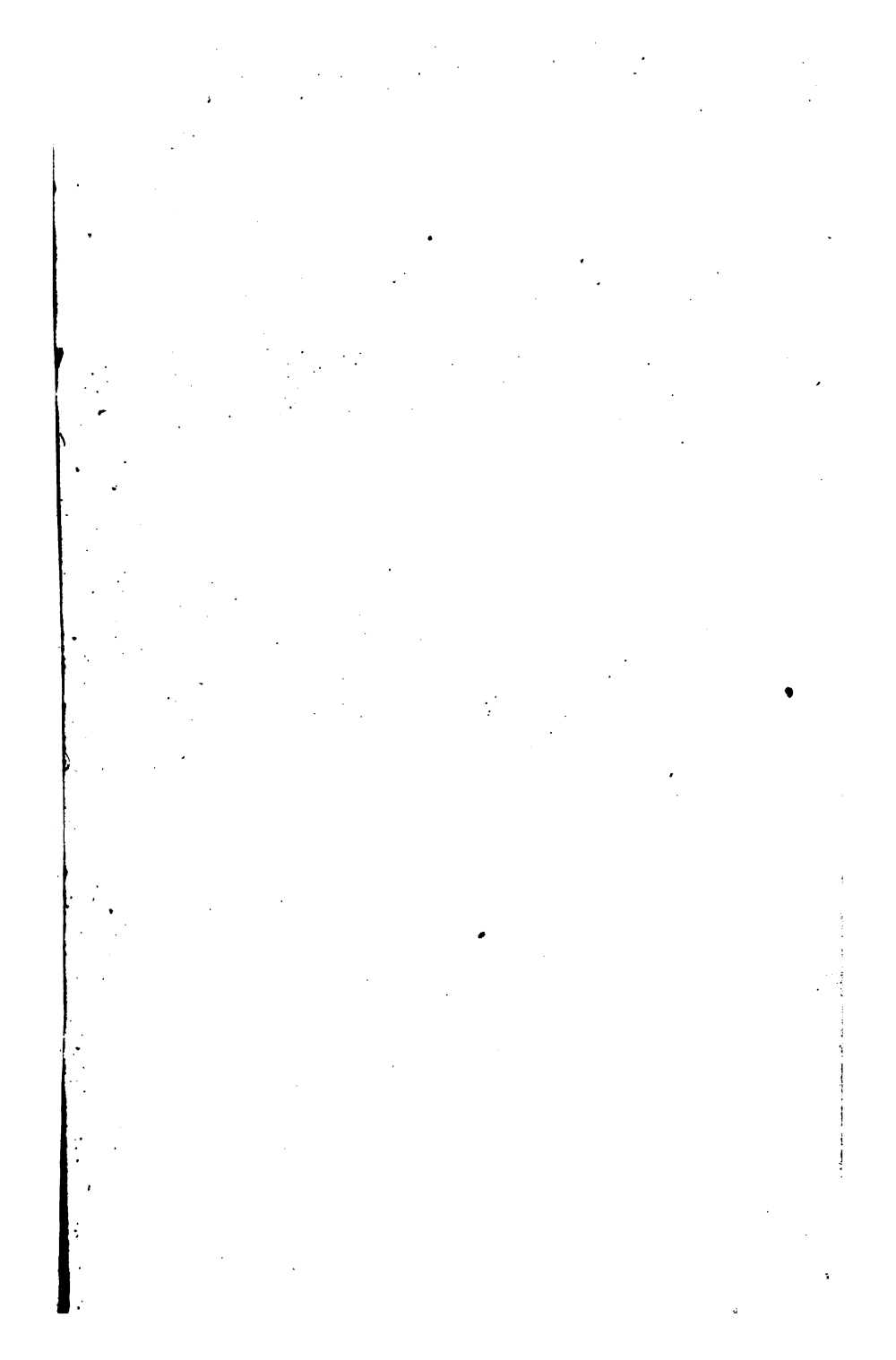
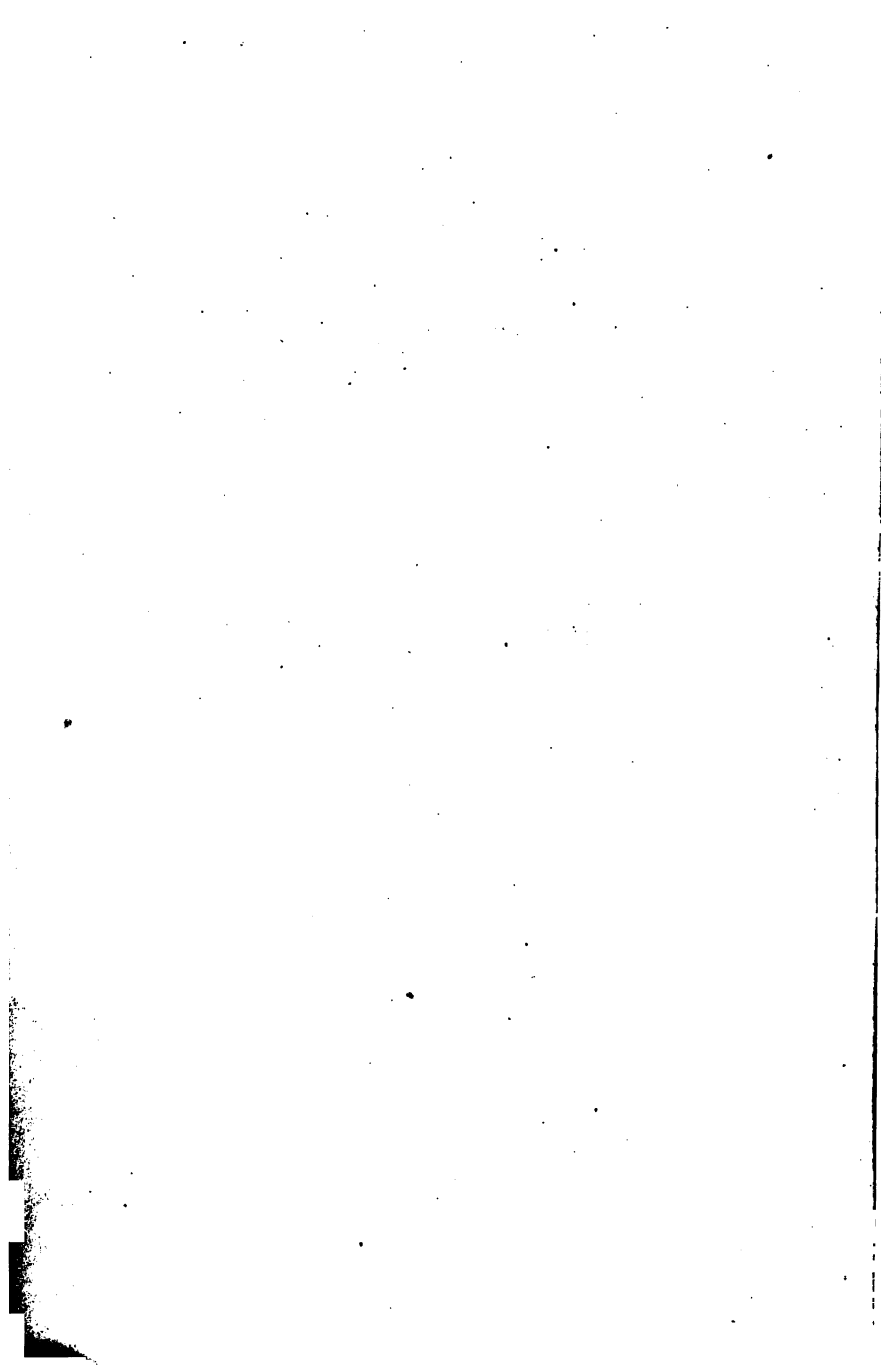
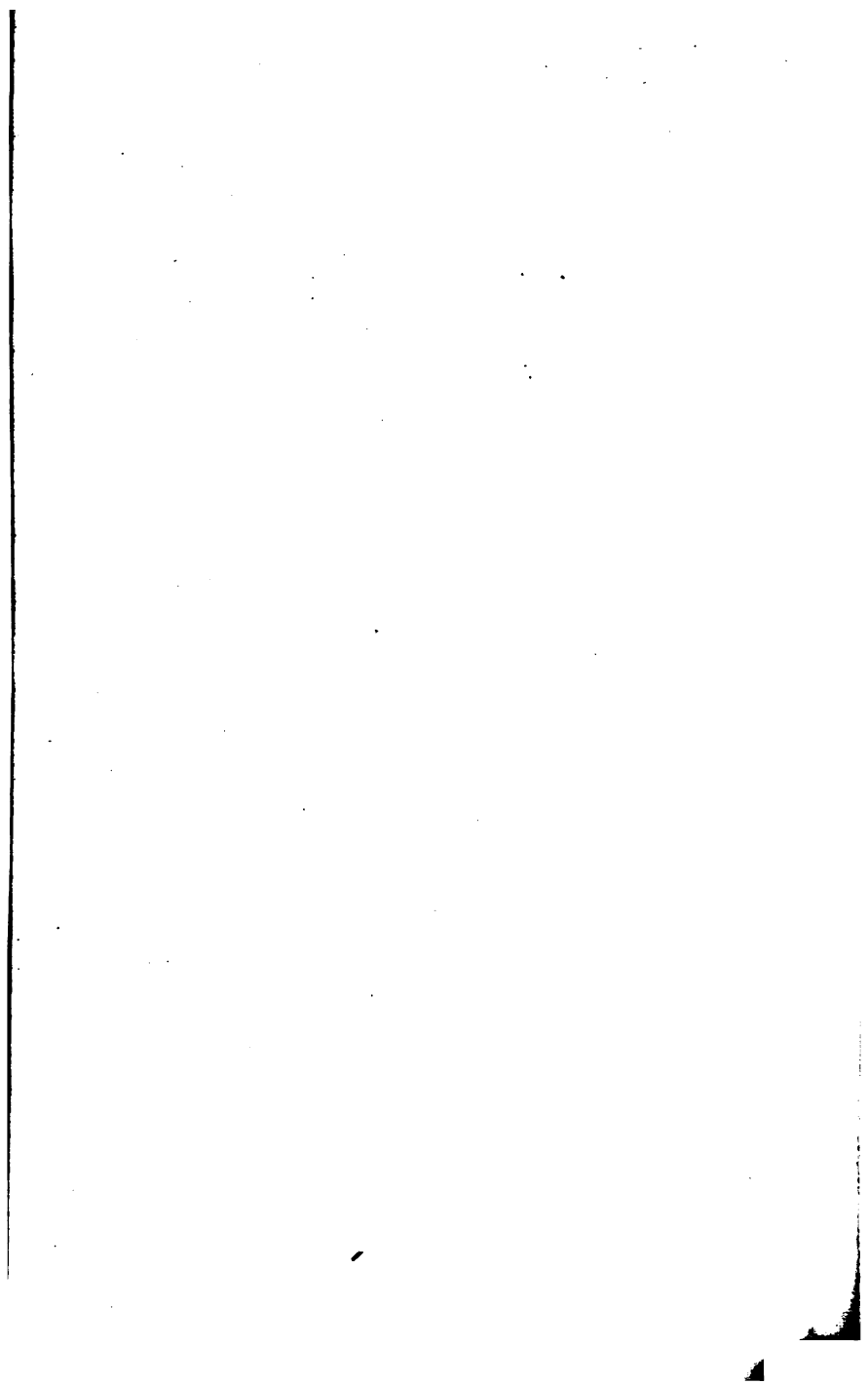


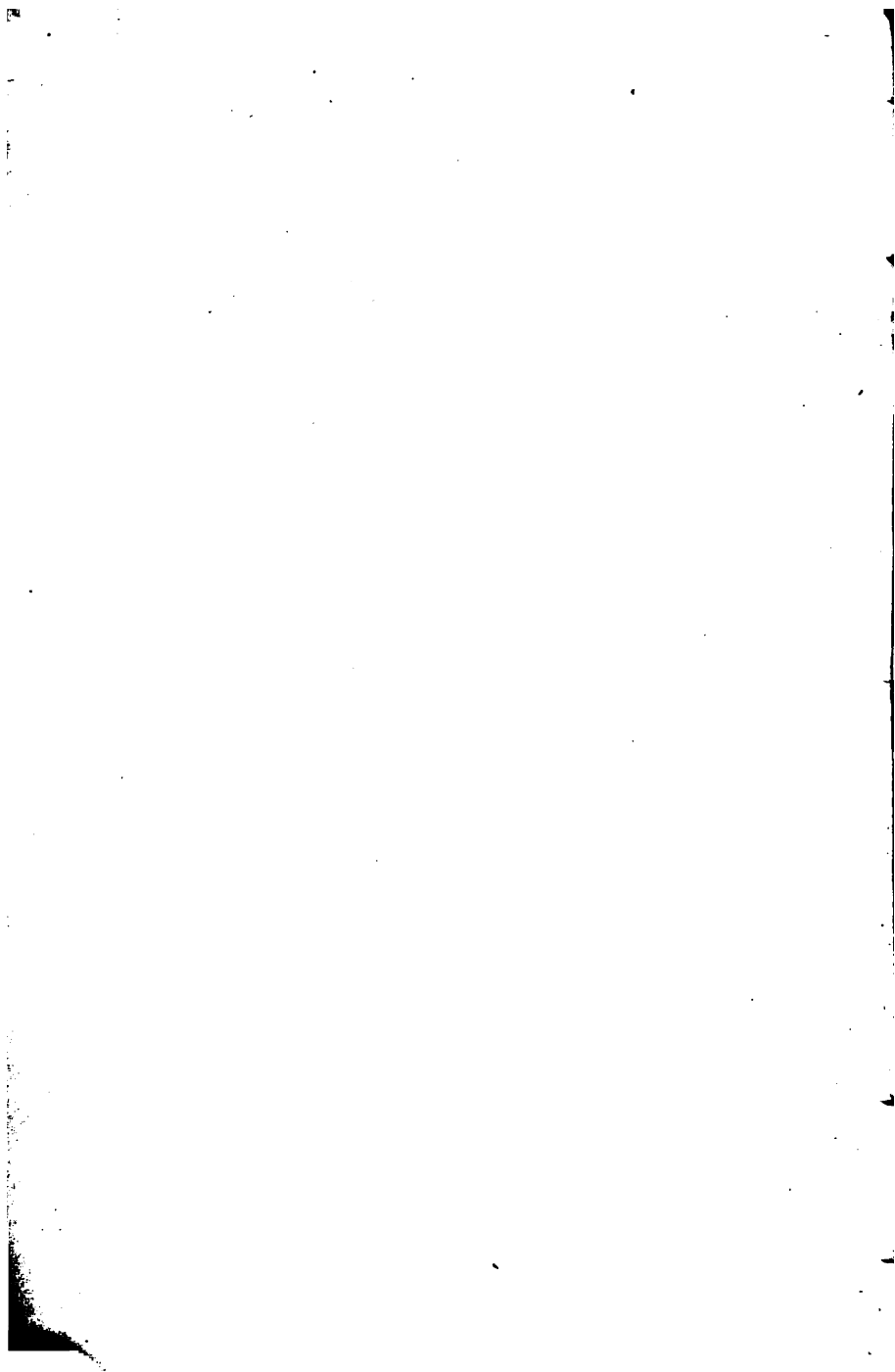


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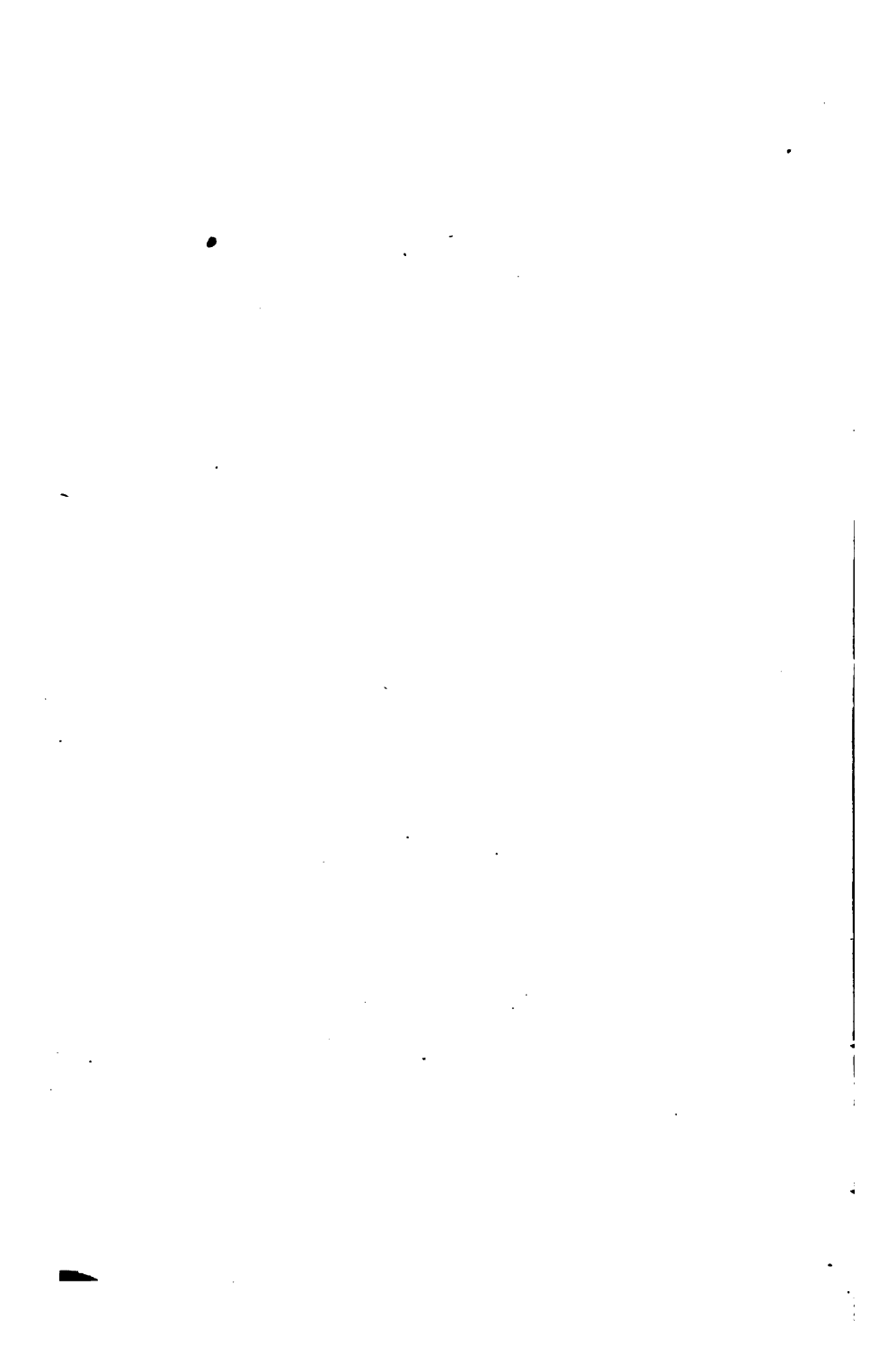






A SUMMER STORY,
SHERIDAN'S RIDE,
AND
OTHER POEMS.





A

SUMMER STORY,

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SHERIDAN'S RIDE

AND

Other Poems.

BY

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.



PHILADELPHIA ·
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1865.

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Dedication.

TO

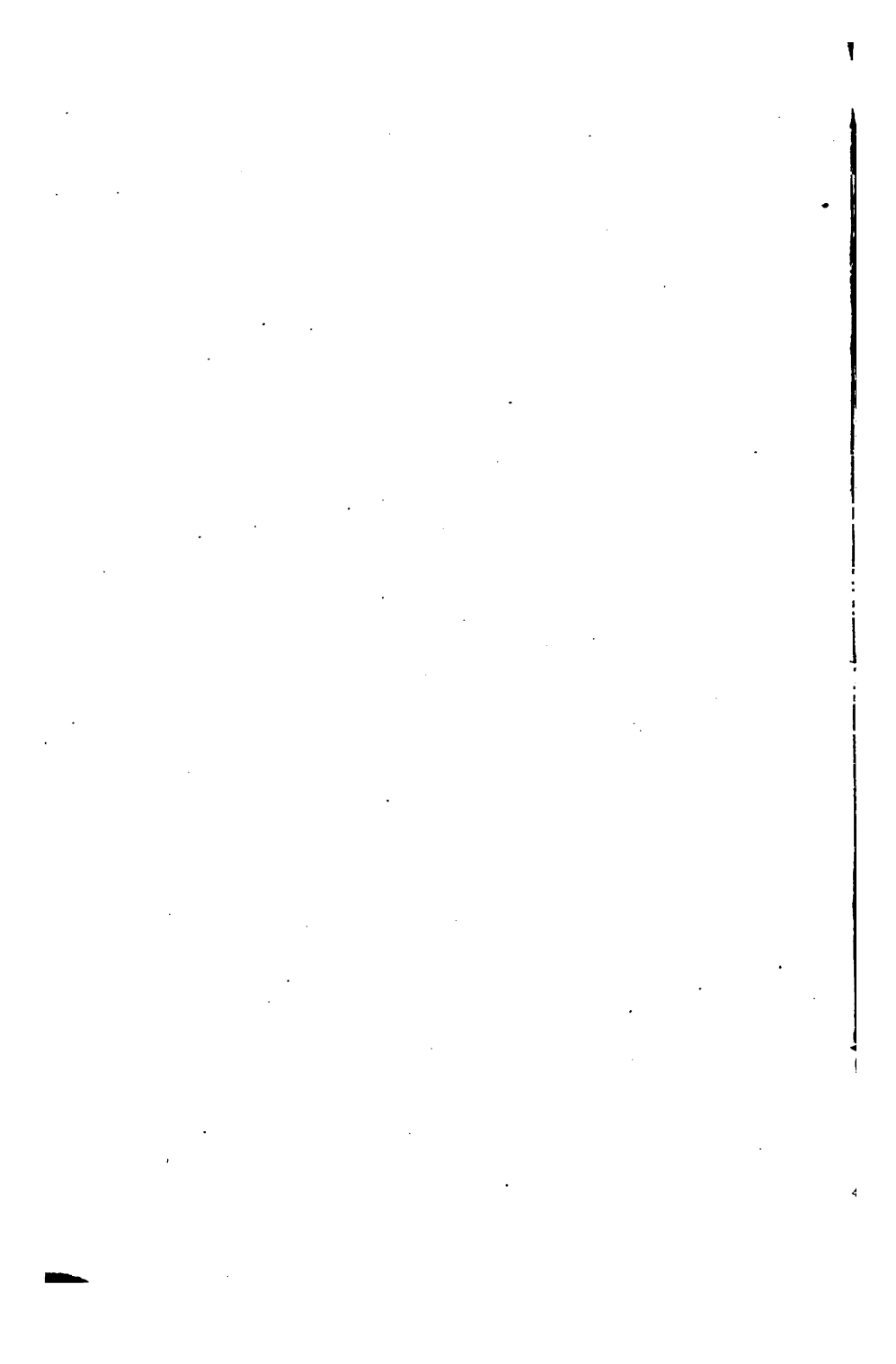
JOSEPH HARRISON, ESQ.

OF PHILADELPHIA.

*Some of these Poems were written when we were
together in Rome,—and others, of a more
patriotic character, have been composed
when, I am sure, we were united
in heart in the great cause of
our country, and there-
fore I dedicate
this Volume
to you.*

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.







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A SUMMER STORY.

"The simple story of two lovers young."—SHELLEY.







TO H. D. R.

My nobler self, before me there,
You sit with tresses backward rolled,
A glossy flood of delicate gold,
Relieved by the plush of the purple chair,
And into those eyes of violet-blue,
I gaze till my heart, in a depth of dew,
Melts, and all their celestial hue
Veils me in Etrurian mist,
And floods my soul with amethyst.
From beautiful brow to rounded chin,
The pale rose, under the pearly skin,
Glow like a glow-worm in the cell
Of a rare translucent lily-bell.
The while along your tender cheek
Light flushes of pleasure play hide and seek,

And on your spotless teeth of snow,
The heart its reddest bloom has set,
The sweetest and dewiest that ever yet
On womanly lip was seen to glow :—
Thus while you sit in your beauty and bloom,
Helped on by the kindly light of your glance,
With silver shuttle and golden loom,
I weave for you this light romance.





I.

A SUMMER STORY.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,
They live in a village of ancient elms,
Whose depth of shade the town o'erwhelms—
Like sunbeams through the shadows cool,
For years they have brightened the path to school ;
 Their lightsome feet,
 And laughter sweet,
Making a May-day in the street :—

A May-day, every day of the year !
With lilacs and violets breathing near,
Dewy and odorous, fresh and clear ;
And each is crowned with the flowers that blow,
In the scented deeps of the heart below,
In the dawn and the dew of Love's young morn :—
Wake, herald, awake your silver horn !

Till the sordid many, and noble few,
Shall know at last on earth are two—
A gain to us, to heaven a loss—
A golden pair not marred with dross,
Born in a glowing Ophirian grove,
In an El-Dorado realm of love.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,

They are wandering down where the fields are blithe,
Through butterfly lanes, over buttercup banks,
Where the sweet-briar breathes its odorous thanks

To the sun and the air,
While here and there
A fragrance springs,
On invisible wings,

Up from the clover that dies on the scythe.

A little further, they find the brook,
And their faces catch the laughing look
Of the liquid sprite o'erwreathed with glee,
With dimples changing instantly,
And bubbles that saucily wink as they pass
Coquetting among the rushes and grass.

Oh, next to being a human soul,
With a destiny higher than earth's control,
'T were to be a never failing stream,
With the crystal wealth of the hills to teem,

For ever and ever, and sing alway
Through meadows green and forests gray,
Over pebbles brown, and sands of gold,
Hither and thither sportively rolled,
To leap, as it were, at a lover's call,
With clapping hands, from the dizzy fall,
And fling the silvery spray on high,
An incense to the loving sky ;
And with this mystic veil o'errun,
Call out young Iris from the sun.

Already, barefooted, my beautiful boy
Has leapt to mid-stream, with that jubilant joy
Which only youth knows, and he stands with his tresses
Thrown free to the sunlight that goldenly blesses.
Full twice seven summers and one,
Those tresses have deepened and curled in the sun.

"Oh, come!" he looks,—'t was but the call
That spoke from out his lustrous eye,
Two souls in such sweet tender thrall,
May still commune though speech should die.
It cannot be resisted—see!
The dainty slipper-shoon are drawn,
The stockings follow ; light as a fawn
She steps adown the daisy lawn,
And meets his laugh with maiden glee.

A little chill—a breath caught in,
And under the crystal, the delicate skin
Of the lovely feet of the beautiful girl,
Shine pure as opalescent pearl ;
And as she moves with gentle stir,
Feels crystal anklets clasped on her
By watery fingers, and hung with bells
Of bubbles, that ring their own quick knells.

Ralph takes her delicate hand in his,
He puts one arm about her waist,
So fearful those dear feet might miss,
If on a slippery slant-stone placed.
With laugh and blush they onward wade,
Till at last their beautiful limbs invade
That deeper pool, with swifter swells,
Where the hermit trout securely dwells,
Of which the baffled fisherman tells—
That fabulous trout in every stream,
Haunting the anxious angler's dream.

A little waterfall just ahead,
Breaks to spray on the rocky bed ;
The rocks are mantled with mosses green,
And tangled wild-vines half way screen
The face of the fall, till it seems to be
A cell for the hermit Secrecy.

And in front of this fall an island lies,—
A couch, and no more, of flowers and moss,—
Its fringe of white lilies, along and across ;
Its inwoven vines, and the feathery floss
Of the bloom of the grass, make a sweet surprise,
To kindle new light in an artist's eyes,
While its odors of many a mingled scent,
Hang round the place like a gauzy tent.

The clear pool deepens ; and at the hem
Of Rosalie's dress drip water-pearls ;
And every wave that round her whirls
Leaps up to add another gem.
And there the little fluttering maid
Stands half in ecstasy—half afraid,
Till stoops the youth, with enclosing arm,
And lifts her from the watery harm ;
Folds on his breast her budding grace,
And feels this moment in his embrace
Is clasped more beauty than ever smiled
Before in the form of a twelve years' child.
Her arm about his neck entwines,
That like rose-tinted ivory shines.
He looks up in her face of light,
The flood of her curls half blinds his sight ;
And, sportive as a chasing wind,
Her fingers play with his locks behind.

With a ripple and gurgle the waters flash
 Around his light, translucent knees ;
He strides with as bold an air and dash,
As did Balboa in the western main,
Bearing the imagined form of Spain
 To enthrone her on the seas.
So, my beautiful boy, with triumphant smile,
Enthrones his queen on the flowering isle,
And then withdraws to a rock which stands
A little above the flooded sands,
And sits thereon with entranced look ;
Then from his breast his companion-book,
With ecstatic hand he gaily draws,
And without further thought or pause,
With charmed pencil begins to impart
What he sees so well with eye and heart ;
For his soul is full of the love of art,
And his youthful hand has long been skilled
In picturing what his fancy willed,
Till far and near, with pride and joy,
All speak of the marvellous village boy.

From either slant-bank over-head,
The great trees lean till their boughs are wed ;
Where the little birds chase in and out,
Singing in their May-day rout.

The kingfisher sails down, and there
The long crane lights, and with sidelong stare,
Seems to the beautiful lovers to say,
"You're intruding, you know, but are welcome to
stay."

The drawing is finished, he strides to the isle,
And lowly sits at the maiden's feet,
And shows her the picture; with blush and smile
She praises the effort in accents sweet.
Great praise, though spoke by a queen aloud,
Ne'er made young Raphael feel more proud.

But look! o'er the fall see the angler stand,
Swinging his rod with skilful hand;
The fly at the end of his gossamer line,
Swims through the sun like a summer moth,
Till dropt with a careful precision fine,
It touches the pool beyond the froth.
A-sudden, the speckled hawk of the brook,
Darts from his covert and seizes the hook.
Swift spins the reel; with easy slip
The line pays out, and the rod like a whip,
Lithe, and arrowy, tapering, slim,
Is bent to a bow o'er the brooklet's brim,
Till the trout leaps up in the sun, and flings
The spray from the flash of his finny wings;

Then falls on his side, and drunken with fright,
Is towed to the shore like a staggering barge,
Till beached at last on the sandy marge,
Where he dies with the hues of the morning light,
While his sides with a cluster of stars are bright.
The angler in his basket lays
The constellation, and goes his ways.

Ah, my sweet Ralph and Rosalie,
I would not mar your morning dream
By hinting at sadder things that be;
Of that solemn Angler who mournfully
Wanders and waits beside Life's stream;
There seeking ever the starriest prey
To bear to his shadowy realms away.





II.

A SUMMER STORY.

MINE ancient, cynical, bachelor friend,
I know you sneer at this, my song,
At school-time loves, that only belong
To "children," a thing you don't comprehend;
And yet I know you 've a great large heart,
In common parlance, a very "barn!"
I warn you, (bards have the right to warn,)
Your crops are all garnered, and every part
Is crowded with sultry sheaves of the past,
And you have gathered your best and last.
November is on you; just bend down your ear
Above that red "barn," and hear what you 'll hear.
'Tis the throb of life's tide, you will say, on the shore;
Nay, the thump of the flail on your heart's dusty
floor.

Can you not remember in days long gone,
When you were a school-boy, and knew not men,
A beautiful face that upon you shone,
As never a face has shone since then?
How, like a highwayman, you laid in wait,
To steal one glance, or to catch one word!
How your heart, like a lark, went singing elate,
If you caught but a smile, or a syllable heard?
So sweet was her speech in its delicate closes,
You thought she was made of music and roses!

So, I pray you, hold off,—if you cannot, in others,
Relive what you've lost in the May that has
flown:
Who enjoys not their pleasures, he murderously
smothers
A thousand delights that might still be his own.
So tend to your barn, and its sheaves, and its flail,
And let the muse freely keep on with her tale.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,
The years are reeling through space, you know,
Three times you have seen the lilacs blow,
Since that sweet brooklet revelry.
Eighteen and fifteen, are beautiful ages,
The loveliest figures on Life's young pages;
But the volume holds threescore, or so,

And every twelvemonth a leaf must be turned,
And its mystical lesson sincerely learned.

The round years roll; they are worlds in themselves,
And spin on their axis, every one,
And eternity is their central sun,

While we, poor, miserable, helpless elves,
Must whirl with their whirling night and day,
Till our eyes are dim, and our hair is blown gray.

Oh, my beloved and beautiful two,
You know not what is in store for you ;
It never troubles your innocent wits ;
You only see what is bright and new,
And glorify all with your heart's own dew ;

From flower to flower your butterfly flits,
Your great bee drops
On the clover tops,
And drinks at his leisure the honey dew.

'Tis a breathless day ; the laden grove
Is dreaming its summer dream of love ;
A murmurous whisper, like a school,
Is stealing along through its shadows cool ;
And you thoughtfully wonder, so still is the air,
What it is that's astir in the tree-tops there.
I have a belief, and no reasoning clod,
With his facts driven in and clenched with a nod,

Shall argue me out of my poet faith—
My heart holds fast to what Nature saith.
I inherit some of that ancient creed,
From which the world has long been freed,—
Freed, and made better; but, in felling the tree
Of Error, such accident well might be;
They may have crushed some flowers of truth,
The fairest that blest the world in its youth.
I believe that every created thing
Hath a soul which was born in Eternity's spring,
Which still will live on to Eternity's close,
Though the world end in fire, as prophecy shows;
So these great forest souls, holding council together,
May converse as they please in the calmest of weather.

In low, mellow tones they are breathing to-day,—
I wish I could know what these woodland bards say;
But I'm sure they are talking of him and of her,
Whose feet 'mid the leaves make a musical stir,
Where they go hand in hand, with singing and
laughter;
The red thrush before, and the gray squirrel after.

Through paths where the whortleberries grow,
And where the woodland blossoms blow,
They find the honeysuckle fruit
Delicious, and only grown to suit

The delicate taste of a maid like ours,
Whose whole sweet life seems formed of flowers.
Where the odorous mandrake lies around,
Dragging the thin stalk to the ground,
Not to be touched till a golden-yellow
Proclaims them mature, and pulpy, and mellow.
They pass, till they gain a May-time knoll,
Only wanting the flowery pole.
Here the vine, in ambitious reach,
Climbs to the top of the oak and beech,
O'erflowing the trees, as fountains their urns,
Till the gazer scarce their support discerns,
And drops its cordage, in many a loop,
Like ropes on the summer deck of a sloop.

Between the trees one great vine clings,
The very completest of woodland swings,
And into the swing my Rosalie
Is lifted, and seated, and there swings she,
Pouring her full heart's rapturous glee;
While Ralph, with his soul brimming o'er with
devotion,
Keeps the vine with its beautiful freight in full motion,
Till, seizing the swing, he runs daringly under,
And impels her so high, that in fear and in wonder,
Her breathing is stayed, while her delicate tresses
Are smoothed forth and back by the soft winds caresses.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,
The clusters are thick on life's young bough,
And they, on the red autumnal tree,
May ripen to purple and gold, and be
All that they promise the future now ;
But oftentimes o'er the full vine blows
A poisonous breath, and no one knows
From whence it comes or whither it goes ;
But the fairest clusters that crown the vine,
Are suddenly seen to wither and pine ;
Or the grape to its central seed is cleft,
Like a broken heart by hope bereft.

But, never let thoughts like these arise,
Dear flower, to dim your violet eyes ;
Let sadness come in its own time brought ;
Let unfound sorrow still lie unsought.
Then swing and sing, sweet maiden mine,
A bluebird on a summer vine ;
An embodied April, May, and June,
Overflowing with spring-time tune ;
A soul of blooms, where the song of birds
Finds sweet translation in musical words.

But, hark ! a shudder runs through the air,
As if, within his desert lair,

Some lion, shaking the sleep from his mane,
Proclaimed himself lord of the boundless plain,
With savage growl, and hungry grumble ;
But as it nears 'tis the rattle and rumble
Of a chariot making its way toward Rome,
Bearing victorious Cæsar home.
But see! to the harnessed winds is given
The tempest car, with its fiery leaven,
And these are the thunder-wheels of Heaven,
Over the distant hilltops driven ;
Already the tremulous heads of the trees
Are bowing before the courier breeze,
But the insolent outriders soon rush past,
Whirling and snapping the whips of the blast,
Lashing and cutting the boughs, till the air
Is alive with the foliage that flies in despair ;
And suddenly frightening the harvesting world,
The roaring cloud o'er the sun is hurled,
With the speed of a death-laden warrior-bark,
While the red lightnings flash from its ports through
the dark.

Near by there is a shelter of rocks,
Where a shepherdess might watch her flocks,
Secure as well from shower and sun,
With mosses and wild vines overrun.

Scenting the rain ere the big drops splash,
Listening to the rending crash,
And blinded by the sulphurous flash,
To this woodland cloister the lovers withdraw,
With a mingled sense of pleasure and awe ;
But not too soon, for a bolt of fire,
By the storm-king sped, in reckless ire,
From his red right hand in a blazing line,
Shivers the oak with its loaded vine ;
And they see when the stun of the blow is past,
 The tree and the swing,
 Each a splintered thing,
Over the knoll in confusion cast.

Now and then they hear the sound
Of large drops on their sentinel round,
For the main great army of the rain,
Has followed the stream up the distant plain,
To entrench its full force in the strength of the hills,
The better to raid on the valleys and mills :
And that splashy tread is of picket or scout,
Which the storm, on his flank, has thrown warily
 out.

The skirmishers now have passed from view ;
Come, stroll to the headland, my beautiful two ;
What is the walk of a mile to you ?

And see how the wind has worried the bay,
Till it flung its insult of flashing spray
 Into the face of the blast,
Half blinding it with brine as it passed.
You are not one to be afraid,
So fear not for your feet, sweet maid ;
Only a little spot of wet
Lies here and there like a violet.

Along the path, under barberry bushes,
And where your hand the low bough pushes
Aside, perchance your golden curl
May catch in its snare a random pearl,
And the branch, if your touch be somewhat reckless,
Rebounding, may fling you a delicate necklace.
But this is all : to the headland hie,
And watch the ships and the storm go by.

They are out on their way, through bush and through
 bramble,
Where the rabbits all year in security gambol ;
There, the snowy skirt of my Rosalie's dress
Is caught in the barbarous vines caress,
Like Innocence, by the world beset,
Till it struggles out of the briery net ;
But the fingers of Ralph will dexterous be,
In freeing her pathway ; and what cares he

If the thorns do wound him? he laughs at the pain,
And brushes away the crimson stain;
For his hand, though no complaint is said,
Like a tiger-lily, is speckled with red.
But out of the thicket they laughing emerge,
And stand at last on the ocean's verge.

The rebel storm is subdued and bowed,
And the seven-hued banner is hung on the cloud,
And the air is flooded with purple and gold,
Out of the royal sun's tent rolled.
From billows that round the dark rocks whirl,
Is thrown their spray of amber and pearl;
The dashing brine, and the new-mown hay,
Send mingled odors around the bay.
The flowers on shore, and the breakers white bloom,
Have each their own beauty of hue and perfume.
The hidden thrush fills the air with delight,
While the grace of the seabird is flashed on the
sight.
In midst of the waves, like a swinging gull,
To the billows a plaything, the fisherman's hull
Is lifted and dropt o'er the watery realm;
But the hand of the master is firm at the helm,
While the larger bark speeds through the foam of the
main,
Like a cantering steed o'er a flowery plain.

See yon great dusky steamer ; it comes from the isles
Where the seabirds of Commerce, in cormorant flocks,
Sail in and sail out round the fog-mantled rocks,
Where the cloud seldom lifts, and the sun seldom smiles.
On its briny deck perchance is borne
Great news, that by to-morrow's morn
May wake our land, and let it know,
That family blood, though it may flow,
Thousands of miles away o'er the main,
Is not perforce our natural foe,
Taking delight in its kindred's pain ;
Or it may tell of the hungry growl
Of the jealous sea-lion ; well, let him howl.
The bird that sits on our cliffs by the sea,
Is as wakeful and watchful a guardian as he ;
The time will come, when, through natural laws,
The teeth will be lost from his leonine jaws ;
Then the king in his lair,
In the depth of his dotage, as well as despair,
With his head dropped over his powerless paws,
Will feel the hoof, and hear the bray
Of the smallest power he awes to-day.

In that hour, forgetting injustice uncivil,
His menacing stand, and his great exultation,
When destruction was waving her torch o'er our
nation ;

Then we, ere he sinks to his ruinous level,
Ere his great mart becomes the sacked Rome of the
 sea,
 An embryo Nineveh yet to be,
In magnanimous might may return good for evil,
And drive the foul robbers, who now are his slaves,
From the island made dear by our ancestors' graves.

Here, in the bay, lies a Union ship,
Which the billow scarce causes to rise or to dip,
So grandly she looms, lying under the fort,
And so heavy the war-dog that snarls at each port.
A thousand defenders like this, huge and grim,
On the watery highway in triumph shall swim,
'Twixt opposite poles, e'en from ice unto ice,
And the world will take heed of their iron advice;
And a continent yet, of Columbia's sons,
Shall delight in the voice of those Union guns.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,
We are not talking of love you see.
In the hour of ruder things,
 Sometimes Love must draw apart
 Into some recess of the heart,
And fold himself in his own bright wings,
Lest, by a sudden whirl and gust
In the highway of life the clinging dust

Might soil those pinions celestial hue,
Which tarnished, no power on earth can renew.
But I hear my trusting young Rosalie say,
 With a shake of her curls, her protest sweet,
She believes that Love, in the roughest highway,
 Would sanctify all with his delicate feet.
That the weariest road where his wings unfold,
Is suddenly paved with amber and gold ;
And thickly strewn through the sultriest hours
With roses, and cooled with the dew of flowers !
A beautiful faith, gentle priestess, in sooth,
To breathe at the garlanded altar of youth,
From which flows the crystalline fountain of Truth ;
 And you, standing so near,
 May see and may hear
What the time-veiled sense of the eye and the ear
Of the world-weary pilgrim might fail to make
clear.

On this bowery headland an altar stands,
Carved from the granite by invisible hands,
 When the world was young,
And there the old loomsman, Time, has flung
 A mantle across,
Made of the delicate many-hued moss,
And here, with the rainbow arching above,
Making a dome to their temple of Love ;

With listening wild flowers, and with witnessing sun,
While the sudden gush of the woodland throng,
Rises like a hymeneal song ;
And along the rocks the swift waves run,
Like the hands of an organist, flashing free,
With inspiration, from key to key,
Sending jubilant melody up from the sea.

Here sitting, the hearts of my beautiful two,
Like long-watched flowers, that blossom at last,
A-flush with beauty, and bright with dew,
Swelling with all the dear growth of the past,
With a glory no time can destroy or conceal,
Bloom full in the light of each other's eyes !
Their two souls look their glad surprise,
And the depth of their deathless love reveal ;
And wonder smiles in the face of each,
That what has been growing so long and well,
Should only this moment have broken the spell,
And found expression in tremulous speech.

Sweet words are said, and sweeter replies
Come on the breath of responsive sighs,
And melt through the tear, which the soft lash keeps,
That earliest drop which the full heart weeps ;
Born of the ecstasy which it feels,
When Love at his first confessional kneels.

Oh, Love, let never foot more rude
Than yours on this sainted place intrude ;
Let a hallowed glory forever shine
Around this consecrated shrine ;
Breathe you a ban on the ambient air,
To admit no wing but the singers there ;
And draw a circle around the spot,
That nothing less pure than the violet,
The sweet-briar, and the forget-me-not,
Shall near this sacred shrine be set ;
Let naught unholy be seen or heard
At the altar where you have ministered.





III.

A SUMMER STORY.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,
There is tumult in your leafy town ;
A tumult, swinging like waves of the sea,
For the swift winds of Rumor thereon have blown,
And the spray of its startled wrath is thrown
Back to the threatening thunder-wrack,
Looming to southward, heavy and black.

The very bells o'er this turbulent ocean
Have caught the tempest's billowy motion,
Like storm-bells rocking to and fro,
Rung by the passionate waves below ;
Even those in their Sabbath towers,
Only meant for prayer-time hours ;

Or bridal scenes; or measured calls,
To slow and solemn funerals;
With unrestrained and fiery clangor,
Ring out their fierce indignant anger,
As might some priest, who long had given
The guiding words that lead to Heaven,
Proclaim, with his denouncing tongue,
The fiercest sentence ever flung,
 At the iconoclastic band;
Should he behold the fiendish frown,
 And see the demon-lighted eye,
 And hear the desecrating cry
 Of one, who strove, with lifted hand,
To strike his dearest image down.

Speak out, wild bells, with swifter swing!
 Ye patriot hearts of iron mould,
 Ye men, whom danger never awed;
Whose courage hath the old time ring.
This is no hour to stand and hark!
 The black, unnatural deed is done;
The traitor, springing from the dark,
 Would tear the stars from yonder fold,
And mar the flag your fathers won!
 The braggart, courting new disgrace,
 Has flung his glove into the face—
The sainted face of Washington.

Let every tongue in anger swing
The anathematizing word abroad,
Even though revenge should fiercely wing
The fiery arrows of your wrath,
To stay the traitor in his path ;
The angel Freedom, sitting near to God,
Whose tearful eyes her anxious soul betray,
Will look into His face and plead the sin away.

The town is full of fifes and drums,
From every home a patriot comes ;
You can hear them shouting on every hill,
Like spring-time brooks, with resistless will,
Swelling the sea on Freedom's coast,
To o'erthrow and drown the insolent host.

The yeoman, who knows to hew and delve,
Driving the axe or the spade to its helve,
Now bears the gun that his father bore
By the side of Scott in the " War of Twelve ;"
Or the glorious sword his grandsire wore ;
The flash of whose good steel still predicts
Defeat to the foe, as in " seventy-six."
All ranks of life, the desk, and plow,
Send out their teeming legions now.

Those patriots old, when their wars were done,
And they hung on the wall the sword and gun,

Ne'er dreamed what future treasonous breath,
Breathed from the hot plains of the South,
Out of the stolen cannon's mouth,
Threat'ning Freedom with sudden death,
Should call those sacred weapons forth,
From the cottage wall,
Or ancestral hall,
To fields that fester beneath the sun,
In defence of liberty and the North,—
The North and Liberty being one.

On every homestead, on every church,
Our eagle banner is seen to perch,
Where it shines like Heaven's approving mark,
A covenant over our Union ark.

My beautiful Ralph and Rosalie,
There's a glorious sight for you to see ;
And could I picture the vision of gold,
The wondrous pile, so high and broad,
A-flush with the eternal light of God,
And full of His harmonies manifold—
Your faces, illumined, would glow and shine
Like those of the souls who have just had birth,
Out of the shadowy vale of earth,
When first they see the celestial shrine.

I behold an organ, tall and vast,
The labor of all the ages past,
Nor yet complete, but the golden ore
Is being wrought for one note more.
Its six and thirty great golden pipes
Are draped about with stars and stripes,
And on its tallest pinnacle height,
Our guardian eagle sits throned in light.
Its fluted form o'ertops the cloud ;

 It covers the land between the seas ;
 While an angel, greater than prophet e'er saw,
 Flashes his hands along the keys,
 Holding the world with his symphonies,
A wonderful music, deep and loud,
 Filling the nations with marveling awe.

But, see, the angel recoils apace,
With wonder and wrath on his startled face,
 For a fiend, with a fierce and murderous mien,
 Has stolen suddenly in unseen,
 And with a mingled rage and glee,
 Is dashing his madness from key to key,
Making horrible discord down the bass ;
And as, from the jargon a maniac mutters,
 May be gathered some clue to his fell disease,
 Thus, from the jar of those tortured keys,
I catch the meaning he wildly utters:—

“ Down, down with the pile the patriots built,
That stands a rebuke to our Southern guilt.

Down, down, though humanity quakes at the jar;
Shuddering to see our sword red to the hilt,

While a race, *half our own*, drags our Juggernaut
car !”

But the angel, for whom the great organ was made,
With a glorious anger, that cannot be stayed,
Strikes the clear silver notes of the octaves above,
That leap to the mountains, and pierce to the grove,
And thrill through the cities, and startle the farms,
Till the North is all lit with the flashing of arms.
And still, as he plays, the other recoils,
Relinquishing keys that his touching but spoils,
Till on his last octaves, with rage and affright,
He frantically strikes a wild maniac blow,
Then flies, with a shriek, to his own native night,
The realm of the king of all traitors below.

Anew the great Union organ awakes,
And the grand anthem swings from the gulf to the
lakes,
Announcing the stigma that darkened our land
Is swept at the waving of Liberty's hand.
Still, still may that music go widely abroad,
Proclaiming our realm is the chosen of God.

The world is all joy, my Rosalie,
And yet one pleasure remains for me :—
In this cathedral land of ours,
Whose aisles are strewn with Union flowers,
 The glorious red, and white, and blue,
 While that wonderful organ, from lofty towers,
 Is pouring its jubilant notes anew,
 Come, kneel at the altar, and over you
And your soldier, with his empty sleeve,
And his crutch, which makes you proud, not grieve,
 The sounds shall fall in hymeneal showers,
Blessing the joining of heart and hand,
In a land united at God's command.





THE REAPER'S DREAM.

THE road was lone; the grass was dank
With night-dews on the briery bank
Whereon a weary reaper sank.
His garb was old; his visage tanned;
The rusty sickle in his hand
Could find no work in all the land.

He saw the evening's chilly star
Above his native vale afar;
A moment on the horizon's bar
It hung, then sank, as with a sigh;
And there the crescent moon went by,
An empty sickle down the sky.

The field was cleared. Home went the bands,
Like children, linking happy hands,
While singing through their father's lands;
Or, arms about each other thrown,
With amber tresses backward blown,
They moved as they were music's own.

The vision brightening more and more,
He saw the garner's glowing door,
And sheaves, like sunshine, strew the floor,—
The floor was jasper,—golden flails,
Swift-sailing as a whirlwind sails,
Throbbled mellow music down the vales.

He saw the mansion,—all repose,—
Great corridors and porticos,
Propped with the columns, shining rows;
And these,—for beauty was the rule,—
The polished pavements, hard and cool,
Redoubled, like a crystal pool.

And there the odorous feast was spread;
The fruity fragrance widely shed,
Seemed to the floating music wed.
Seven angels, like the Pleiad seven,
Their lips to silver clarions given,
Blew welcome round the walls of heaven.

In skyey garments, silky thin,
The glad retainers floated in
A thousand forms, and yet no din :
And from the visage of the Lord,
Like splendor from the Orient poured,
A smile illumined all the board.

Far flew the music's circling sound ;
Then floated back, with soft rebound,
To join, not mar, the converse round,—
Sweet notes, that melting, still increased,
Such as ne'er cheered the bridal feast
Of king in the enchanted East.

Did any great door ope or close ;
It seemed the birth-time of repose,
The faint sound died where it arose ;
And they who passed from door to door,
Their soft feet on the polished floor
Met their soft shadows—nothing more.

Then, once again the groups were drawn
Through corridors, or down the lawn,
Which bloomed in beauty like a dawn.
Where countless fountains leapt alway,
Veiling their silver heights in spray,
The choral people held their way.

There, midst the brightest, brightly shone
Dear forms he loved in years ago,—
The earliest loved,—the earliest flown.
He heard a mother's sainted tongue;
A sister's voice, who vanished young,
While one still dearer sweetly sung!

No further might the scene unfold,
The gazer's voice could not withhold,
The very rapture made him bold:
He cried aloud, with clasped hands
"O, happy fields! O, happy bands!
Who reap the never-failing lands.

"O, master of these broad estates,
Behold, before your very gates
A worn and wanting laborer waits!
Let me but toil amid your grain,
Or be a gleaner on the plain,
So I may leave these fields of pain!

"A gleaner, I will follow far,
With never look or word to mar,
Behind the Harvest's yellow car;
All day my hand shall constant be,
And every happy eve shall see
The precious burden borne to Thee!"

At morn, some reapers neared the place,
Strong men, whose feet recoiled apace,
Then gathering round the upturned face,
They saw the lines of pain and care,
Yet read in the expression there
The look as of an answered prayer.





DOWN TO THE DUST.

A CERTAIN rich man, stern and proud,
Yet, like a winter hemlock, bowed
With the accumulated weight
Of many snows, o'er his estate
Led his fair grandchild by the hand,
Showing her miles and miles of land,
Meadows and forests, and fields of grain,
Far as her wondering eye could strain ;
And all to be hers some future day ;
All hers ! The realms which round them lay,
Descended were from a lofty line,
Whose precious blood was wine, old wine,
While others' was but water ! Now
Their noble tree, from root to bough,
Stood hopeless of all future fruit,
Save from the little orphan shoot,

Lovely, as ever in spring was seen,
Flattering a dying tree with green.

“ All these broad lands are mine,” he said,
Laying his hand on the grandchild's head,
“ And shall be yours, all yours, one day ;
One day, but that is far away.
In heavy coffers, iron-bound,
I have treasured many a golden pound,
Gold, gold, all gold,—a thousand-fold
More than you 'll dream till they are told.
All yours, love, when my sun has set,
But that, my child, is a long time yet.

“ This mighty forest must come down,
And bring more gold from yonder town ;
They want the wood wherewith to build,
I want the gold for a plan unfilled,
For I must rear a mansion grand,
Grander than any in the land,
At which the envious world will stare,
As if a prince were quartered there ;
And you the mistress of it all,
The princess of that noble hall ;
And then, at last, the queen, my dear ;
The queen ! but not this many a year.

"These cabins of my tenants old
Must fall. They mar my dream of gold;
They pay no rent; the men, infirm,
Have all outlived their useful term;
Their homes must all come down, and yield
Their space to the golden harvest-field:—
Down, down!" And he rubbed his hands with glee,
Gloating over his prophecy!
The child gazed up with a look of pain,
That could not make the justice plain,
And sighed, "But would not that be wrong,
Since they have worked for you so long?
What will become of the frail and old,
If they have neither strength nor gold?"
"That is naught to me," he said, "my child;
Chide from your brain those questions wild:
Who made them poor, and left them so,
Must feed his ravens; let them go!
My thoughts with grander schemes are filled,
I want free scope whereon to build!

"And see, the milldam there, is broke!
And he whose heart was tough as oak,
Too old to toil, too proud to sue,
Sits on the sill with naught to do.
And other mills, some miles away,
Grind larger grists for smaller pay,

And, therefore, must the mill come down !"
Then the little child, with that piteous frown,
Which is not anger, but seems to keep
The tears back that she fain would weep,
Demanded, with low, thoughtful head,
"What will the people do for bread?"
"The best they can,—the best they can!"
Was the jeering answer of the man.
"Let them go beg their cup and crust;
The old mill shall come down to dust!
The spot be cleared; the dam be filled,
To help the landscape when I build!"

He rubbed his hands with new delight,
Then, taking one more circling sight,
And with his own heart reconciled,
Led home the little wondering child.

That night the old man ate and drank,
Thinking only of wealth and rank,
And the mansion, which was all to him.
He drank till his filmy eyes grew dim,
Then, in his great deep-cushioned chair,
Slept, and forgot his golden care.
He slept; the chin upon his breast
Sunk deep and deeper into rest, \ \

Till, with a sudden, noiseless sway,
The dam of life was borne away.
And now the stream lay dead and still ;
The breast was cheerless as the mill ;
The heart hung like a sultry wheel,
Where ne'er again the wave shall reel,
And never yet was one so skilled,
That dusty ruin to rebuild.

Then laughed that shadowy miser, who
Hath countless coffers, old and new,
All buried full, and more to fill.
"The dam is broke, the cumbrous mill
Is useless now : the fate is just ;
Come down it must ; aye, down to dust !"
And, rubbing his ghostly hands in glee,
Gloated over his prophecy.

Then spake an angel, on whose tongue
The tremulous voice of pity hung,
"What will become of the houseless soul—
He who sat there taking toll ?
An outcast into nameless ways,
Where foot of charity never strays ;
Too old to toil ; too late to sue ;
What will the friendless wanderer do ?"

"That's naught to me!" the shade replied,
"Let the spirits which he deified,
Which made him rich, yet kept him poor,
Look to him now, for at my door
No mercy dwells! Come down it must,
This crumbling clay: down, down to dust;
And that last mansion which he willed,
My busy architect shall build!"





THE WESTERN VINE.

I SING the vine,—the western vine,
The newly found, but not unsung ;
Whose magic to the minstrel's tongue,
Made music flow through every line.
Within its mellow amber deeps,
A mild and soothing spirit dwells,
As innocent as that which sleeps
In Poesy's Castalian wells ;
Then bless the wine, the mellow wine,
That flows from the Catawba vine.

From east to west this vine shall spread,
Embowering all our vales and hills,
And half of all our daily ills
Shall vanish where its light is shed ;

The fields are joyous where it grows ;
It makes the rugged hillsides glad,
And where, with vines the porch is clad,
There dwells the spirit of repose.
Then bless the wine, the mellow wine,
That flows from the Catawba vine.

The fiends that lurk in burning draughts,
Shall no more poison cups of ours ;
But when with us young Bacchus laughs,
O'ershadowed by our vineyard bowers,
The god shall think his cup is filled
With honey-dew, at morn distilled
By Flora, from her purest flowers.
Then bless the wine, the mellow wine,
That flows from the Catawba vine.

Oh, tell us not, ye over-wise,
That God his choicest fruit has banned ;
Those clusters from the Promised Land,
Were welcome to the prophet's eyes.
Let him who would dilute his blood
With water at the festive board,
Remember how the crystal flood
Was turned to purple by our Lord.
Then bless the wine, the mellow wine,
That flows from the Catawba vine.

And yet, beneath these glorious skies,
A nobler Vine o'reaches all ;
In its support, or in its fall,
A mighty nation lives or dies ;
Its boughs are weighed with Freedom's fruit,
Beyond the hungry fox's reach,
With sturdy shoulders, each to each,
Come, let us guard it branch and root !
And bless the wine, the sacred wine,
That flows from our great *Union* vine.





BURNS' BIRTHDAY.

My friends, the grape that charms the cup to-night,
Should be the noblest ever grown in cluster ;
Our flowers of wit and song should be so bright,
That all the place should wear a noon-tide lustre.

For he whose natal day, and marvellous worth,
We strive to honor with our yearly presence,
Was of that clay so seldom found on earth,
On which the gods bestow their purest essence.

Ay, doubly bright should this ovation be ;
For we are honored far beyond your dreaming,
The inward spirit bids me look and see,
Where comes the bard with light and music teeming.

He comes, but not like Hamlet's sire, to wing
The soul with fear, and urge to painful duty;
He comes; let us behold the phantom king,
The king of song, and marvel at his beauty.

I see his presence in the luminous air,
And feel no thrill to make my blood run colder;
He stands beside our presidential chair,
With loving arm upon a Scotchman's shoulder.

Upon his brow a crown of glory beams;
His robe of splendor makes the lamplight hazy;
In his right hand a pledging goblet gleams,
The other holds a "crimson tippet daisy."

Of deathless rainbows is his tartan plaid;
His bonnet now is the celestial laurel;
And on his face the light of song betrayed,
Makes all the room with poesy grow choral.

With eye of inspiration stands the bard;
His lips are moving, though no sound can follow.
Let me translate,—although the task is hard,—
To justly render Scotland's sweet Apollo.

"Dear friends, and brother Scotsmen, doubly dear,"
'Tis thus the poet looks his kind oration,
"The day is come, which once in every year
Calls me to make my wonted visitation.

" I glide through Caledonian halls of mirth,
Where votive feast and song together mingle;
I seek the cot,—the sweetest place on earth
Is just the simple peasant's glowing ingle.

" The haughty Briton lights his dusk saloon,
Forgetting all his rancor for Prince Charley,
And to the plowman bard of Ayr and Doon,
Pledges the smoking bree of Scottish barley.

" Where'er a ship upon the ocean swings,
To-night, before the mariners seek their pillows,
My songs shall sail on their melodious wings,
Like sea-birds o'er the phosphorescent billows.

" By Indian river, and Australian mine,
And by the wall of China's old dominions,
My verse above their cups of mellow wine,
Shall fan the air to music with its pinions.

" The far Canadian winter hears my name,
E'en where the trapper's northern home is chosen,
The songs of Scotland, mingling with the flame,
Warm all within, though all without be frozen.

" By Californian shores and forests old,
Where, like a mighty bard new realms discerning,
The gray Pacific, over sands of gold,
Chants his great song, the glittering metal spurning.

“ In new-built towns, and round the miner's lamp,
Or on the plains, or by the Colorado ;
Where'er the far adventurous train may camp,
My song to-night shall cheer the deepest shadow.

“ Or in the snow beleaguered tents of strife,
By jocund fires, or beds of painful story,
Health shall take courage, and the sick new life,
To hear of Wallace, and of Bruce's glory.

“ Oh, that my song might be as bolts of fire,
Within the grasp of soldiers and of seamen !
The bard profanely wakes the sacred lyre,
Who chants no strain to nerve the hearts of freemen.

“ From town to town, obedient to the call,
I pass in haste, for envious Time is fleeting,
As oft before, within this noble hall,
I greet the friends who cheer me with their greeting.

“ Here in your midst, my brothers, once again,
I stand to-night a saddened guest and speaker ;
I miss among you certain noble men,
Who erewhile pledged me in a brimming beaker.

“ For your sakes saddened,—not, my friends, for mine,—
You mourn their music, and their pleasant sallies ;
But we together pledge nectarean wine,
And join our song in amaranthine valleys.

"I see the forms your sight cannot discern ;
I see the smile across their happy faces,
With eye of loving faith look round and learn
Your friends are here,—there are no empty places.

"From shadowy goblets held in fingers dim,
We drain the glass that keep the memory vernal,
Our cups with yours are clinking brim to brim,
And thus we pledge you in a draught fraternal.

"Adieu, adieu ! across the eternal sea
Still let us hear your pleasant song and laughter,
And let the love you bear me, warrant be,
Of love as deep for all true bards hereafter."





TO BRYANT,

ON HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.

WHAT time I ope, with reverential love,
One of the charméd volumes of my choice,
I hear, as in the cloister of the grove,
The solemn music of thy Druid voice.

All sights and sounds that can delight impart,
Or whatsoe'er athwart thy vision swims,
Before the altar of the world's great heart,
Thou nobly breathest in undying hymns.

For thy broad love there is no flower too small,
Nor scene too vast for thy encircling mind;
Thy heart is one with Nature's, yet o'er all
Rises its sweet vibrations for mankind.

The faintest breath that finds a flowery nook ;
The flying winds with wild and gust-wise locks ;
The pebble, which the lapidary brook
Rounds into form, or ocean, scorning rocks.

The burnished bluebird with the spring-time song ;
The azure-wingéd runnel's April call ;
The timid wren, the falcon fierce and strong ;
The soaring water-fowl, the swooping fall ;

The glowworm's lantern, and the lunar car ;
The midnight taper, and the noonday sun ;
The pool where swims the lily like a star ;
The boundless sea, with lily-sails o'errun.

The brooklet-blade, the brightest wavelet moves
Where childhood's paper sails are set unfurled ;
The antique home, or shade ; the oaken groves,
Growing the ponderous navies of the world.

The peaceful hearthstone, and the roaring field ;
The song-bird, and our eagle on his crag ;
The love that all that quiet home can yield ;
The love of country, freedom, and her flag.

All these are thine, thou pioneer of song,
Bard of the prairie and primeval grove ;
And unto thee our praise may well belong ;
Yes, more than praise—the homage of our love.

And this is thine, and, therefore, I obey,
And bow before thy Druid locks of snow ;
And on thy sacred altar here I lay
My votive branch of western mistletoe.





TO HYPERION.

Our land is like a prairie overswept
With tempest flame, around the horizon whirled;
By fiery swords our harvest fields are reapt;
By maniac winds the blazing sheaves are hurled;
Where swift Destruction strides through cinders deep,
The blinding ashes, blown about the world,
Whiten our sackcloth where we sit and weep.
The whole broad sky is choked with fire and dust;
With reeling clouds of sulphur overrun,
What wonder that the bright star of your trust,
The noble planet of your minstrel dawn,
Should be this hour, by careful Heaven withdrawn,
Caught by a sudden and celestial gust
Into the glad embraces of the sun.



D A W N .

WITHIN a gray Empire of dawn and of dew,
Where rung the clear clarion which chanticleer blew ;
Which sang to the stars, and rang round to the sea,
Proclaiming a triumph and glory to be ; —

A realm where the air of the primeval gloom
Was thick with the night-opening blossoms' perfume ;
Where all the wide world of those delicate blooms,
The heirs of the daylight, lay still in their tombs,
Awaiting the summons, by young April given,
Blown down through the morning-lit portals of Heaven.

There, dank with the dew, and o'erweiled with this
dawn,
The shadowy nations went towering on,

Enlarged by the dimness, gigantic, sublime,
They walked in this long-vanished twilight of Time.
There were marvellous marble-built marts where the
 sea

Proclaimed the same problem he utters to me.

There were shadowy fanes on each shadowy height,
And purple-dusk pyramids piercing the night
So far, that their pinnacles dialed the sky ;
And the stars, for the shepherds to calendar by,
Their peaks in the blue, and their feet in the sand ;
Each a tomb in its gloom, that o'ershadowed the
 land,

And between, meaning more than philosophy thinks,
In the desert, breast-deep, sat, like Egypt, the Sphynx.

There were altars a-flush with the horrible sign,
As if Murder had thrown his red cloak on the shrine ;
And statues of Terror, with faces uncouth,
Where the world in its error still stumbled at truth.
And a murmur arose, as when billows in vain
Rage round some lone rock that no answer will deigu.

Strange Druidical henges encircled the wold ;
Dusk granite enigmas, no time can unfold ;
Great dogmas in stone, a grand, terrible creed ;
A hieroglyphic worship, God only could read.

Along these great woods, and among these great piles
A priesthood, mysterious, shed awe through the aisles.
In vain the sweet herbage looked up from the sod
And pointed to Heaven, and whispered of God ;
And the night preached in vain, with its stars and its
tears,
The truths it has taught through its millions of years.

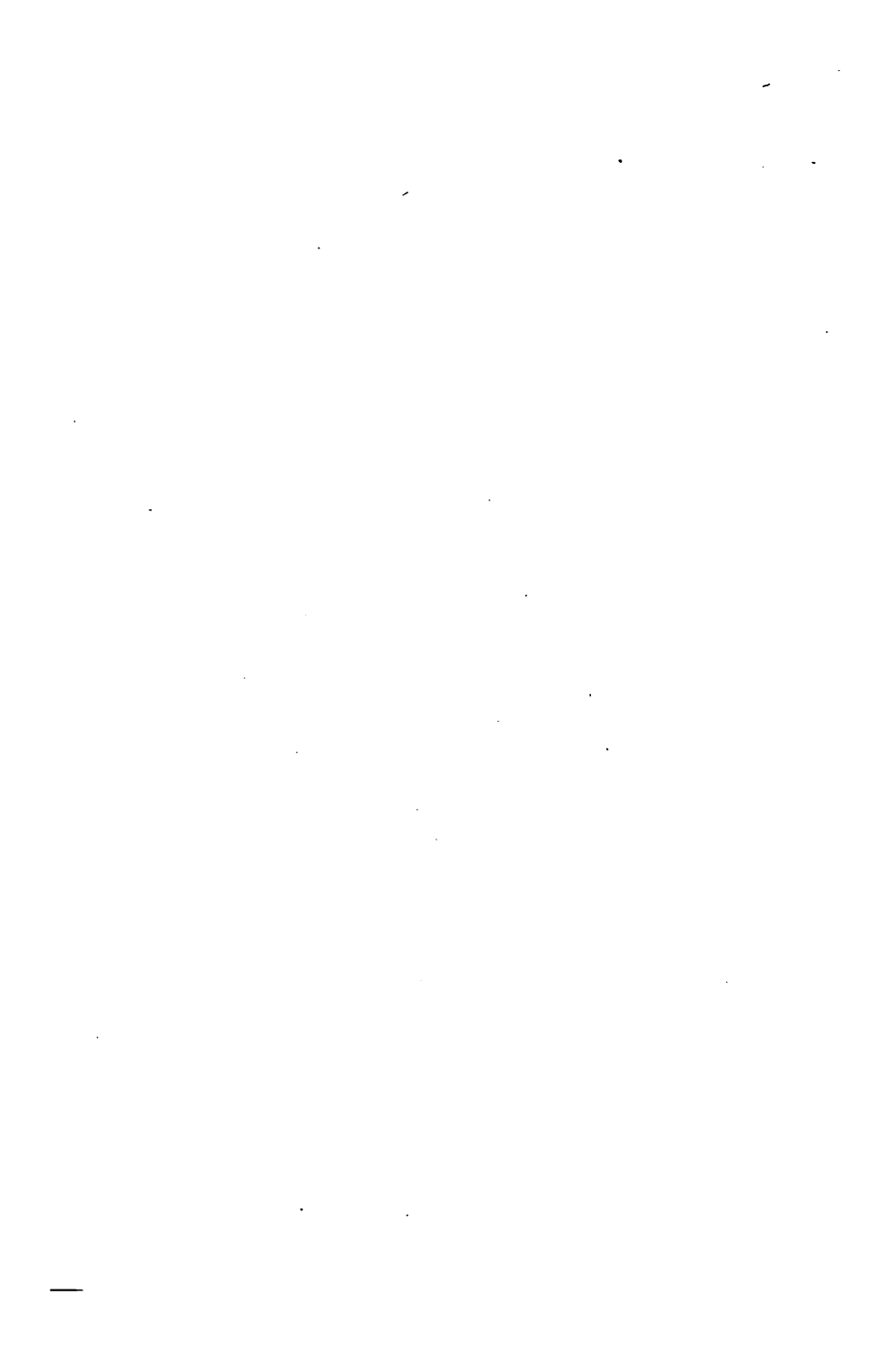
Still, the soul in its chains, self-abased and abused,
The light only dazzled ; sounds only confused,
Till a God, in his pity, came down as a child,
And walked 'mid those temples which night had
defiled,
And solved the old riddles in language so plain,
That the mystery dispelled could not settle again.

Then man, in his wisdom, perverse as a blast,
Dismantled the world of each shred of the past ;
The piles were no longer Divinity's throne ;
The rocks were but rocks, and the sphynx but a stone.
The hills were disrobed, and the groves were but trees,
And the voice of the ocean was only the seas.
But the faith of the bard may not scorn what is gone,
While it stands in the noon it looks back to the dawn,
Believing the good in all worships, it feels
A divinity present wherever it kneels.



WAR POEMS.







SHERIDAN'S RIDE.

Up from the South at break of day,
Bringing to Winchester fresh dismay,
The affrighted air with a shudder bore,
Like a herald in haste, to the chieftain's door,
The terrible grumble, and rumble, and roar,
Telling the battle was on once more,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

And wider still those billows of war,
Thundered along the horizon's bar;
And louder yet into Winchester rolled
The roar of that red sea uncontrolled,
Making the blood of the listener cold,
As he thought of the stake in that fiery fray,
And Sheridan twenty miles away.

But there is a road from Winchester town,
A good broad highway leading down ;
And there, through the flush of the morning light,
A steed as black as the steeds of night,
Was seen to pass, as with eagle flight,
As if he knew the terrible need ;
He stretched away with his utmost speed ;
Hills rose and fell ; but his heart was gay,
With Sheridan fifteen miles away.

Still sprung from those swift hoofs, thundering South,
The dust, like smoke from the cannon's mouth ;
Or the trail of a comet, sweeping faster and faster,
Foreboding to traitors the doom of disaster.
The heart of the steed, and the heart of the master
Were beating like prisoners assaulting their walls,
Impatient to be where the battle-field calls ;
Every nerve of the charger was strained to full play,
With Sheridan only ten miles away.

Under his spurning feet the road
Like an arrowy Alpine river flowed,
And the landscape sped away behind
Like an ocean flying before the wind,
And the steed, like a bark fed with furnace ire,
Swept on, with his wild eye full of fire.
But lo ! he is nearing his heart's desire ;

He is snuffing the smoke of the roaring fray,
With Sheridan only five miles away.

The first that the general saw were the groups
Of stragglers, and then the retreating troops,
What was done? what to do? a glance told him both,
Then striking his spurs, with a terrible oath,
He dashed down the line, 'mid a storm of huzzas,
And the wave of retreat checked its course there,
because

The sight of the master compelled it to pause.
With foam and with dust, the black charger was gray;
By the flash of his eye, and the red nostril's play,
He seemed to the whole great army to say,
"I have brought you Sheridan all the way
From Winchester, down to save the day!"

Hurrah! hurrah for Sheridan!
Hurrah! hurrah for horse and man!
And when their statues are placed on high,
Under the dome of the Union sky,
The American soldiers' Temple of Fame;
There with the glorious general's name,
Be it said, in letters both bold and bright,
"Here is the steed that saved the day,
By carrying Sheridan into the fight,
From Winchester, twenty miles away!"



THREE ERAS.

INSCRIBED TO PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

L

THE TREATY ELM.*

ERE to the honored patriot's mansion yonder
These charmed and emblematic relics pass,
Upon the sacred fragments let me ponder,
While Fancy, to the admiring eye of Wonder,
Withdraws the veil, as in a magian's glass.

* Some relics, consisting of a piece of Penn's "Treaty Elm," of the old frigate "Alliance," and the halliards of the sloop-of-war "Cumberland," wrought into appropriate form, were presented to President Lincoln by James E. Murdoch, Esq., and this poem was written to accompany them.

I see the "Treaty Elm," and hear the rustle
Of autumn leaves, where come the dusky troops,
In painted robes and plumes, to crowd and jostle,—
A savage scene, save that the peace-apostle
Stands central, and controls the untamed groups.

These are the boughs the forest eagle lit on,
Long ere he perched upon our nation's banner;
Beneath their shade I see the gentle Briton,
And hear the contract, binding, though unwritten,
And worded in the plain old scriptural manner.

Across the Delaware the sound comes faintly,
And fainter still across the tide of Time,
Though history yet repeats the language quaintly—
That from lips of Penn, the calm and saintly,
Speaking of love, the only true sublime.

This is his mission, and his sole vocation;
To hear of this, the savage round him presses;
How sweetly falls the beautiful oration
Which bids them hear the marvellous revelation
Of Christian peace through all their wildernesses!

Not to defraud them of their broad possessions
He comes, or to control their eagle pinions,
But to pledge friendship and its sweet relations,
Truth and forbearance, gentleness and patience,
To all the people of their wild dominions.

"We meet," he said, "upon the open highway
Of broad good will, and honest faith and duty;
Let love fraternal brighten every by-way,
And peace inviolate be thy way as my way,
Till all the forest blossoms with new beauty."

So spake their friend, and they revered his teaching;
They said, "We will be true to thee and thine."
And through long seasons toward their future reaching,
No act was shown their plighted faith impeaching—
Marring the compact, loving and divine.

O thou, like noble Penn, who truth adorest,
A priest at her great shrine in Freedom's temple,
While o'er this gift in thoughtful mood thou porest,
Point to the faithful children of the forest,
And bid the nations learn from their example.





II.

THE ALLIANCE.

HERE is an oaken relic from a bark,
That speaks of olden scenes and ocean mystery,—
An anchor from the Revolution ark,
Dropt to the present through the twilight dark,
Linking the troubled periods of our history.

It may be that the sapling of this wood,
Crowned on the coast with vines inviting inland,
Was swaying to the seawind's fitful mood,
Learning the rocking motion of the flood,
When roving Norsemen stood agaze at Vinland.

Or, did it feel the westward-sweeping gale—
The wind that still of God and freedom hymneth—
Which landward drove the saintly hero's sail,
Until the sea-tossed pilgrims, worn and pale,
Were landed on the icy rock of Plymouth?

Where'er it grew, the woodman found the oak,
It knew the teamster and the hewer's trestle,
It felt the hammers, snuffed the pitchy smoke,
Then seaward, like a steed from stall, it broke,
While Salisbury hailed her favorite warrior vessel.

Those were the days wherein we flung defiance
Unto a tyrant monarch and his henchmen.
We asked for friendship, France gave her compliance;
And, hence, we called our vessel the Alliance,
In honor of the noble-hearted Frenchmen.

Then France was generous France: her well-earned fame
Shed round the world a lustre of pure glory.
No Italy breathed curses on her name,
No Mexico stood pointing at her shame
With feeble fingers, desperate and gory.

The royal vessel sought her future realm,—
Royal, because her parent oak was regal;
And sceptred Science shaped her prow and helm,
And crowned Courage, naught could overwhelm,
Breathed in the bosom of that fierce sea-eagle.

The ocean cormorants fled before her path;
Her wing, descried afar, was fearful omen;
Full oft her desolating vengeance hath,
In the great tempest of her iron wrath,
Sent a wild shudder through the hearts of foemen.

Hers was the enviable pride to bear
The unselfish hero's well-beloved exemplar,
A Paladin, whose heart was full of prayer
For freedom's Palestine—his soul was there.
Forever honored be the good knight-templar.

O Gratitude, forget not the ovations
Due to a noble country's nobler scion.
Let Lafayette, before the gaze of nations,
Stand canonized amidst our constellations,
Belted with starry fame, like brave Orion.

Old Europe's waters bore her graceful keel,
And heard the rolling of her threatening thunder;
She taught the insolent buccaneer to kneel
And sue for quarter,—taught their homes to feel
A mingled sense of due respect and wonder.

Though she awhile the doubtful Landais bore,
It was her glorious privilege to carry
The pennant of Paul Jones, the commodore,
The pride and terror of the sea and shore.
And his, the hardy and intrepid Barry.

And when the war was o'er, she laid aside
The latest vestige of the past commotion,
And to the winds of Commerce, far and wide,
Shook out her sails for other realms untried,
And brought home treasure from the farthest ocean.

There have been doubtful Landais' on our deck,—
The deck of State,—that wellnigh brought disaster;
But thou, obedient to a nation's beck,
Didst save the flag-ship of the world from wreck,
O noble patriot and unswerving master!

And still thou rul'st this stormy deck of State,
With all thy sea-worn councillors in communion;
Still, with thy manned and well-tried guns in wait,
Stand by thy charge, O Captain, calm and great,
Beneath the steadfast banner of the Union!

And when the Southern buccaneer at last
Shall strike her colors, saying, "It is over,"
Lash on the prize and raise her jury-mast,
Stop all her leaks, make all her rigging fast,
And bring her homeward, a repentant rover.

And when anon our battle-flag is furled,
If that no insolent gauntlet lies before us,
By dastard in the hour of danger hurled,
Then let our ship of commerce sweep the world,
Her deck made musical with Freedom's chorus.





III.

THE PIECE OF HALLIARD FROM THE FLAG OF THE CUMBERLAND.

THIS simple cord, by unknown fingers spun,
Holds history in every slender fibre,—
Telling more baseness in one action done,
And of more heroism, than the sun
E'er saw upon the storied tide of Tiber.

A shred from off the halliards of our hope,
Our battle-banner, seldom lowered or baffled !
Did he who twined the fellow to that rope
Behold, in his imaginary scope,
The trembling traitor on his well-earned scaffold ?

He should have seen, methinks, the dance of death,
The traitor's dance in this rebellious season,
While the gaunt wizards on the Southern heath,
Like the foul hags encountered by Macbeth,
With hell-born charm and chant are brewing treason.

Fierce maledictions, breathed with desperate might
By trodden nations, longing to be freemen,
Shall fall upon them with the withering blight
Of leprous pestilence that walks at night,
Till their own hearts shall curse their reigning demon.





THE ATTACK.

IN Hampton Roads, the airs of March were bland,
Peace on the deck, and in the fortress sleeping,
Till, in the look-out of the Cumberland,
The sailor, with his well-poised glass in hand,
Descried the iron island downward creeping.

A sudden wonder seized on land and bay,
And tumult, with her train, was there to follow ;
For still the stranger kept its seaward way,
Looking a great leviathan blowing spray,
Seeking with steady course his ocean wallow.

And still it came, and largened on the sight ;
A floating monster ; ugly and gigantic ;
In shape, a waye, with long and shelving height,
As if a mighty billow, heaved at night,
Should turn to iron in the mid-Atlantic.

Then ship and fortress gazed with anxious stare,
Until the Cumberland's cannon silence breaking,
Thundered its guardian challenge, "Who comes there?"
But, like a rock-flung echo in the air,
The shot rebounded, no impression making.

Then roared a broadside; though directed well,
On, like a nightmare, moved the shape defiant;
The tempest of our pounding shot and shell,
Crumbled to harmless nothing, thickly fell
From off the sounding armor of the giant!

Unchecked, still onward through the storm it broke,
With beak directed at the vessel's centre;
Then through the constant cloud of sulphurous smoke
Drove, till it struck the warrior's wall of oak,
Making a gateway for the waves to enter.

Struck, and to note the mischief done, withdrew,
And then, with all a murderer's impatience,
Rushed on again, crushing her ribs anew,
Cleaving the noble hull well nigh in two,
And on it sped its fiery imprecations.

Swift through the vessel swept the the drowning swell,
With splash, and rush, and guilty rise appalling;
While sinking cannon rung their own loud knell.
Then, cried the traitor, from his sulphurous cell,
"Do you surrender?" Oh, those words were galling!

How spake our captain to his comrades then ?

It was a shout from out a soul of splendor,
Echoed from lofty maintop, and again
Between-decks, from the lips of dying men,
"Sink ! sink, boys, sink ! but never say surrender !"

Down went the ship ! Down, down ; but never down

Her sacred flag to insolent dictator.

Weep for the patriot heroes, doomed to drown ;

Pledge to the sunken Cumberland's renown.

She sank, thank God ! unsoiled by foot of traitor !





THE APOSTROPHE.

GREAT ruler, these are simple gifts to bring to thee,—
Thee,—doubly great, the land's embodied will;
And simpler still the song I fain would sing thee:
In higher towers let greater poets ring thee
Heroic chimes on Fame's immortal hill.

A decade of the years its flight has taken,
Since I beheld, and pictured with my pen
How yet the land on ruin's brink might waken
To find her temples rudely seized and shaken
By traitorous demons in the forms of men.

And I foresaw thy coming,—even pointed
The region where the day would find its man
To reconstruct what treason had disjointed.
I saw thy brow by Honesty anointed,
While Wisdom taught thee all her noblest plan.

Thy natal stars by angels' hands suspended,
A holy trine, where Faith, and Hope, and Love—
By these celestial guides art thou attended,
Shedding perpetual lustre, calm and splendid,
Around thy path wherever thou dost move.

No earthly lore of any art or science
Can fill the places of these heavenly three ;
Faith gives thy soul serene and fixed reliance ;
Hope to the darkest trial bids defiance ;
Love tempers all with her sublime decree.

'Tis fitting, then, these relics full of story,
Telling ancestral tales of land and sea,—
Each fragment a sublime *memento mori*
Of heroes mantled in immortal glory,—
Should be consigned, great patriot, unto thee.





THE DEFENDERS.

OUR flag on the land, and our flag on the ocean,
An angel of Peace wheresoever it goes ;
Nobly sustained by Columbia's devotion,
The angel of Death it shall be to our foes.
True to its native sky,
Still shall our eagle fly,
Casting his sentinel glances afar,
Though bearing the olive-branch
Still in his talons staunch,
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War !

Hark to the sound ! there's a foe on our border,
A foe striding on to the gulf of his doom ;
Freemen are rising and marching in order,
Leaving the plow, and the anvil and loom ;
Rust dims the harvest sheen,
Of scythe and of sickle keen ;

The axe sleeps in peace by the tree it would mar ;
 Veteran and youth are out,
 Swelling the battle-shout,
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War !

Our brave mountain eagles swoop from their eyrie ;
 Our lithe panther's leap from forest and plain ;
Out of the West flash the flames of the prairie ;
 Out of the East roll the waves of the main.
 Down from their Northern shores,
 Swift as Niagara pours,
They march, and their tread wakes the earth with its jar,
 Under the stripes and stars,
 Each with the soul of Mars,
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War !

Spite of the sword, or assassin's stiletto,
 While throbs a heart in the breast of the brave,
The oak of the North, or the Southern palmetto,
 Shall shelter no foe except in the grave.
 While the gulf billow breaks,
 Echoing our Northern lakes,
And ocean replies unto ocean afar,
 Yield we no inch of land,
 While there's a patriot hand
Grasping the bolts of the thunders of War !

ROME, July 4, 1861.



THE OATH.

HAMLET.—Swear on my sword.

GHOST (*below*).—Swear!—SHAKESPEARE.

YE freemen, how long will ye stifle
The vengeance that justice inspires?
With treason how long will ye trifle,
And shame the proud name of your sires?
Out, out with the sword and the rifle,
In defence of your homes and your fires.
The flag of the old Revolution,
Swear firmly to serve and uphold,
That no treasonous breath of pollution
Shall tarnish one star on its fold,
Swear!
And, hark, the deep voices replying
From graves where your fathers are lying:
“Swear, oh, swear!”

In this moment, who hesitates, barter
The rights which his forefathers won,
He forfeits all claim to the charters
Transmitted from sire to son.
Kneel, at the graves of our martyrs,
And swear on your sword and your gun,
Lay up your great oath on an altar
As huge and as strong as Stone-henge,
And then, with sword, fire and halter,
Sweep down to the field of revenge.

Swear !

And, hark, the deep voices replying
From graves where your fathers are lying :
“ Swear, oh, swear ! ”

By the tombs of your sires and brothers,
The host which the traitors have slain ;
By the tears of your sisters and mothers,
In secret concealing their pain—
The grief which the heroine smothers,
Consuming the heart and the brain ;
By the sigh of the penniless widow ;
By the sob of her orphans' despair,
Where they sit in their sorrowful shadow,
Kneel, kneel, every freeman, and swear.

Swear !

And, hark, the deep voices replying
From graves where your fathers are lying :
 "Swear, oh, swear !"

On mounds, which are wet with the weeping,
 Where a nation has bowed to the sod,
Where the noblest of martyrs are sleeping,
 Let the winds bear your vengeance abroad ;
And your firm oath be held in the keeping
 Of your patriot hearts and your God.
Over Ellsworth, for whom the first tear rose,
 While to Baker and Lyon you look ;
By Winthrop, a star among heroes ;
 By the blood of our murdered McCook,
 Swear !

And, hark, the deep voices replying
From graves where your fathers are lying :
 "Swear, oh, swear !"





THE EAGLE AND VULTURE.

In Cherbourg Roads the pirate lay
One morn in June, like a beast at bay,
Feeling secure in the neutral port,
Under the guns of the Frenchman's fort ;
A thieving vulture ; a coward thing ;
Sheltered beneath a despot's wing.

But there outside, in the calm blue bay,
Ouf ocean-eagle, the Kearsarge, lay ;
Lay at her ease on the Sunday morn,
Holding the Corsair ship in scorn ;
With captain and crew in the might of their right,
Willing to pray, but more eager to fight.

Four bells are struck, and this thing of might,
Like a panther, crouching with fierce affright,

Must leap from his cover, and, come what may,
Must fight for his life, or steal away !
So, out of the port with his braggart air,
With flaunting flags, sailed the proud Corsair.

The Cherbourg cliffs were all alive
With lookers-on, like a swarming hive ;
While compelled to do what he dared not shirk,
The pirate went to his desperate work ;
And Europe's tyrants looked on in glee,
As they thought of our Kearsarge sunk in the sea.

But our little bark smiled back at them
A smile of contempt, with that Union gem,
The American banner, far floating and free,
Proclaiming her champions were out on the sea ;
Were out on the sea, and abroad on the land,
Determined to win under God's command.

Down came the vulture ; our eagle sat still,
Waiting to strike with his iron-clad bill ;
Convinced by the glow of his glorious cause,
He could crumple his foe in the grasp of his claws.

" Clear the decks," then said Winslow, words measured
and slow ;

" Point the guns, and prepare for the terrible blow ;

And whatever the fate to ourselves may be,
We will sink in the ocean this pest of the sea."

The decks were all cleared, and the guns were all
manned,
Awaiting to meet this Atlantic brigand;
When, lo! roared a broadside; the ship of the thief
Was torn, and wept blood in that moment of grief.

Another! another! another! and still
The broadsides went in with a hearty good will,
Till the pirate reeled wildly, as staggering and drunk,
And down to his own native regions he sunk.

Down, down, forty fathoms beneath the blue wave,
And the hopes of old Europe lie in the same grave;
While Freedom, more firm, stands upon her own sod,
And for heroes like Winslow is shouting, "Thank
God!"





THE FLAG OF THE CONSTELLATION.

The stars of the morn
On our banner borne,
With the Iris of Heaven are blended ;
The hand of our sires,
First mingled those fires,
And by us they shall be defended.
Then hail the true
Red, White and Blue,
The flag of the Constellation ;
It sails as it sailed,
By our forefathers hailed,
O'er battles that made us a nation.

What hand so bold
As strike from its fold
One star or one stripe of its bright'ning,
For him be those stars
Each a fiery Mars,
And each stripe be as terrible light'ning.
Then hail the true
Red, White and Blue,
The flag of the Constellation ;
It sails as it sailed,
By our forefathers hailed,
O'er battles that made us a nation.

Its meteor form
Shall ride the storm
Till the fiercest of foes surrender ;
The storm gone by,
It shall gild the sky,
A rainbow of peace and of splendor.
Then hail the true
Red, White and Blue,
The flag of the Constellation ;
It sails as it sailed,
By our forefathers hailed,
O'er battles that made us a nation.

Peace, peace to the world,
Is our motto unfurled,
Though we shun not the field that is gory :
At home or abroad,
Fearing none but our God,
We will carve our own pathway to glory.
Then hail the true
Red, White and Blue,
The flag of the Constellation ;
It sails as it sailed,
By our forefathers hailed,
O'er battles that made us a nation.





THE ROLL OF HONOR.

DEDICATED TO MAJOR GENERAL ROSECRANS, WHO INSTI-
TUTED THE ORDER OF THAT NAME IN THE ARMY OF
THE CUMBERLAND.

LIKE the lordly Mississippi, we are sweeping to the
South,
A mighty Union river, and the gulf shall be its mouth;
O'er our front wave floats our banner, boys, that leads
to glory's goal,
And at its side, in martial pride, is borne the Honor
Roll.
On the Roll of Honor, boys; on the Roll of Honor,
boys;
Oh, let us see our names shall be on the Roll of Honor,
boys.

Like a great wind we drive Southward, with a storm
of Northern hail,
And our banner rides before us, as a cloud upon the
gale;
We will tear from out the rebel's hold his stolen stars
and bars,
And fame shall see our names enrolled beneath the
stripes and stars.
On the Roll of Honor, boys; on the Roll of Honor,
boys;
And fame shall see our names will be on the Roll of
Honor, boys.

With this great gale sweeping Southward, daily come
the gentle airs
Of our fathers' words of courage, and our mothers' con-
stant prayers;
With them our wives and sweethearts, with a love
beyond control,
Are reading in their fancy, boys, the names on Honor's
roll.
On the Roll of Honor, boys; on the Roll of Honor,
boys;
Oh, let them see our names will be on the Roll of
Honor, boys.

And when the last armed rebel falls, and bites his
native dust ;
When waves o'er every mile of land the banner of our
trust,
We'll return to those whose images are shrined within
the soul,
And proudly listen while they read our names on
Honor's roll.
On the Roll of Honor, boys, on the Roll of Honor,
boys ;
Oh, let them see our names will be on the Roll of
Honor, boys.

When the twilight settles round us in life's evening
cool and gray,
Among our children's children we'll describe the
battle day ;
They'll cluster to our knees to hear the story never
old,
And watch our trembling veteran hands point out the
names enrolled
On the Roll of Honor, boys ; on the Roll of Honor,
boys ;
And they shall see our names will be on the Roll of
Honor, boys.

And when at last Death's night comes on and stops
the battle din,
And we have conquered in our hearts the rebel hosts
of sin,
To the fields of Peace above us, may we march there
soul to soul,
And find our names emblazoned on the great Celestial
Roll.
On that Roll of Honor, boys ; on that Roll of Honor,
boys ;
Oh, let us see our names will be on that Roll of Honor,
boys.





POEMS IN ITALY.







TO H. W. L.

OH thou, the laureate of our western realms,
Singing at will beneath your Cambridge elms,
Charming that sacred mansion where the grand
Paternal Cincinnatus of our land
Dwells, a majestic shadow—more than king;
Who, staidly smiling, hearkens while you sing.
Wouldst thou but build in Rome, we should behold
O'er Nero's ruins rise the enduring house of gold.

But I, a Troubadour born out of time,
From shrine to shrine, pour out my idle rhyme,
Impelled still onward with a love intense,
Singing for love (the only recompense),
Of one sweet lady, and perchance to be
But spurned at last by scornful Poesy.



THE ART PILGRIM.

ROME holds to-day in her maternal trust,
An artist army gone to noteless dust,
The tribute of all nations, and they lie,
Their campaign o'er, beneath their favorite sky,
A tranquil brotherhood. How calmly well
They sleep at last in Cæsar's citadel—
As it were sweet to fill an urn in this
Earth's mausoleum—Fame's Necropolis!
Only a few brave generals of the field
Have left a name which history will not yield;
But, emulating these, behold to-day
What new recruits still throng the dubious way,
Toiling with hope, as if beneath their tread
Slept not the host of disappointed dead.
And now another joins the aspiring line;
A pilgrim knight, and Rome his Palestine.

Rome was his dream, since in his boyish path
A Fate, or Fury, smiling, or in wrath,
Dropt the light pencil of the limner's art,
Which seen he seized, and loved with all his heart.

Ah me, in sooth, much patient love it needs
To toil and starve, where only one succeeds
Out of the thousand! Yet, he deemed it grand
Even to fail 'mid that devoted band;
To labor toward the ever-flying mart,
Led by the banners of triumphal Art;
Feeling the sweet winds from her pennons flow
Athwart the pallid cheek and fevered brow;
To hear the music, and the steady beat
Of his, and his advancing comrades' feet.
Though hard the fare, and difficult the load,
Yet Beauty smiled on either side the road,
Till it seemed good, in such a land of bloom,
To be at rest beneath a nameless tomb.

Approaching Rome, he climbed the Apennines,
Which round the horizon rolled their billowy lines,
Where sailed his heart of hope, while blood as fleet
As Mercury's pinions, winged his tireless feet.
Sweeter than breath of Fame, the perfumed air
Breathed on his lip, and cooled his sunny hair.

The scene serene ; the sky a liquid blue,
Where his wild fancy with the falcon flew.
The mountain goat-herd trolled his shepherd rhyme,
The tinkling bells made chorus with their chime ;
Thrilled with the lark, the arching azure rang,
And full of rosy girls the vineyards laughed and sang.

And this was Italy—the glorious goal
Of many a long-gone vision of his soul.
Oh, happy youth—he of the golden hair ;
His present bright, his morrow promised fair.
How many a spirit worthy of such bliss,
For such an hour, in such a scene as this,
Would barter half its future ! Through his brain
Young Jasper felt the pleasure throb like pain,
Throb like the wings of some glad bird which flies,
Aching from slavery, to his native skies.

To sketch the beauty of a wayside scene,
He turned apart 'twixt rocks and laurels green,
And under chestnut boughs, until he found
A crumbling crag, with toppling turrets crowned.
Fast flies the pencil when the heart directs ;
When feeling, quicker than the sight, detects
The line of loveliness. But, hark, the leaves
Are stirred with music, and his eye perceives,

In the deep umber of the neighboring glade,
Figures, whose fiery colors in the shade
Burn like the red light of the setting sun!
One blows upon a rustic pipe; and one,
Who glows the centre of the flaming scene,
Leads their gay footsteps with her tambourine;
Still dancing as she plays, her followers,
With pleasure, more than emulating hers,
And intermingling arms, and songs insane,
Whirl till the green earth whirls with them again.
Thrice round the ring they wheel their dizzy flight,
Then past the ruin, laughing, sweep from sight.

Though swift they came, and though as swift they sped,
The painter caught the vision ere it fled;
But, striving still to fix the flying grace
Of her who led the momentary chase,
He toiled perplexed, till smothered laughter told
He was no more alone: and there, behold!
Close at his side the mirthful maiden stood,
Poised in the action of her wildest mood,
Still as a statue, with the self-same air
O'er which his pencil wrought him such despair;
The backward shoulders, tambourine aloft;
The dark eye full of laughter, large and soft;
The black waves rippling through the caught-up curls;
The crimson lips just parting on the pearls;

The full breasts heaving in their snowy wards,
As in rebellion 'gainst the crimson cords ;
Her height perfection ; rounded not too much,
A shape, where Nature could not add a touch ;
In all, a form to poets seldom shown,
For which the painters sigh, and sculptors seek in stone.

Breathless with wonder, gazed the startled youth,
Before his senses could explain the truth,
Then madly tore the picture he had wrought,
And flung the fragments wide, as worse than naught,
And joined the laughter of the wild-eyed maid,
Who led him prisoner where her comrades strayed.

It was a level space, which once had been
The courtyard of a castle, where was seen
A fountain, choked as is a tomb with dust ;
The songless triton, thick with moss and rust ;
Dripping green vines where once the waters flowed ;
Where ruined arch, and broken column showed
What marble splendor, and what knightly power
Reigned on this mountain in the feudal hour.

There led the maiden ; and the traveller saw
Groups of wild men, who, disregarding law,
Dwell in such covert places, making bold
With others' goods, as doubtless did of old

The early masters of these castled heights,
When robbers were not thieves, but gallant knights;
And Europe still permits the old disgrace—
The boldest robber holding highest place.
As witness,—nay, I dare not thrust it home,
I hear the usurper's guard patrolling Rome.

They leaned, or sat, or lay in open air,
Most lazily making pictures unaware—
The true Italian fashion. Here a troop
Drained the red flask, and sang. And there a group
Passed the wild story; many a curious tale,
Worthy Boccaccio. Some there were lay prone
And dead in sleep, like statues overthrown,
Half buried in the grass. But when came in
The maiden with the captive, all the din
Of song and story was no longer heard;
They ceased like feathered singers, when a bird
Of foreign plumage fills their eyes with doubt.
The sudden silence, like their leader's shout,
Brought all the sleepers to their feet, and they
Waited the word to charge, or stand at bay.

“Behold!” the maiden cried, and clapt her hands;
“See my first captive; how demure he stands,
And offering no resistance. All his gold
Is mine if I demand it! And I hold

His life within my palm." Then Pietro cried,
 (Pietro, who held her his affianced bride,
 And he the captain,—comeliest of the crew):
 "Take you the gold, it is your rightful due,
 But let his life remain as so much weight
 Of dull, red copper, a most cumbrous freight
 To barks which fly the chasing sloops of State.
 Make fast your prize, fair pirate, and then lift
 The precious bales aboard, and let him drift."

Then uprose one, who looked as she might be
 A mountain Borgia, full of majesty;
 Her black hair touched with gray; her cheeks with
 brown—
 The tan of forty summers; her swift frown
 Was like a summer cloud, and lit
 With fearful lightnings; yet, when she deemed fit,
 The smile could melt across those features wild
 With all the sweetness of a guileless child.

"Nay, Pietro, nay! Though he, whose place you
 hold
 As head of this, our band, was bad and bold;
 My master, yes, and thine; he was too brave
 To bid the hand he loved do what the knave,
 The cut-throat at his side could do as well!
 The child is innocent, and so shall dwell,

While I remain her mother and her guard."

"Come, come, good mistress; pray you, not so hard!"

Gay Pietro answered. "It were sport to see
The young hawk pluck the heron! Would not he
Much rather feel those dimpled fingers lurk
About his breast, than hands for rougher work.
But, be it as you will. There, Jocco, you
Try what your art on our new friend can do."

The robber slave strode forward, then recoiled;
Though not accustomed to be checked or foiled,
Nor easily daunted; but the maiden's look
Had something in it which he dared not brook.
Then seized she the *spadino* from her hair,
Which fell a storm of tresses, and the glare
Of the bright weapon glittering in the sun,
Flashed like her eye of anger. Every one
Cried, "Brava, brava!" even, as at play,
Clapping their loud applause, till, far away
Among the rocks, the aerial robber bands
Of echoes answered back with merry tongues and
hands.

Thrice round the throng she sped her fiery glance,
Which glittered like a bright, defiant lance,
And held her threatening posture till she saw
They all approved, and owned her will was law.

Then, confidently, in the stranger's hand
She placed her own, and said, " Let all the band
Show hospitality, and none offend
In word, or look, or deed, my artist friend !
Have you not heard the Roman painters tell
(You, who are models, know the story well),
How wild Salvator, in a mountain cave,
Lived with the robbers ; how they freely gave
Their bread and wine, and shelter ; and that he
Conceived there those great pictures which you see
On palace walls ; and which the princes hold
More precious than thick tablets of pure gold ?
So was it once ; and let it now be shown
That we can have a *Rosa* of our own."





THE CAMPAGNA.

Lo the Campagna! How those startling words
Sweep like swift fingers o'er enchanted cords,
Thrilling the heart with infinite delight!
Lo the Campagna! The incredulous sight!
Sailing from this, the eagle's wild domain
Cleaves the far blue of the historic plain,
Fainting with pleasure. How, on this high bar,
The soul dilates, and trembles like a star
New born. And, lo! as in a sea of rest
Rome lies, a palmy island of the blest,
Glowing with glory. Lo! the aspiring dome,
The smaller sky that over-arches Rome,—
Rome, and the minds of millions,—till it grows
Greater than that it emulates, and shows
How Power still sways, with her titanic will,
The ancestral sceptre on her sevenfold hill!

Here, where I stand, the weary pilgrim line
Drops on its knees before the long-sought shrine.
The way-worn mother, with her rapture wild,
Holds towards the Dome the wide-eyed, wondering
child.

Here youths and maidens kneel, with marvellous stare,
With pleasure taking precedence of prayer ;
Drinking the sight, of which, in some far year,
The curious grandchild at their side shall hear.
Here, manhood, from some foreign harvest-field,
Kneels, as beside his mother's feet he kneeled ;
And age, with white locks, bowing to the dust,
Salutes the goal—the temple of his trust—
His old arms crossed upon his tranquil breast,
Where all the passions lie in pious rest ;
The lamb and lion—and the child's control—
The reign of Peace. Millennium of the soul !
How beautiful ! Old pilgrim, here by thee,
The heretic within me bows the knee.





ROME ENTERED.

THE loud Vitura rings along the way,
White as the road with dust. The purple day,
O'er Monte Mario, dies from off the dome,
And, lo! the first star leads us into Rome.

Oh, glorious city! Through the deep'ning shade
A thousand heroes, like the gods arrayed,
And bards, with laurel rustling on their hair,
Walk proudly, and speak grandly, till the air
Is full of solemn majesty, and night
Is half way robbed by temples marble white.
Yon tramping steeds, and yonder glittering wheel—
Chariot & Cæsar—while the commonweal
Greets him with pæans, and we proudly march
On toward the Forum. The triumphal arch,

Burning with banners, and the murmuring street,
Deep strewn with roses, till the air is sweet
With floating odors. How the heralds blow
Their wild delirious trumpets, notes that go
Like swift flames soaring with the fiery tune,
Bursting from clarions blazing in the noon!
Whence come we? from what conquest? with what
 spoil?

Whence are these captives, bleeding as they toil
Under our load of trophies? Whips, and groans,
And blood, that shames the rose leaves on the stones
For depth of crimson! And the dew of tears
Blistering the noonday dust! O'ercome with years,
And toil, and grief, there drops the way-worn slave
Under the horses; and the conquering wave,
Above his carcass, pours its glorious flood
Down through the Forum in a path of blood,
Roaring with triumph! Do I wake, or sleep?
Thank heaven, 'twas but a dream; a ruined heap
The house of Cæsar and of Nero lies!
And o'er the golden wall the owlet nightly cries.





I.

THE SCALINNATTI.

IN Rome there is a glorious flight of stone,
Great steps, as leading to a giant's throne ;
Or to a temple of Titanic gods,
This marvellous height, up which the pilgrim plods,
Breathless halfway, seems like a stairway tracked
By myriad feet of some wild cataract ;
Like those where Nilus, with his flag of spray,
Leads his wild Abyssinian floods away.

Below this giant stairway, in the square,
There springs a cooling murmur in the air ;
The liquid music of a tinkling rill ;
A stolen naiad from the Sabine hill,
Still singing, in captivity, the lay
Learned on her native mountains far away.

In middle of this fount a marble barge
Sits, overflowing with its crystal charge ;
Its light mast liquid silver in the sun ;
Its viewless rowers singing every one,
Until—so feigns the fancy—warmly dark,
Great Egypt sails in the fantastic bark ;
Melting in languors of her own heart's heat,
A tame, bright leopard cushioning her feet !
But here, with swelling heart, and lordly mien,
The stately swan of Avon swims between.*

Crowning the flight, a porphyry column stands
Dark as the sphynx above the desert sands ;
Solemn as prophecy it points the sky,
Propounding its dim riddle to the eye ;
And it has seen, with look as calm as Fates,
On Nile and Tiber, the imperial States,
Rise nobly, and fall basely ; and there still
Waits for new wonders, silent on yon hill.

* The barge she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Burned on the water, etc.—*Antony and Cleopatra*.





II.

THE SCALINNATTI.

IN Rome, there is a glorious flight of stone,
Terrace o'er terrace rising, like that shown
To dreaming Jacob, climbing, till on high
The last broad platform nobly gains the sky.
On this great stairway what are these I see?
Ascending and descending! They should be
Angels with spotless mantles and white wings.
But, look again: those sad, misshapen things,
They scarce seem human! Where they crawl and
lay,

Their tattered misery, in the stranger's way,
Filling the air with simulated sighs,
Weeping for bread with unsuffused eyes.
Would they did weep, indeed! for, stung to tears,
Then were there hope where now no hope appears.

But such the melting influence of the place,
That one there was—most abject of his race;
A whining trunk—deprived of every gift
Save his misfortune; but with this, did lift
Himself to such a height of wealth and power,
That many a Roman noble, at this hour,
Envies his hoard, and many a sinking name
The beggar's usurous gold still keeps from shame.

Here the brown Sabines, in their gay attires,
Whose eyes still kindle with ancestral fires,
Bring down their mountain graces to the mart,
And wait for bread on the demands of Art.
There Belisarius, with his patriarch hair,
Sits blind and hungry. A Lucretia there
Winds her light distaff. Young Endymion here
Sleeps, as in Latmos. Yonder, drawing near,
The original of many a picture moves,
And many a statue which the world approves.
There sits the mother, with her soft, brown eyes
Bent o'er the face which on her bosom lies;
Enough of mingled wonder, pride, and trust,
To call the hand of Raphael from the dust.





THE OLD STUDIO.

'TwiXT these four walls, so dusk and soiled by Time,
Where you, poor student, with your dreams sublime,
Build a proud future—many a flaming brow
Hath reared the structure you are rearing now;
Then saw it, under Time's relentless hand,
Crumbling to nothing, like a dome of sand,
And the heart with it. Many a canvas here,
Painted with life-blood, and the modest tear;
Where hope still shed its wild misguiding light;
Or, where ambition, in his fancied might,
Rivalled the masters, now, midst dusty lots
Of kindred lumber in the Ghetto rots,
Gathering blackness, till the stranger calls,
And, for a pittance, decks his far-off walls

With "Raphaels," "Claudes;" and other rubbish lies,
While the poor artist in his garret dies.
In yon low cell, that reeks with ancient damp,
The student sculptor burns his nightly lamp;
The summer day too short to tire his heart.
Art is his toil; his pastime still is art.
There hews his statue; suffering as he carves,
And at the feet of his first effort starves.
Here toiled a courage hunger could not tame,
Till crushed ambition sapped the failing frame.
Here the young soul for truth and beauty sighed,
Till envy smote him, and the victim died.

Here many an aspiration as divine
As yours has perished—as may thine and mine;
And we may see the names we write to-day
So proudly, brushed, as idle dust, away.
Well, let them pass; 't were nobler thus to fall,
Striving, than never to have striven at all.
Brave heart, toil on; and grandly struggle still,
With steady purpose, and unwavering will;
There is reward, though failure crowns your lot;
A triumph Time and Envy baffle not;
The noble suffering, and the long endeavor,
Shall bring the soul its recompense forever.



A VISION IN ITALY.

THE clouds were built of roses ; purple showers
Of light, like ashes of those flaming flowers,
O'erveiled the mountains ; and the vesper bells,
Like hooded hermits lodged in turret cells,
Chanted their " Aves." All the mellow air
Throbbled with the trembling pulse of praise and
prayer—

The thrill of worship—till the deep sky, even
A bell of silver in a greater heaven,
Vibrating to the countless tongues abroad,
Poured the melodious anthem up to God.

To watch the glories of the dying light,
A pilgrim mounted to a rocky height
That overlooked the mountain's misty sea ;
Alone he sat in silent revery,

Endeavoring to make his heart believe
That all the charms of the delicious eve,
The sounds, the sunset, and the charmed air
Were Italy, and he was really there.

He looked, and dreamed, until his conjuring gaze
Saw marvellous shadows issuing through the haze.
Like clouds, they passed majestically slow ;
Silent as shadows of those clouds below ;
Stately as ships that skirt the horizon's bar,
Bearing their freight of mystery afar.

All the great dead of Italy went by,
Or rather say, the great, who cannot die ;
Poets and painters, sculptors, and the rest,
Who wore the fire of glory in their breast ;
Burning, until consumed with their own flame,
They passed to Death, the chief high priest of Fame,
And were thenceforth immortal. Every brow
Wore the green chaplet won in toil below,
And wore it grandly, spite the thorns beneath,
The goring thorns, the skeleton of Fame's wreath,
Which first about the bleeding brow she weaves,
The better to support the after leaves.
And where the laurel loftiest brushed the stars,
He knew its fulness hid the deepest scars.

Each bent on him, in passing, their deep eyes,
As if they felt that pain which never dies ;
The memory of mortal hopes and fears,
And loves unquenched by their immortal tears.

Anon, upon the dusky sky appeared
A crowned, colossal woman ! which the weird
Immortals seeing, in a curving line
They rose, and rose above the Apennine,
Until the tallest laurels caught a ray
Of glory from the sunken flame of day,
And thus they circled her. But who was she ?
Shade of what giantess, thus doomed to be
A watcher, with great sorrows overborne,
While her poor dust below lay tombless and forlorn ?

In gloomy quiet sat she, and her throne
Seemed but a ruin rankly overgrown ;
Of ruins only was her queenly seat,
And fallen columns lay about her feet,
Enough to corridor the starry heaven ;
While rising round her, through the golden even,
Shone grandly many a spectral arch and dome,
Shattered, as they had stood a siege at Rome.

An empty scabbard in her right hand lay,
The other propt her cheek ; her hair, half gray,

Fell subject to the wind ; her drooping head
Ached with three crowns, and all her forehead bled ;
Her once bright mantle, trampled in the dust,
Lay tattered, while a foreign robe was thrust
About her rudely, held as by a blast,
Whereon her eyes, at times indignant, cast
Their direful glances, and her fingers, wild,
Plucked at the garment like a fretful child.

There, round the sorrowing shadow, stood the line
Of knightly phantoms, and their eyes divine
Wept when she wept, and what she bade to do
Their ghostly hands attempted. Well she knew
They were her chiefest champions, and her trust,
The guard which kept her memory from the dust.

What sound was that? A ringing, martial note
Jarred the near hills and streamed through lands remote ;
And he who blew stood on a rocky crest,
A battlement of nature, and the nest
Where Freedom rears her tyrant-scorning young ;
When o'er the heights the clarion far had rung,
Obeying answers ran from hill to hill,
And in the valley were repeated still.

From Adria's mart a painful voice was borne,
Like the low wailing of a bird forlorn ;

Round the Campagna rang the thrilling call,
And echoed loudly 'gainst the Roman wall,
O'er poisonous marshes, down the purple shore,
Then swept the sea, nor died amid its roar.
And, lo! the glad Sicilian shepherds heard,
And sped through orange groves the wakening word;
From Ætna's side the jubilant echo sprung,
Till old Vesuvius woke, and all his vineyards rung.

These sounds commingling, reached the shadowy
throne;

The shade from off the queenly brow was blown,
Swift as a cloud gust-driven from the sun,
And all her form a sudden splendor won.
She dropped the robe, and in her beauty stood,
Like Hero, gazing o'er the battling flood.

At once, like meteors streaming down the air,
Came all her court, with every falchion bare,
And round the summoning hero closely prest,
Fanning the flame that fired his patriot breast.
Through all the land there sped tumultuous roar,
Loud as the sea. The awakened mountains wore
Their battle flags of fire. The blazing breath
Of sudden conflict thundered notes of death;
Death to oppression wheresoe'er it be:
The despots fled, and Italy was free!

"Viva Italia!" Every prison door
Swung with a sound that clang'd from shore to shore.
"Viva Italia!" In his chains of rust
The Press arose and shook them to the dust,
Proclaiming, in the tumult of his glee,
"Viva Italia! Italy is free."

"Viva Italia!" rang the glad earth round.
"Viva Italia!" Answering to the sound,
The queenly shade descended, and her pride
Was first to wreath the brow which had defied,
And frighted her oppressors with its frown.
She, who had sat in exile, looking down
Long centuries of pain, her sad estate
Mocked with the memory—she once was great—
Now felt the long-lost sceptre in her hand,
Received once more the homage of the land.





MISCELLANEOUS.







TO R. H.,

ON RECEIVING FROM HIM A BEAUTIFUL SILVER FRUIT-
DISH, CHRISTMAS, 1864.

OUT of what charmed artist's brain
Came the beautiful form I here behold?
The soul of a glorious Greek, it is plain,
Must have dreamed this dream of silver and gold.
Perchance he lived in an attic cold,
His guest the sun, and the rain, and the wind;
His only riches the wealth untold,
Which glows and gleams in the artist mind;
Doomed never to taste the far-off fruit,
That shall crown this carved and delicate brim.
Does he walk the world? or is he mute
In the dust of buried ages dim?
Though he lives or sleeps in his funeral suit,
The heart of the bard goes out to him.

With this wonderful work before me placed,
So pure in its beauty, embossed, and chased,
The fancy suddenly plumes her wing
And flies to regions where never yet
Her noiseless and venturous feet were set,
And as she flies, she needs must sing ;
She hovers o'er Indian mines afar,
And seeks the fabulous ophir field ;
And Palestine under its Christmas star ;
Or, in Hellas, finds some Homeric shield,
Into ingots made by the greed of a Turk ;
Or beautiful censer, a rare antique,
Swung in the hands of a Roman or Greek ;
Or delicate image, Athenian work,
Melted and sold by some infidel thief,
Whom the gods have long since brought to
grief ;
Or wonderful vase, by Cellini made,
To grace the cloth of some princely board ;
Or traces within the Cathedral shade,
Those sainted and silver statues fine,
Which Cromwell, going from shrine to shrine,
Cast angrily down in the name of the Lord,
Then rolled them in coin through the world of
trade,
Till they slept, perchance, in a miser's hoard.

She sweeps where Brazilian summer shines
Into the shades of the Andean mines ;
By turbulent rivers, broad, deep, and bold,
'Mid California's hills of gold ;
Under giant cedars, antique as man,
Planted ere History's life began ;
And there beholds, in its glittering birth,
The new-found ore as old as the earth.

A thousand mystical guesses arise
And swim in the dream-light of her eyes—
But all in vain ; she only knows
That this beautiful form before her glows,
Silver without and golden within ;
 It gleams like a rising harvest moon,
When labor ceases and pleasures begin
 In a land of fruit at the close of June.
Alive with its light is the twilight room,
And already I breathe the sweet perfume,
The delicious odors that seem to swim
Around its future laden brim ;
The grape and the plum, the pear and the peach ;
All these seem glowing within my reach,
And mingling its delicate odor and smile
Is the fruit of many a far-off isle ;
But sweeter still the thought ascends,
Around it I see kind groups of friends.

The metal is solid, and massive, and pure,
And wrought with all skill that an artist can
lend;
But there's something exists that I value still
more—
It is this: and the Master Designer, I'm sure,
Took out from Humanity's mine the best ore
To make it—the generous heart of my friend.





OUR SOLDIERS' FAMILIES.

A PROLOGUE, DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF AN
AMATEUR PERFORMANCE OF HAMLET FOR THE BENE-
FIT OF THE SOLDIERS' FAMILIES IN CINCINNATI,
FEBRUARY 6, 1865.

OUR soldiers' families! How the fancy roams,
And finds these patient patriots in their homes;
Finds them at quiet firesides—nobly there—
Waiting beside the hero's empty chair;
Beside the chair, perchance, which never more
Shall know the occupant it knew of yore.

Look in to-night beside that tranquil fire;
There sits the mother, there the aged sire;
Or there the wife, with matron accents mild,
Teaching a patriot prayer unto her child;

A prayer for him who put his all at stake,
His all (save honor), for his country's sake.
There sits the maid with eyes of dreamful light,
Watching her warrior lover in the fight;
Beholds him with a swelling heart of pride,
With fiery Phil. along the valley ride;
Or Grant, or Thomas, our stern, sturdy George,
Whose stalwart blows fall thundering like a forge;
Or, with his eastward banner, sees him swoop
Through Georgian fields with Sherman's eagle troop.
Perchance his lot is on the ocean cast;
Where Farragut stands steadfast as his mast;
Perchance, with Winslow, poured the shot and
shell
From guns which rung the British pirate's knell;
Or at Stone River stemmed the leaden shower,
Where noble "Rosey" saved the desperate hour.
Or with that glorious chief to whom was given
The right to scale above the clouds of heaven,
And bear the starry-rainbow flag on high,
Back to its native region in the sky.
Behold our general, on the rocky height,
A stately statue in a dome of light!
With all the rebel army put to rout,
Our fighting Hooker takes a long "Lookout!"
While through his army shouts on shouts increase,
Hailing this true commissioner of Peace.

Our soldiers' families! Some are veiled in gloom;
The mourners' crape pervades the solemn room;
There, though the tears in sorrowing eyes may
start,

There is no murmur in a patriot heart.
Though sad the lot, the recompense is plain,
They hear the falling of the bondman's chain,
And hear the song of freedom from the South,
While shouts of "Union" pass from mouth to mouth;
In glory's cause the warrior died content,
With human liberty for monument.

Our soldiers' families! Mark the glorious sight,
For them the Swan of Avon sings to-night.
The earth's great laureate, whose immortal skill
Created worlds and peopled them at will,
Whose wizard wand, at one majestic swing,
Could make a kingdom, or dethrone a king;
For them he bids the spectre monarch rise;
For them the sweet Ophelia sings and dies;
For them he asks a sovereign of our own
To leave to-night his magisterial throne;
To lay aside awhile his genial vein,
To look, and think, and be the melancholy Dane.

Our soldiers' families! For them have come
This generous audience, packed from pit to dome.

For them (would it were worthier), here I lay
Upon their altar this, my light bouquet;
And if, perchance, their kindly eyes should view
Among the leaves some random drops of dew,
Believe them each the poet's loving tear,
In secret shed beside some patriot's bier.

Newly descended from their high estate,
For them, be sure, the angels watch and wait;
Our patriot sires, who all our freedom gave,
Look down and bless the households of the brave;
But, grander still, within his dome of domes,
God smiles his blessing on our Soldiers' Homes!





EPITHALAMIUM.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL W——.

THERE 's a glorious group in Parian stone,
Which made the sculptor a deathless name;
War stands with his strong arm gently thrown
Round beauty, that lives in immortal fame,
By the gods conceded the brightest and best;
Her light hand lies on his manly breast,
To find, as it were, how his great heart stirs.
His noble eyes look down on hers—
That look which only love confers—
While hers beam tenderly up to him
In the depth of their love-light, dewy dim;
And over both, with hymeneal flame,
Brave Cupid proclaims his triumphant endeavor—
Then Beauty and War, in the world of fame,
Stand wedded in spotless marble forever.

And thus, our Union Mars to-day,
A warrior as noble, as brave, as tall,
Stands with his bride, and over all
Love hovers, and whispers his sweet commands,
Blessing the union of hearts and hands;
And, joining with him in his dear endeavor,
Let us bless the Union for ever and ever.





THE CABLE.

LAI'D BY THE "AGAMEMNON" AND "NIAGARA."

'Tis fit the grand old kingly name
Of which the kingliest poet sings,
Should eastward bear Jove's track of flame,
And link it to the land of kings.

'Tis well, Niagara, whose renown
With Freedom mingles evermore,
Should westward lay its burden down,
And chain the world to Freedom's shore.

'Tis done; the angry sea consents—
The nations stand no more apart;
With clasped hands the continents
Feel throbbings of each other's heart.

Speed, speed, the Cable ; let it run,
A loving girdle, round the earth,
Till all the nations 'neath the sun,
Shall be as brothers at one hearth,—

As brothers, pledging hand in hand,
One freedom for the world abroad,
One commerce over every land,
One language, and one God !.





WHAT A WORD MAY DO.

ONE day, as we sat at a generous board,
Where wine with a liberal hand was poured,
I heard a beautiful lady say,
Whose lord had sometimes gone astray,
Just as the sparkling cup was raised,
That one too much for a social dinner—
A rebuke, I am sure, the angels praised—
“ I *hate* the sin, but I *love* the sinner.”

Down went the cup to the snowy cloth,
Brimming and laughing with creamy froth,
That quickly flattened below the brim,
While the master's eye with a haze grew dim,

And ever after, the wine at his side
Woed him in vain as it sparkled and died ;
And though he should sit at the board of a duke,
'Mid the kingliest wines of a princely dinner,
He would still remember that sweet rebuke,
" I *hate* the sin, but I *love* the sinner."





TO LUCY.*

ACCOMPANIED BY A TOY.

Dear Lucy, the light of your sweet little face,
I have heard by good judges proclaimed ;
If it bears of your beautiful mother a trace,
Then, darling, you are properly named.

They christened you "Lucy," my dear little one,
And, if what I am told is half true,
That you shine in the house like a ray of the sun,
I don't know what else they could do.

A dear, truant angel, just out of the sky,
You needs must be radiant, I'm sure ;
May the light of your smile, and the light of your eye,
Undimmed in their lustre endure.

* Light.

With this toy—no great thing, but it still might be
worse—

You can whistle, or ring out a chime ;
Accept, too, this poor penny-whistle of verse,
With its light jingling rattle of rhyme.





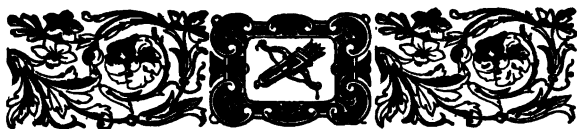
EPITAPH.

FOR MRS. M——.

Toward the dark gate we saw her slowly glide,
The angel Patience moving at her side ;
The noiseless portal opened, and the light
A moment gleamed, then left us in the night,
Where still we sit beside her sacred urn,
Praying the angel Patience to return.

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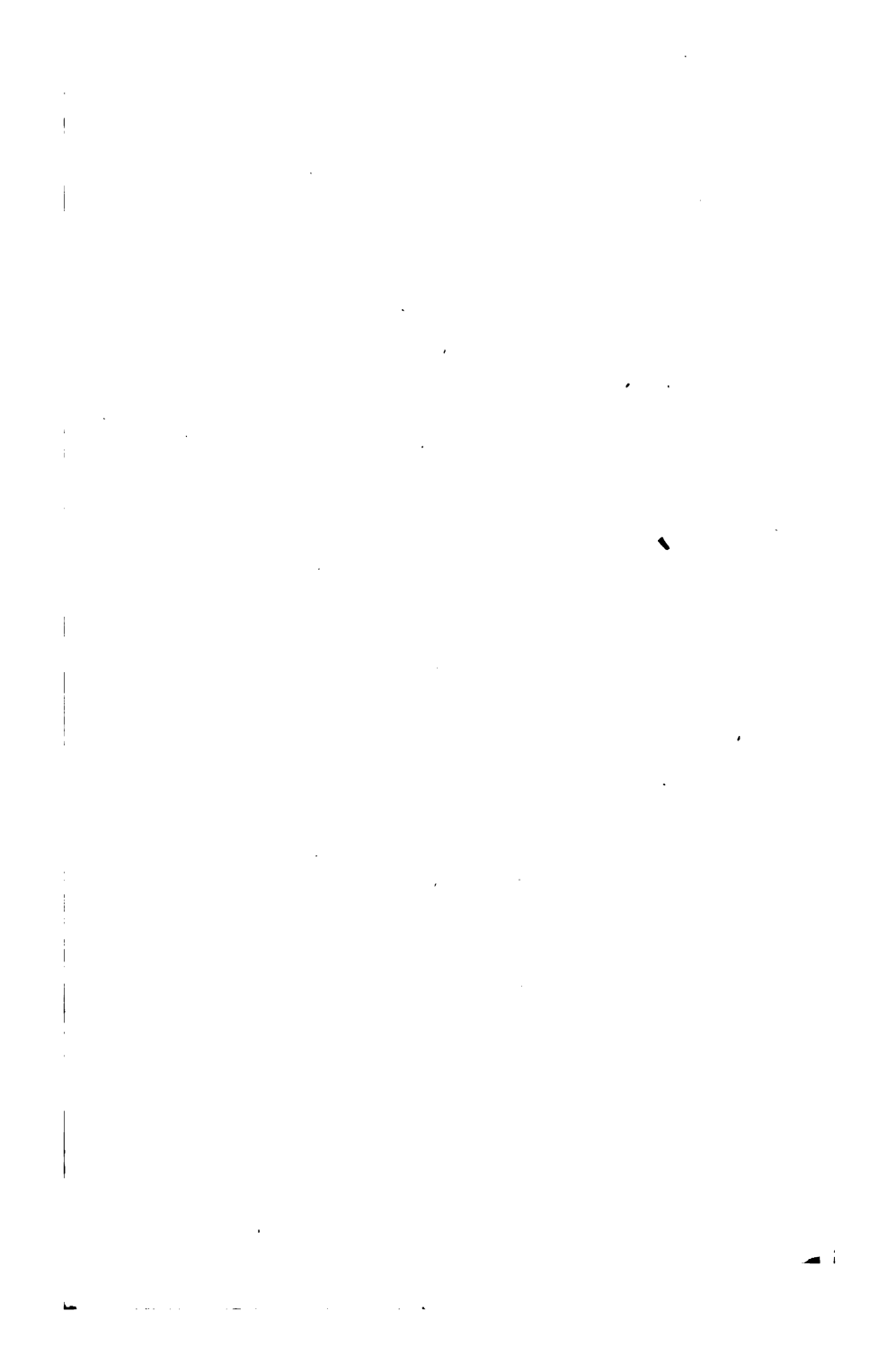




THE FOOL'S ARROW.

THE fool who shot against the noonday sun,
Then stood agape to note the mischief done,
Just as he thought the missile at its place,
Received the returning arrow in his face;
But still a fool—though bleeding, and in pain—
His vanity could make the matter plain;
“Behold!” he cried, “Apollo’s jealous spite
Lets fly this shaft at my superior light!”







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POEMS

BY

THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

A NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION, IN TWO
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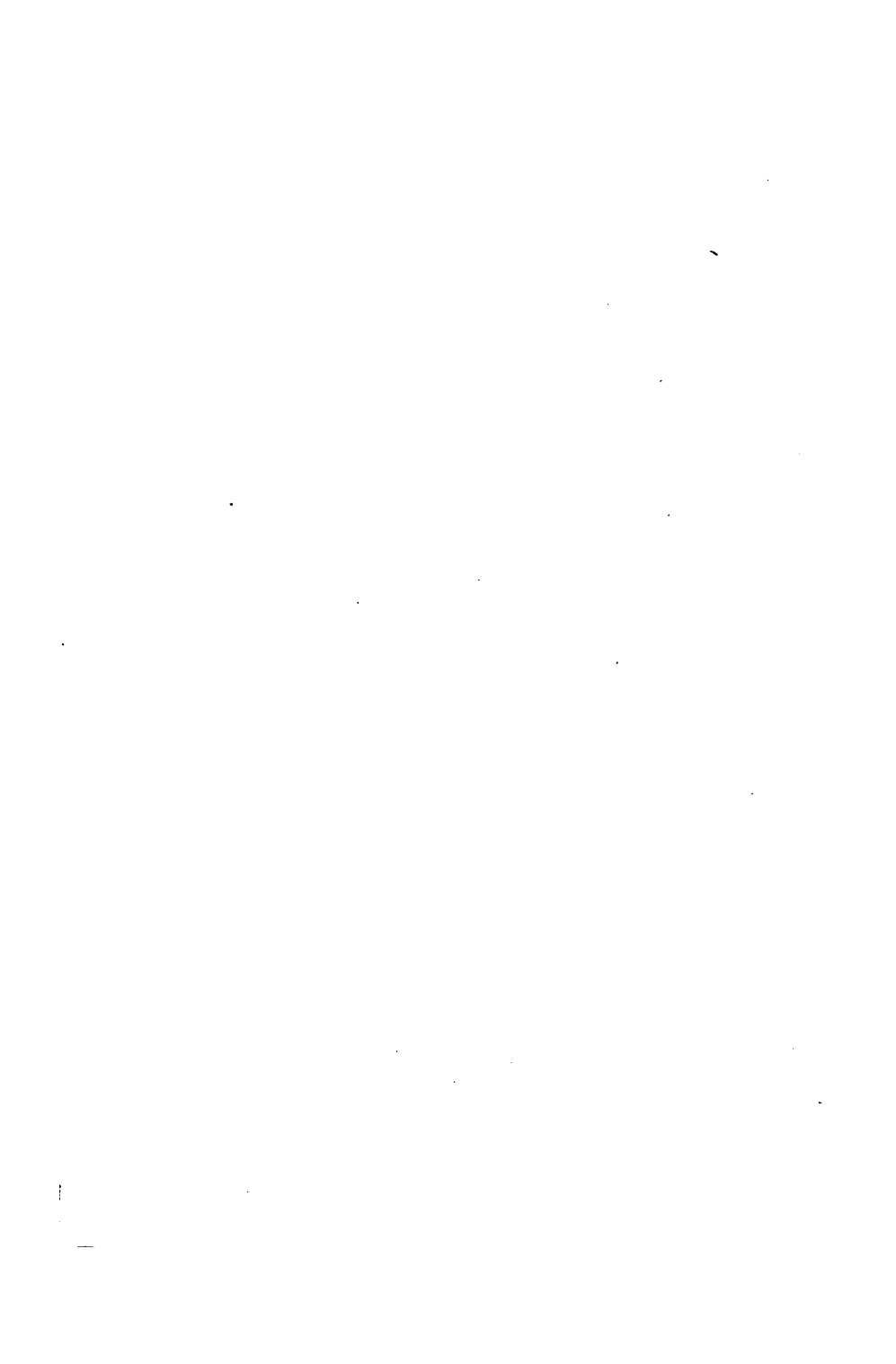
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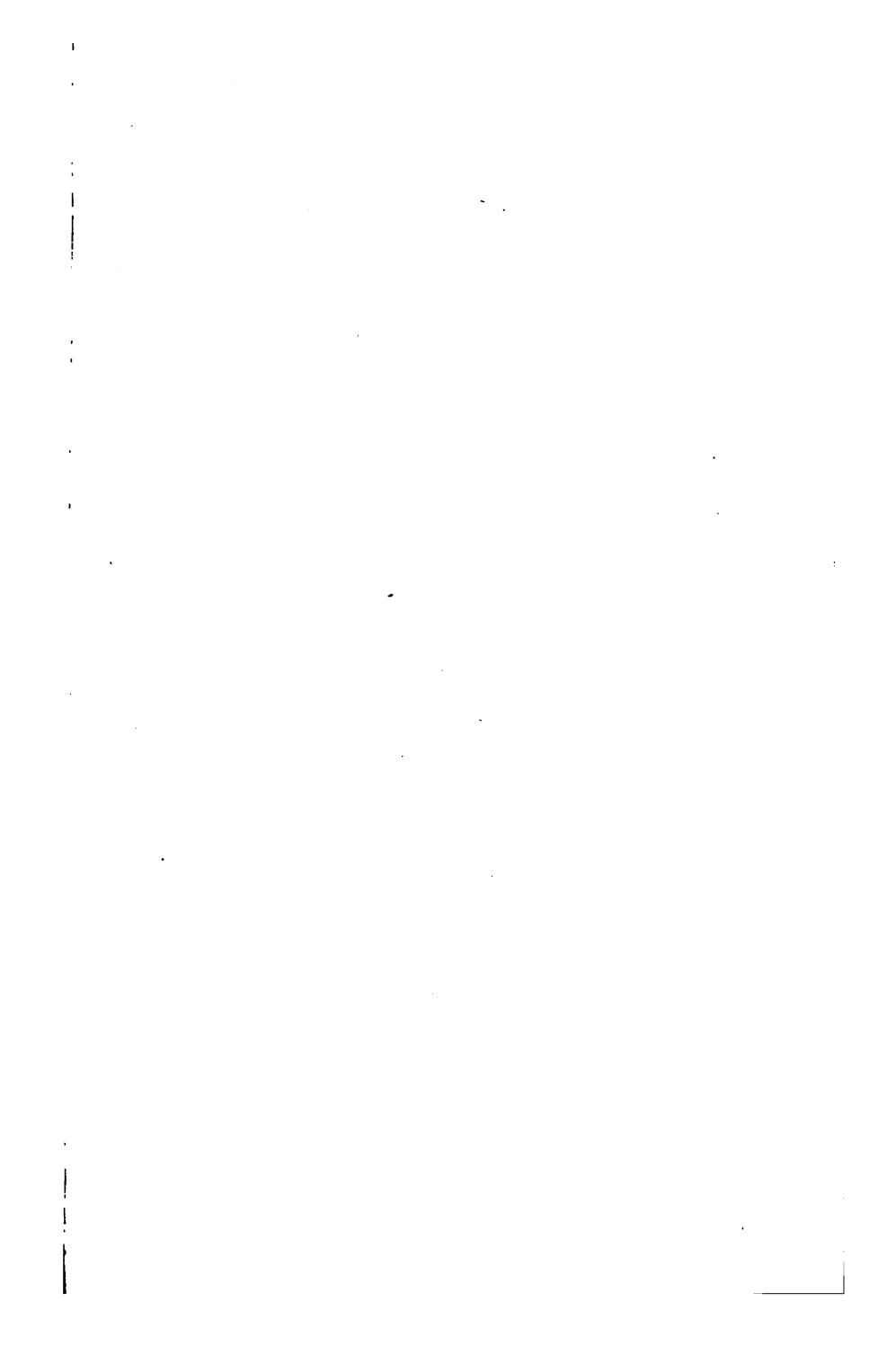
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Walter ...

1911

