Three Visions

“ODE TO MONT BLANC”

MONARCH of mountains thou, whose giant
form

Stands all unmoved in sunshine and in storm,
Like a strong oak that in the forest wide
Is rooted deep, defying wind and tide.

Unlike the oak, thou wast when Time was young,
And thou shalt be when man's last dirge is sung.
Cold winter's blast in vain blows 'round thy head,
White with the frosts of centuries long dead;
And e'en the noon-tide heat of summer's sun
Can no more change thy form than if 't were
stone.

Men perish, like a flower fade away,
Whilst thou, unchanging, seest every day.
Thy glittering peak the sun's bright rays adorn,
And gild and brighten first in rosy morn;
And at the close of summer's glowing day,
That sun to thee bequeathes his latest ray,
While fleecy clouds around thy temples move,
And touch and kiss thee as if drawn by love,
Vainly we try to paint thy matchless face,
And with the artist's brush thy form to trace;
In vain the poet's pen its art may try
To praise thy form uplifted to the sky,
So grand, so beautiful, may it recall
To human minds thy Maker, Lord of all,
And may those minds in humble, grateful lays
Remember ever thy Creator's praise.

Three Visions

"EXCELSIOR"—A PARODY

THE shades of night were falling fast,
As through a Southern city passed
A man who muttered as he went,
The while his steps were Northward bent,
"Excelsior."

"O, stay," his faithful wife exclaimed;
"You really ought to feel ashamed
To leave me thus at home alone."
But still he answered, with a moan,
"Excelsior."

"O papa dear," his children cried,
"Stay with us at our own fireside;
Your presence here makes home more bright."
He murmured softly, "Not to-night,
Excelsior."

His church friends, too, they strongly try,
And want to know the reason why.
"Are not your duties here enough?
Why waste your time upon such stuff?"
"Excelsior."

"Cross not the bridge," the watchmen say,
" 'T is well enough to go by day;
Night is for rest, and not for work;
Then mischief breeds and dangers lurk."
"Excelsior."

To loving wife and children dear,
To friends and church, and those who fear

Three Visions

For him the snares that nightly lie,
To each he gives the same reply,
"Excelsior."

"'T is true," he mutters to himself,
"I go not forth in quest of pelf,
Nor honors seek, nor knightly fame;
I go to spread the magic name,
Excelsior."

The lodge is reached, and there he sees
A table spread, while all at ease,
The brethren blow the curling rings
Of smoke, and drink some tea and things,
"Excelsior."

A while before the break of day,
The last car missed, he wends his way
To home and bed, but not to sleep,
Cigars and tea their vigils keep,
"Excelsior."

Next morn at breakfast he sits down,
His head all dull, his face a frown;
He wishes now he ne'er had heard
The sound of that most fateful word,
"Excelsior."

Moral.—

Come list to me, my brethren true,
If you are over sixty-two,
Go not to lodge, or if you do,
Just once a year 's enough for you.
"Excelsior."

Above read at anniversary of Excelsior Lodge, No. 369, F. & A. Masons,
of Cincinnati.—THE AUTHOR.

Three Visions

“LESLIE’S ANSWER”

DEAR Peirce, when I opened your letter,
It caused me no little surprise,
And I said for the want of a better
Remark, That ’t was good for sore eyes.

I read it to mother and father,
And showed it to Irving and Ray,
And they all agreed it was rather
A corker for Valentine’s day.

Had you sent me a verse or two only,
I’m sure I’d have thought it sublime,
But you’ve written to cheer me so lonely,
The whole of your letter in rhyme.

I was proud of the sketches you gave us,
With pencil, with brush, and with pen,
And I’m sure that your talent will save us
From being forgotten of men.

My advice to you then is to go it
While yet you are young as a rule,
For I’m sure you will be the class poet,
And honor yourself and the school.

So good bye to you now, College brother,
For I think that you never would guess
That the writer of this is no other
Than your humble admirer called, “Less.”

Three Visions

VERSES IN ALBUMS

WELL, Jessie, your wish is, a motto or name,
In this album where others have writ,
Why, I never—no, never, a sentence could frame
That would be either pleasing or fit.
What! never? Well, then, hardly ever, I mean,
But now I must certainly try,
And I hope that the joys you have already seen,
May be doubly increased by and by.

'Tis sweet to walk at evening's shade,
When skies are clear above us;
When care has for a moment strayed,
Dull lessons all aside are laid,
And those are near who love us.

While o'er life's rugged pathway
A wanderer I roam—
I'll ne'er forget the friends I knew,
At the dear old hillside home.

Dear Harry, you said, when you gave me this
book,
That for something right smart, you'd be certain
to look,
I've tried, but you see that the effort was vain,
So I'll wish you long life and good-night to you,
Shane!"

Three Visions

May opening flowers their fragrance send—
To perfume every passing breeze:
And light-winged birds their voices lend,
That thou may'st comfort find, and ease.

May thy young feet, in time to come,
Be ever found in Wisdom's way,
And all thy future years be bright
As an unclouded summer day.

A kind request, and modest you've preferred,
That in your album I my name might place;
But if 't will bring it honor or disgrace,
I know not, time will tell, I've just a word—
'Tis this, farewell, and in the time to come—
Long life be yours, kind friends, a happy home!

A glimpse of sunshine in a cloudy sky,
A moment's pleasure in an hour of pain,
These but express, tho' sorrow says "Good-bye,"
Joy softly whispers, "We shall meet again."

To turn these pages o'er, the thoughts expressed,
Some breathing sorrow, friendship, some a jest,
Seem, though they are all writings of the hand,
Like small or larger footprints in the sand.

My name upon the pages of your book?
Why should I? Is it not then writ
Upon the tablets of your heart? Just look.
If not—you do not covet it.

Three Visions

LINES TO AN ESSAY, "ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE"

ONE word I'll say, forgive these rhymes,
There's scarce a man in modern times
That, like your ancient Orpheus, would
Search for his wife, however good.

Nay rather, but the truth to say,
Your Orpheus of the present day
Would surely give himself no bother
About the one, but seek another.

Dear Miss, if fate should e'er decree,
That married bliss thy lot should be,
May thy lord love and cherish thee,
As Orpheus loved Eurydice.

Three Visions

TO AN ESSAY, "FULL MANY A FLOWER IS
BORN TO BLUSH UNSEEN."

FULL many an essay, too, will lose its power,
And waste its charms upon the careless ear,
And many a friend's kind face will darkly lower,
When e'er 't is read so low they can not hear.

Three Visions

“WHAT THE FLAG SAYS”

WHEN, on dusty highway marching,
Limbs all weary, throats all parching,
Through the long and dreary day.
When the cold rain on them dashing,
Or the ice beneath them crashing,
Takes all feeling quite away;
When the night's dark mantle's falling,
When the birds have ceased their calling,
And have fluttered to the nest—
When the flag is wrapped so gently
Round the staff, and reverently
Laid away, it whispers, “Rest.”

When the serried lines are charging,
Death's long muster-roll enlarging,
On some gory battle plain—
When thro' tangled thicket creeping
Where his comrades lie a-sleeping,
Who will never fight again;
When the heart is loudly beating,
Like some church bell still repeating,
“Shall we e'er the country save?”
When the smoke cloud parts asunder,
Then amid the battle's thunder—
Waves the flag and says, “Be brave!”

When by weary tunnel shaping,
When by force or wile escaping,

Three Visions

Prisoner at last is free.
When thro' ghostly darkness striding,
Or thro' daylight hours in hiding,
Sheltered by some fallen tree;
When he sees the colors waving
Thro' the tears his eyelids laving,
Then he feels all sorrow past;
As upon the staff it flutters,
Words of joy and hope it utters,
Gently saying, "Safe at last."

When some fair and stately city,
By the foe that knows no pity,
Is surrounded and bereft—
When the weary days have lengthened,
And the foe his hold has strengthened,
And of hope there 's nothing left.
When each grim and gaunt defender
Still unwilling to surrender,
Hoists the flag with every dawn;
Then the friendly army nearing,
Thro' the mists of morning peering,
Sees and reads the message cheering,
For it says, "We 're holding on."

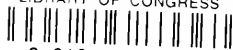
But our starry flag, "Old Glory,"
Ever waving, tells this story,
Liberty to every slave;
To the children of the nation
Fuller, freer education,
From the cradle to the grave,

Three Visions

Arm of power ever round him
Breaks the toiler's chains that bound him,
Overthrows the ancient plan;
Everywhere the tyrant shaming,
Everywhere the truth proclaiming
Of the brotherhood of man.

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