

POEMS FOR LOYAL HEARTS

WILLIAM LIVINGSTON





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POEMS FOR LOYAL HEARTS

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BY

REV. WILLIAM LIVINGSTON

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Love beareth yet with all that stains the world.

Louise Imogen Guiney



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Many of the following verses, now given with some alterations, were permitted to appear at various times in the CATHOLIC WORLD, the AVE MARIA, the ROSARY, the New York FREEMAN'S JOURNAL, the Troy DAILY PRESS, the CHILDREN OF PROVIDENCE and OUR COLORED MISSIONS, for which kindness grateful acknowledgment is here rendered. Others saw the light in periodicals which have ceased to exist, and a few are printed for the first time.

TO
JAMES LIVINGSTON
MY BROTHER

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IN HOPE ASSURED

When Visions Pass

A BOY beside my mother's knee,
I dreamed myself a name
That girt the land on wings of fame,
And crossed the throbbing sea.
Ah! simple dream,
Than scenes of elfin land more fair!
The child passed by, the youth came on,
Yet roses warmed the air.

A student bending o'er the page
Where dwells the brilliant past,
Mine was the light illumed the vast,
The wondrous coming age.
Ah! luring dream,
That taught my youthful mind to dare!
The days stole by and manhood came,
Yet found my brow still bare.

WHEN VISIONS PASS

A man endowed with pride alone,
I sought to pierce the skies;
To grasp what far beyond me lies,
And know as I am known.
Ah! wild, wild dream,
That urged but failed to lead me there!
The night has passed, the morning dawns,
And finds me here at prayer.

Gone with the song forever mute,
The lily's bloom that died,
Still as the soothing tones that hide
Within a voiceless lute.
Ah! buried dreams!
My soul is filled with fragrance rare
Of that which knows no fading hues,
God's love and tender care.

A Crushed Rose

My fingers crushed a fresh cut rose
Nor told me in my heedless pride,
Until the perfumed air complained
My careless act to chide.
Ah! then too late I sighed
And mourned the evil done,
But all in vain, the petals died
One by one.

My rudeness pained a loving heart
Nor told me of her sharp surprise,
Until I saw the darkened light
In soft, reproaching eyes.
Ah! then repentant sighs
And tears were not in vain,
For smiles as dawn to waking skies
Came again.

Wintry Hearts

SPRING should come but Winter lingers;
All the world is cold,
Waiting till the fairy fingers
Shall her robes unfold,
Waiting for her minnesingers
And their song of gold.

Buds that should be bursting flowers
Hang with folded lips,
Telling of the sky that lowers
And the chill that nips,
Keeping back the honeyed bowers
And the bee that sips.

Thus our wintry hearts shall ever
Mourn in cold decay:
God with all His love can never
Bring the gladsome May,
While our want of true endeavor
Keeps the Spring away.

Presumption

A DREAMY rosebud lost in thought
Was wondering why it grew,
And why the dusky evening brought
Such load of chilling dew.
“Ah me!” it sighed, “how short the day!
The dreary night how long!
Perchance 'tis just and wise, as they
With brows of wintry wisdom say,
And yet—Ah! well,
This young heart feels it wrong.”

Ah! thus our feeble minds would scan
The wherefore and the why,
Forgetful that to finite man
Some things must hidden lie.
Where brilliant souls have paused in awe,
We tear aside the veil,
The vast, the infinite to draw
Within the bounds of human law,
And yet—Ah! well,
God knows that man is frail.

When Dewdrops Fall

THE dewdrops trembling on the leaf,
When dawn unveils the morning sky,
Perceive their presence gives but grief
And breathe a soft good-bye.

Then red, pulsating sun-rays fold
In warm embrace the drooping flower,
And sombre tints are turned to gold
Beneath their subtle power.

How brief that hour of joyous pride
In garden close or wildwood glen,
Till shadows fall at even-tide
And dews return again.

Ah! night is longer far than day,
Clouds gather even in summer skies;
The smiles of gladness pass away
But sorrow never dies.

In Advent

THE voiceless gloom of silent night
Lies gray along the pallid hills,
Where cold and ghostly terror fills
One heart that yearns for morning light.

A heart whose own half-stifled beat
Measures the passing time in fear,
And tells how sad the hour and drear
Before the night and morning meet.

Yet chill and sharp the night winds blow,
Robbed of the day's delicious balm,
Across a world that pale and calm
Awaits the morn in robes of snow.

Robes that will shine as crystal strands
Of silvered pearl by angels wove,
Whose folds, in evidence of love,
Have floated from the Father's hands.

O coming love! with ashen cheek
We wait thy tender smile to see,
Yet tremble lest our souls should be
Too sin-bestained to hear thee speak.

Dear God! could we but live alway
In vesture clean as falling snow,
How softly would our faces glow
With rapturous joy to greet the day!

A Moonlit Frost

TO-NIGHT I stand on frost-baked snow,
And watch the full moon riding high
'Mid silver waves of cloud that flow
Across a cold blue sky.

The spectral trees are thin and bare
Beneath a heaven all mute the while;
The landscape lies serenely fair
And smiles a ghostly smile.

All colors warm and living things
Are lost to view and silence reigns,
As when the soul expands her wings
And shrouded clay remains.

A MOONLIT FROST

Before my feet a slender stream
Slips through an archless icy cave
And shoots a timid, flickering beam
From many a trembling wave.

Yet still the halo-circled moon,
From out yon curving cold-blue sea,
Sends down her soothing, precious boon
Of light to earth and me.

While crystal snow and streamlet pale
Look up to her in meek amaze,
That night's fair queen should light the vale
With such resplendent rays.

And I that own a Queen divine
Who smiles on me from Heaven above,
Know not why such a gift is mine;
Ah! clearly God is love.

When Sunset Comes

How beautiful, though sad,
Are glimpses of the past
To hearts still young and glad
When years are flying fast!

For as they glance along
The vistas of the years,
Their lips break out in song
If eyes should melt in tears.

Such hearts can always find
The light in days gone by
Which stimulates the mind
To thoughts that glorify.

WHEN SUNSET COMES

The sun at eve, grown old,
In love would still remain,
And gilds with warm, red gold
The mourning hill and plain.

Thus even their darkest days
Are touched with beamy light
That fills the soul and stays
To make the present bright.

Two Autumns

YOUNG leaves in Spring are tender,
But if the parent stem
Be rich and strong, what splendor
And strength it yields to them.
Then Autumn's wildest blowing
May surge around and roar,
Yet, tinged with red
Like heart's blood shed,
In warmer beauty glowing
They're lovelier than before.

Young love is rich in fragrance,
And if that love be true,
It glows with fire that vagrance
And time will not subdue.
Then pain or grief no longer
Can make such hearts grow cold,
For, tinged with red
From God's Heart shed,
The purest love is stronger
And sweeter still when old.

The Truest Love

OCTOBER winds blow sharp and rude
To mar our Autumn joys,
Yet well we know the power for good
In that which now destroys.

Strong, earnest men at times are wild
As stormiest winds that blow,
Whose inmost hearts are sweetly mild
With light and love aglow.

In Cherry Lane

In Cherry Lane the blossoms blow
In wreaths of white around the trees,
And spread their petals wide, as though
They longed for nectar-seeking bees.

O'erhead, the arching boughs that spring
From pillar trunks look down and smile
On lowly currant shrubs that cling
Around their feet along the aisle.

In Cherry Lane the sunbeams steal
Through many a leaf and branch above,
And tender shoots come forth to feel
The touches of a wondrous love.

And life grows warmer with the hours,
Unmoved, unchilled by human pang,
Till from the stems now robed in flow'rs
The great, red drops in clusters hang.

IN CHERRY LANE

Ah! Mother mine! white blossoms came
And filled my soul with thoughts of thee,
Who art to those that love thy name
What honeyed buds are to the bee.

Thou art the floweret white and fair,
A virgin from thy stainless birth,
The fruitful stem designed to bear
A Saviour to our sinful earth.

And when the cherries, ripe and red,
Come forth upon the breast of June,
They'll tell me of a heart that bled,
By men forgotten all too soon.

Ah! precious drops! through future days
Preserve my soul from spot or stain,
With tender thoughts of love and praise
That once were mine in Cherry Lane.

February Snow

IN downy softness falling from the pale white sky
It clothed the naked branches and with seeming fond-
ness clung,
Where we saw the blushing blossoms in the days gone
by,
When the blossoms and the days were young.

Quietly it floated downward through the still, calm
night,
And piled a feathery burden, till beneath the con-
stant strain,
Limbs, that felt the sap up-rushing, bent and showed
their might,
But the rot-attainted snapped in twain.

Then came the welcome murmur of a soft south wind,
That caused a fluttering stir amid the foliage of
snow,
And the branches all looked fresher when they rose to
find
It had fallen to the earth below.

Ah! many a trivial sorrow, in the long, sad days,
Has brought such clinging burden to the world-
corrupted soul,
And many a weak, misguided one with wild-eyed gaze
Has plunged him where the dark floods roll.

But souls that soar in silence from the cold, gray earth,
Find love and courage clinging round the cross to
which they yield,
Till the breath of heaven lifts them to a fresh, new
birth,
With the chastening hand of God revealed.

To a March Bud

FIRST promise of the sunny days to come,
When bursting flower and softly swelling fruit
Will make for earth her yearly paradise ;
So delicate and graceful are thy leaves,
They charmed the sun to rude, insistent love
That brought these mantling blushes here to stay
Until thy riper beauties throw aside
Their green protection, and thy petals ope
For minstrel bees that honey-burdened heart.

Full many a fairer bud I've seen unfold
And live their perfect lives from hour to hour ;
Now mournful in the chilling tears of night,
Now glistening in the laughter of the morn,
Now glowing in the full-orbed smile of day.
The story of their lives will tell thy tale ;
The story of thy life and theirs is mine.

One hand has fashioned us with one intent :
 To manifest His glory and to serve
 As lowly instruments of joy to men.
 And yet thy hopeful look has waked my soul
 To sweeter strains of music than the rest :
 I know not why, save that the passing gloom
 Lay round my heart with more oppressive woe
 Than heretofore. But now the earth's astir ;
 Thro' all her wondrous grades of living things,
 From soul-blest man to nature's lowest forms,
 One chord is trembling and the air is filled
 With mighty symphonies of waking life.
 And I, in homage to our Father's love,
 Stoop down to touch thee with my grateful lips
 And whisper : "Bud, I am a child again."

The cheeks of apple bloom have not returned
 Nor can I climb again my mother's knee
 To find relief from all the pains of life
 In sweet oblivion on that loving breast.
 And yet, my bud, I am a child again.
 Repentance cleans away the stain of years,
 And leaves the soul absolved as fair in grace
 As angel youth where never blot has been.

TO A MARCH BUD

It may not last for many precious hours,
For men are frail in intercourse with men;
But while I stay and drink thy perfume in,
There's nought but innocence for thee and me.

Dost envy me? Ah! thou wilt pass away,
Nor earth nor sky shall know thy beauties more.
So shall not I. But since our ways are one
About our Master's business: Him to praise,
Thou with thy beauty, I with mind and tongue;
Can we not cheer and help each other now?
My careful hand can lop decaying limbs,
And brush the crawling insect from thy leaves,
And wrap thy roots in warmth-producing soil;
Whilst thou canst smile upon me in return.
And when my heart is sad, though wanting cause,
Thy perfumed breath shall drive its cares away.
So, loving thee, I'll love our Master more,
And love, my bud, is what we live for here.

When Passion Dies

TO-NIGHT in the snow-clad, frozen valley,
 What glittering smiles for the soft-cheeked moon
Transform the faces of mound and river,
 That lie in the glory of night's full noon.
Ah! southland breezes with dewdrops laden,
 And dawn's gray veiling will come too soon.

The young day brought me her morning greetings
 In golden glances and laughter white ;
The passionate noontide glowed and sparkled,
 The sunset clothed me in crimson light.
Ah! dearer far, in its chastened beauty,
 The calm, pure smile of the nun-robed night.

The Spectrum of Love

My prism is set, to catch one ray of light
That enters from the outer world to flow
Across my room in lines of sentient snow
Instinct of heaven and with its radiance bright.
A narrow band of soft, celestial white
It sinks within the crystal prism and lo!
New rays divergent issue forth and glow—
A bow of promise in the chambered night.

My heart is hushed, my questing lips are closed
In joy for light where eyes had long been blind;
That violet is mercy's gentle sway,
That red is justice firm! Yet these, opposed,
Unreconciled in my poor prism-like mind,
Are one in God, love's white, eternal day.

After the Rain

THE moist winds come with greetings strangely sweet
To breathe their cooling fragrance on my face,
And seem to fold me in their soft embrace
As some old friend they long had yearned to meet.
With new found life all nature's pulses beat,
The hour of gloom has passed and left no trace,
Save where a glistening drop remains to grace,
With liquid pearl, the grasses at my feet.

And from my heart there comes a whisper low:
These drops that lie, a burden on the leaves,
Are gems for me that deck the grateful sod;
So, when the tears of anguish cease to flow,
Those cares for which the patient mourner grieves,
Are jewelled crowns that make her dear to God.

The Mariner's Compass

I STOOD at night beside the swarming bay
And watched the stately ships that seemed to glide
Like sheeted ghosts along its heaving tide,
While others rolled amid the flashing spray.
Some dragged, as weary, tempest-tossed and gray,
Where tug-boats surged ahead and puffed in pride;
But swift and worn had one sure, steadfast guide
To hold them safely on their mystic way.

So, buoyed in hope, my humble bark I'll steer
Nor envy those that flaunt their flags afar,
Even though in splendor on the waves they go.
And if my way be rough, I'll have no fear;
The same true guide, the same eternal star
Lights up the pathway of the swift and slow.

On the Shore

A LONG, low stretch of gray, receding sands,
A wide expanse of waves where streaks of spray
And sun gold gleamings on the surface play,
Lighting the dark green sea. A maiden stands
The water's edge beside; her slender hands
Clasp wildwood blooms and tresses rippling stray
Around her cheeks while eyes look far away,
As if they sought some dreamed-of mystic lands.

Ah! thus how oft we stand along the shore
And gaze across life's fair but dangerous sea,
Yearning to know what lies beyond the wave:
How oft forget that He whom saints adore
Can calm the storm as once on Galilee,
That faith in God alone can guide and save.

Perseverance

FAR up the mountain height a glorious beam
So clothed and glorified the summit fair,
That I enraptured longed to rest me there,
As flown from earth above the clouds to dream.
Upward I toiled, led by that golden gleam,
And gained the heights with bleeding feet and bare,
But oh! the scene was so superb, so rare,
That pain died out and joy remained supreme.

Ah! thus will those who toil and persevere
Forget the anguish they have bravely borne
When Heaven dawns upon their gladdened sight:
The pain that calls up many a blinding tear,
The grief that causes many a heart to mourn—
All, all will fade in everlasting light.

Hidden Light

THE snowflakes blow across a misty sky
And hide the hills whereon I yearn to gaze,
Such dreams they bring of long-expected days.
And through the pallid gloom my straining eye
Looks for the light and watches hopefully
To catch a glimpse of soul reviving rays,
Because I know beyond this veil of haze
The sunlight shines to bless and beautify.

Dear God! what shadows hide the heavens from me
To dim the eye and shade the trusting view;
Yet can I see love's far refulgent ray.
And though at times obscure and faint it be,
Beyond this gloom for souls divinely true
Still glows the lustre of eternal day.

St. Patrick's Cathedral

How near seems heaven within this solemn pile!
And what a sense of cloistered splendor falls
Around our hearts, along these sculptured walls
From choir and transept to the vaulted aisle!
What visions heavenly the fair, pure style
And graceful majesty before us calls,
Of jasper thrones and marble gleaming halls,
All lighted up in God's eternal smile!

O rare, white monument to faith and zeal!
Symbol of perfect, never-ending bliss!
Kingdoms may pass away, but thou wilt stand,
And morning's first-born ray will ever steal
Around thy spires, that it may softly kiss
The fairest temple in this wondrous land.

Unconquered

WHEN hearts are true and souls are brave,
They fear no scourging rod,
And hail with joy a martyr's grave
To reach the arms of God.

IN LIVING FAITH

Loyal Hearts

God guard the loyal hearts that love,
With a love that never dies,
Despite the dark, derisive sneer
Or flashing flame of scorn ;
God bless the noble, steadfast souls
Whose clear, discerning eyes
Can see afar the portals of the morn.

Their way on earth is a stony road
And that stony road is dark,
Beset with battle-burnished swords
In maddening malice drawn ;
Their only guide through dismal night
The heaven-sent gleaming spark
That fires their souls to ardor for the dawn.

LOYAL HEARTS

God guide the earnest minds that burn,
As they keep love's lamp aglow,
Where flaring flames of falsehood light
The new built pagan shrine;
God warm the lips that speak those truths
He preached so long ago,
When men had quenched the fires of love divine.

Their lamp is scorned: a dim rush-light
In the dawn of splendid day,
Their words are mocked as chains that bind
Man's soul to prison bars;
Yet still they feed the deathless flame
And preach love's upward way,
That leads where truth shines out beyond the stars.

Fallen Angels

DEAR Lord, how men have fallen! Gifted minds
That rose amid the higher fields of air,
Were wont to pause before Thee, bowed and bare,
To kiss the slender, golden chain that binds
The soul with God. Now man's presumption finds
Weak superstition in a Christian prayer;
Makes human praise and human love his care,
And scatters virtue to the wanton winds.

Day after day the vinegar and gall
Are held before Him, lances pierce His side,
The wounded limbs and temples bleed anew;
Whilst ribald jest and blasphemy recall
That hour of anguish when the Saviour cried:
"Father, forgive! they know not what they do."

At Baltimore 1889

I

EXULTANT-VOICED the deep toned organ swells,
The fragrance and the smoke of incense rise
And fill the temple-vaulted shrine where dwells
The Incarnate God, the Lamb of Sacrifice.

Layman and levite, pontifex and priest
Have journeyed far to bid the Church rejoice,
And tell the listening nations of our feast
In many tongues and one world-filling voice.

What have we done? We've crossed the stormy wave,
Scaled mountain walls, explored the forest vast,
Watered the plains and lit the gloomy cave,
To teach men truth and bid them hold it fast.

We've preached the gospel of a suffering God,
And suffering still have kept our onward way;
By heathens cursed, the thorny road we've trod
And sowed the seed for all that's great to-day.

Therefore we sing hosannas to the Christ,
Pledge Him this hour is but the opening bud,
Swear our allegiance at this sacred tryst
In peace and love or, as of old, in blood.

II

Illustrious Carroll! rise and speak once more;
Point down the ages that are lost in space;
Bid us march on as they who marched before,
Preaching the truth to all the human race.

Tell us how Christ, the pre-ordained to die,
Came to His own; His own received Him not,
And that His Church must bear the sneer, the lie,
The ribald jest by sensual minds begot.

Base minds have raked the gutters of the past
For loathsome garbage of our human shame,
Held them aloft as types and strove to cast
Their slimy foulness on the Church's name.

They've made man's history a brazen lie,
Letters a pool whence odors foul may start,
Canvas and stone breathe sensuality
To prostitute the sacred name of art.

From hour to hour Christ's truth is mocked, denied,
His Name blasphemed while all the centuries run ;
From year to year His Church is crucified,
For Christ, His Doctrine and His Church are one.

Where Passion Calls

STAND on the snow-clad peaks of faith and see
The vaunting toilers in this vale below ;
Men in pursuit of myth and phantasy,
Warmed into action by their passion's glow,
Striving in vain by rosy paths to go,
Yet know not whither. Straight before them lies
A foot-pressed path up toward the gleaming snow,
Through it ascending to the love-lit skies—
Ah! no, the wondrous height dazzles their doubting
eyes.

Some, on the self-plumed wings of private thought,
Soar to their little heights and call it bliss.
Entranced by rays of seeming wisdom caught
From earthly sources, some adore and kiss
Such as themselves, yea, even the vile abyss
Of human sin is odorous with wreaths
That had been twined for heaven; serpents hiss
Where buds should bloom, and dying man bequeaths
To man contempt for Him who through his being
breathes.

Striving to prove mankind a cultured beast,
To drown the voice of man's immortal soul;
Make life a wine-tinct, rose-crowned pleasure feast,
And call the gifts, from God's own hand that roll
In rich profusion, nature's meagre dole.
Thus would they fling the sacred Name aside
And yield to phantasms of the brain a sole
And blind obedience; scorn the Crucified
And those who kneel to Him, their Saviour and their
guide.

A Winter Moon

My feet are damp with the salt sea spray
Here on the shore where the mermaids be,
While soft winds laden with moisture play
Over the shimmering, cold green sea.
They chill my heart and I long to flee,
Yet still dream on by this sandy dune,
For a strange enchantment hangs over me
Under the light of yon winter moon.

At day's young dawning I yearned to stray
Where dreamers sang of, where men were free;
My bark, though slender, soon winged its way
Over the shimmering, cold green sea.
At morn the waters danced joyously,
And evening glowed with the warmth of noon;
But ah! the night wind sighed mournfully
Under the light of yon winter moon.

Now, light streams down but with ghostly ray
Falls weird and pallid along the lea,
And still I long for a glimpse of day
Over the shimmering, cold green sea.
Ah me! how faint are the smiles of glee!
Songs rise, and die in a wailing croon;
How dim and filmy what eyes can see
Under the light of yon winter moon!

Prince, let us fly to the old roof-tree,
Over the shimmering, cold green sea;
Faith dies, and love fades away too soon
Under the light of yon winter moon.

False Prophets

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

St. Matthew VII, 15.

I

WE are living in marvelous times ;
Supreme in the world's control,
When, laughing at zones and climes,
We travel from pole to pole.
We can rush in a sumptuous car
To the earth's most utterward parts ;
We can measure the farthest star :
Have we measured each other's hearts ?
We can speak to the orbs that sweep
Through the nebulous seas above ;
We can search the caves of the deep :
Have we sounded the depths of love ?

FALSE PROPHETS

We can stand on the earth, our throne,
And claim for domain the spheres;
The night into day has flown,
And the elements bring no fears.

But has hatred of wickedness stirred
Every soul to its inmost core?
Are we nobler in deed and word
Than the men who have gone before?
Have we lessened the greed for gold?
Are the thieves and the sharpers dead?
Are none left to shiver with cold?
No voices to clamor for bread?

II

Yes, the days of the slave in chains
Have gone to the long dead past,
But the power of Mammon remains,
For the greed of the heart will last.
Though millions are living at ease
Surpassing the dreams of kings,
Yet millions are still on their knees,
For the lords are replaced by rings.

The city, the village, the field,
Give voice to the wage-earner's cry
That the riches his labor may yield
Bring only inducements to die.
He is crushed by the factory wheel,
He is choked in the factory dust,
And those who have heard his appeal
Would offer him barely a crust.
Speculators and gamblers and drones
Reck not what he lives on, or how;
They eat the flesh from his bones
And drink the sweat from his brow.
The voice of his soul must be stilled—
What business with conscience have they?
The purse of the rich must be filled
And souls must not stand in the way.

III

But his cry is disturbing the world,
His shout is encircling the earth,
And the flag of the masses unfurled
Is bringing new beings to birth.

New beings who think and can feel
The weight of the burden they bear,
Whose rags can no longer conceal
The brandings of shame they wear.

But the spirit of strife is abroad
And the forces are forming in line:
Will they take up the standard of God,
Or tear down the cross and the shrine?
Will the struggle be solely for right,
For truth and for justice to all?
Or when men march forth in their might
Must the church and the altar fall?

IV

There are leaders to-day in the field
And spirits that march in the van,
Whose creed is that Christ must yield
To the deification of man;
That the sole redeemer and friend
Is the march of untrammelled mind;
That the sum of existence and end
Is the worship of all mankind;

That religion is founded on fear ;
 That faith is a fossilized fraud :
 Man's day of redemption is near
 When he shouts his defiance at God.

V

Must these be the leaders of men?
 Must these be the makers of laws?
 Must a Judas-led rabble again
 Bring shame to a heavenly cause?
 For as often as brave men tried
 To stand up for the rights of man,
 Some self-styled apostle as guide
 Came forward to plot and plan.
 He preached with uplifted hands,
 False light on his features glowed ;
 He would lead them to teeming lands
 Where the milk and the honey flowed.
 But the old superstition must go,
 If they wished to be truly free :
 The Church was their deadly foe ;
 Who crushed men's souls? It was she.

VI

Then others came forth to lead,
 With the shield of the "Sovereign State,"
They scoffed at the new-found creed
 And God was their object of hate.
But their purpose was still the same,
 And this common bond sufficed
To make of them brothers in shame,
 To dishonor the bride of Christ.

And men fell away from grace,
 For man was alone divine;
They spat in the sorrowful Face
 And mocked at the Christian sign.
The voice of the people arose
 In a clamor of pride and scorn,
They cursed, as cause of their woes,
 The day when the Christ was born.
They were freemen at last, released
 From the Church's chains and the rust;
Their hearts, turned cold to the priest,
 Were aflame with the fires of lust.

Ah! Calvary's blood-stained sod
 And the wood of its cross can tell
 How the voice that is called "of God"
 May utter the thoughts of hell.

VII

Will they shout for His blood to-day,
 Urged on by a frenzied voice?
 Must the people be led astray?
 Is Barabbas again their choice?

Oh! the lightning of tongue and pen
 Must shatter the mask of lies
 That the malice of godless men
 Is holding before man's eyes.
 We must call to the surging crowd
 That the Church and the Church alone
 Can preach the truth to the proud,
 And claim for the poor their own.
 That man's injustice to man
 Is the cause of the soul's decline;
 That the only redeeming plan
 Must be stamped with a seal divine;

That man when he bows in prayer
 With face to the heaven-made sod,
Is nobler when kneeling there
 Than the creature defying his God;
That the cross and the wounded side
 Are the ties of our brotherhood;
That truly is man deified
 When washed in a God's red blood.
The Church and no other can teach
 These millions of man-made slaves
The truth she was sent to preach,
 The gospel of Christ that saves.

The Christian Scholar

HE stands as one apart

From the common herd of men,
With stainless soul and a noble heart,
His mind undimmed by the tainted art
Of every pensioned pen.

And luring tongues may cry

They have found new paths to light :
He turns away with a flashing eye
For his guardian angel ever nigh
Will guide his steps aright.

His face is flushed and fair

As the smile of Heaven beams
On every wave of his shining hair,
And leaves a mystical glory there
Men see alone in dreams.

And virtue leads him on
With her white inviting hands,
Along where many a saint has gone,
And many a weaker soul was drawn
Beneath the shifting sands.

His step is light and free—
'Tis the blind alone who plod—
The sweeping winds of a stormy sea
Obscure his vision, but safe is he
Who proudly trusts in God.

Valentine Hill

1776

HERE on this hill, in the olden days,
When veins ran warm with a patriot fire,
They stood in the ranks, their souls ablaze,
Shoulder to shoulder, son and sire.

And the virgin land they loved so well
Was flushed with the rich, red blood they gave;
She rose in strength as her heroes fell,
And to give that power they sought the grave.

Some of their forms are carved in stone,
Their names are shrined in a nation's pride,
While thousands sank to their death unknown;
For love they struggled, for love they died.

We honor them all and we love the fields
These resolute soldier-martyrs trod.
And the seed they planted this harvest yields—
The road of sacrifice leads to God.

1896

Here on this hill, in these golden days,
Their faces glowing with voiceless joy,
They stand prepared for the coming frays,
Shoulder to shoulder, man and boy.

They bring to the famished, heavenly bread,
That the souls of men may be fair and clean:
The world hears not their marching tread,
And their banner floats to the breeze unseen.

But the sin-enslaved cry aloud for aid
While the spirits of evil hear and pause;
There never was yet a Priest afraid
To shed his blood in the Master's cause.

Some of their names will live for men;
Thousands will gain but a nameless sod;
They die that the dead may live again—
The road of sacrifice leads to God.

The Upper Room

I

“ALL power in heaven and earth is given to Me,”
Thus spake the sovereign Lord in Galilee,
“Therefore I say to you, go forth and teach
The nations of the earth. Baptize and preach
What things soever I have spoken to you.
This is their law: bid them observe and do.”

That was not all, the end was not as yet.
He spake again: perhaps on Olivet
Before He blessed them and was lost to view;
Perhaps within that chamber where the few,
His chosen followers, sat down to eat,
His blood their drink, His sacred flesh their meat;
We may not say just where. He spake again:
“Depart not from the city, but remain
Waiting the promise. In that awesome hour
The Father from on high will send you power,
That going forth your lives and words may be
Throughout the world a witness unto Me.”

So when the cloud received Him from their sight
They turned them to the city. Day and night,
Morning and evening found them waiting there
With Mary, Mother of the Lord, at prayer.

The days wore on, the world was sunk in sin;
Foul crimes without and loathsome vice within.
Blood-purchased souls went onward to their doom,
Yet came no voice from out that upper room.
The Gospel bearers from the world had fled—
Christ and the preachers of His love were dead.

Dead to the sneering world, the sinful throng
That makes its pleasure judge of right and wrong.
Dead in the eyes of carnal-minded men;
Dead, when around the streets they should have been,
Holding aloft the standard of the Cross,
Saving the souls of men from endless loss.

Dead—Ah! the devil and his angels knew
What death was theirs: a death in which they grew
In grace and wisdom as their Lord had grown
Who chose to dwell for thirty years unknown.

THE UPPER ROOM

Dead to the world they were; with Christ they died
A living death, that sin might not abide
Within their souls. Dead as the seeds that die
To spring toward heaven and bloom and fructify.

Such was their death; to sin and passion lost,
Till dawned the morning of the Pentecost.

Then kneeling humbly with united mind,
Suddenly upon them, as a rushing wind
That filled the house, a sound from heaven came
Mighty in power; while the Spirit's flame
In parted tongues blazed o'er each bending head
And fired the souls of those accounted dead.

Trembling they rose, who knew themselves so weak,
Trembling, their human lips essayed to speak;
Then, as they felt the spirit of the Lord
Giving new life and strength, with one accord
They rushed abroad, impatient to proclaim
The Gospel message and the Saviour's name;
They spoke, and thrilled a vast assembled host
In divers tongues as bade the Holy Ghost.

THE UPPER ROOM

II

Spouse of the Christ! in every clime and age
True to the Lord's command—thy heritage—
To teach the nations: on this Pentecost,
Knowing what millions to their God are lost,
Angels in joy around the Father's throne
Fill Heaven with music for this corner-stone;
This mighty stone and sturdy rising walls,
That bring such promise of the spacious halls
Where youth may learn and pray and persevere
With Mary's influence and the angels near.

There men who consecrate their lives to God
May learn the ways in which their Master trod,
May learn with glowing hearts to read the Word
And hear Him speak, as the Apostles heard.

There love shall set their earnest souls on fire,
Until they blaze with one supreme desire,
To cut, to burn, to cast away the dross
Of human weakness that would shirk the cross.
To love no flesh; to sever ties that bind,
Making the body master of the mind.

THE UPPER ROOM

To lay up treasures which no moths consume,
Absorbed in prayer, as in that upper room.
Living for Christ: with Him their daily bread,
But lost to sin—with His Apostles dead.
Dead—but the Father and His angels hear
How speak these dead from fruitful year to year.

Low murmured prayers in ceaseless round ascend
For all the world, alike for foe and friend.
Their hymns of praise arise as one sweet voice,
While angels listen and the heavens rejoice.
Their chanted psalms, with love's appealing, swell,
Loosing for men the bonds of death and hell,
While mute desire and supplication reach
Sublimar heights than ever human speech.

Such is the life these young Apostles lead,
Bound to their Lord in every word and deed.
For them the banquet of His love is spread,
For Him they live though men account them dead.
Dead! aye, the devil and his angels know
What death is theirs: a death in which they grow
In grace and wisdom, till the anointed hour
Bids them arise in God's almighty power;

THE UPPER ROOM

Bringing back souls the world had long enticed,
Who, but Apostles from the School of Christ?

Here is the School of Christ—the upper room—
Where men shall learn to know the bud and bloom
Of saintly lives; where Christ Himself shall teach,
Illuminate the mind and wake the chords of speech.
Here men will dwell to learn God's holy will:
That He who built the church must guide her still.

Christ has not lied; this pompous world has need
Of high, inspiring word and God-like deed;
Of men who lift themselves above the clay
And yearn to show their fellow men the way;
Of men whose spotless souls are all aflame
To teach the sweetness of the saving Name;
Whose word and work, though like their Lord assailed,
Prove that the gates of hell have not prevailed.

Enshrined

THE fairest bud that blows
 May grace the green hillside :
The sweetest flowers are those
His garden walls enclose,
 Where love and peace abide.

IN LOVE DIVINE

The Shepherds' Watch

CHILL, wintry skies looked down on Bethlehem
Where wayworn pilgrims lay in slumber deep,
While under heaven, the only roof for them,
The shepherds kept night watches with their sheep.

And weary watch it was, for wolves will prowl
Amid the shadows of the starless night,
And rest is sleepless when the jackal's howl
May stir the flock to sudden fear and flight.

Aye! weary watch it was; the heavens were dark,
The air was cold and damp with foggy rain,
The brushwood failed to catch the friendly spark
And longed-for sleep oppressed the drowsy brain.

THE SHEPHERDS' WATCH

What dreams were theirs, these shepherds on the hills?
What great ambition gave them courage? None.
They watched their sheep and bore accompanying ills
With hopeful prayer: Jehovah's will be done.

No dreams of wealth disturbed their souls' repose,
No wild desire where others sowed to reap;
The morning found them, as the evening's close,
Simple and trusting as the nibbling sheep.

And so they shivered in the chill night air
And drew their sheepskin coats in closer fold,
Stretching their forms on branches hard and bare
To snatch a moment from the world and cold.

But suddenly the darkness fled the sky,
The sheep sank trembling on the silvered ground,
And lo! an angel of the Lord stood by,
While brightness as of heaven shone around.

Speechless with fear the cowering shepherds lay:
"Fear not," the angel said, "good news I bring
With joy for you; a Saviour's born to-day,
Lo! Christ is in the city of the King."

THE SHEPHERDS' WATCH

Ah! many a wintry night our hearts have known,
When sin and sorrow filled the burdened air
With wailing voices, by the wild winds blown
Across the world in accents of despair.

And many a soul yet feels the evening chills
That creep around him with the gathering shade,
And looks in vain across the cheerless hills
For even a tinge of light so long delayed.

He bears, perchance, the weight of others' sins,
Perhaps the crushing fault is all his own ;
The dew lies dense and hopeless night begins—
He finds himself upon the fields alone.

He looks for courage from the worldly wise,
He seeks for comfort in the ways of men ;
A little light shoots out across the skies
And leaves him, lost in deeper depths again.

Where shall he turn to find the strength he needs,
The hope to cheer him and the light to guide?
Ah! not in dreams of wild, heroic deeds,
Nor yet in drifting down a pleasure tide.

THE SHEPHERDS' WATCH

The soul that clings to God's eternal love
And strives, though feebly, as the days go by,
Will hear some night the voice he's dreaming of,
And see new glory light the darkened sky.

His heart will throb for joy, and bounding feet
Will speed him on to kneel before the shrine,
Where, rapt in adoration, he may greet
With words of tender love the Child Divine.

A Christmas Song

SING! heavenly choirs of angels, sing!
For the night has flown away,
And earth exults in her new-born King
Who comes with the opening day.
The shepherds have hied
From the cold hillside
To the manger where He lies,
And His wondrous star
Shines out afar
'Mid the gloom of the Eastern skies.

Sing! heavenly choirs of angels, sing!
Your song is a song of love:
Glad tidings to earth-worn souls ye bring
From the mansions of joy above.
The Magi have come
From their distant home,
With their frankincense and gold,
To kneel before
A child and adore
What the heavens in awe behold.

A CHRISTMAS SONG

Sing! heavenly choirs of angels, sing!
Your song is a song of peace:
The dove has come of the fair white wing
With sorrow and pain's surcease.
The Word divine
For His favored shrine
Has chosen the hearts of men,
And the votive flame
Of passion and shame
Shall burn there never again.

Sing! heavenly choirs of angels, sing!
For the gift of these glorious days:
Let earth rejoice and the welkin ring
With anthems of joy and praise.
The warm, glad beams
Of God's love streams
On a world that once grew cold,
For His spouse is there
Still young and fair
As she was in the days of old.

The Heart of God

AH, tender Heart of Jesus!

Since deathless love was Thine,
What fires of pure affection
Should warm this heart of mine!
But cold and dark the chambers
Where living light should be,
And silent are the heart-strings
That should pulsate for Thee.

Ah! bleeding Heart of Jesus!

My sinful heart should bleed,
And wash away the foulness
Of thought and word and deed;
But dried up are the fountains
Where holy thoughts may spring,
And fled is all the fragrance
That holy deeds should bring.

Ah! broken Heart of Jesus!
What time Thy spirit fled,
The stars grew pale in heaven
And tombs gave forth their dead.
Break, break with bitter anguish
This hard, unfeeling heart,
Till, conscious of its baseness,
The tears of sorrow start.

Ah! patient Heart of Jesus!
Since joys of earth are dross,
Sustain me, for Thy love's sake
To meekly bear my cross;
To love the way of sorrows
Thy sacred feet have trod:
My life, my love, my Saviour,
My brother and my God.

Homeward Bound

DEAR Lord! I've walked a winding way
By meadow, stream and hill,
Nor dreamed of aught but to obey
My own capricious will.
And every path my feet essayed
Led farther still from Thee;
What wonder if my heart's love strayed!
The world was dear to me.

I sought support in other strength
And boasted of mine own,
But vain the trust, and now at length
I've turned to Thee alone.
Ah! strength to do and eyes to see
Come only with Thy grace;
Then let the world not hide from me
The beauty of Thy face!

HOMeward BOUND

Trembling and sore afraid am I
 To feel Thy hand on mine,
Lest faltering step or worldly sigh
 Should draw my hand from Thine.
Yet glad and full of joy withal
 To know Thee Lord and guide,
Whose love will last, whose voice will call,
 Even though I turn aside.

Oh! watch me, guard me, lest I turn!
 This world is wondrous fair;
The fires may not so fiercely burn,
 Yet embers still are there.
Then bid my trembling limbs be strong!
 My throbbing heart be still!
They feel no fear of pain or wrong
 Who love Thy holy will.

Before a Crucifix

AH! wounded Love! my worthless lips I press
To these, Thy carven feet,
Cold as the stones that felt their warm caress
On Sion's dusty street.

How blest those stones and they who walked on them
All stained and cracked and worn!
How doubly blest who kissed Thy garment's hem,
Though dust-begrimed and torn!

Then blest am I, though far removed yet free
Thine image here to kiss—
Were not Thy garments, till they vested Thee,
Just earth-born things, like this?

Eternal Rest

THEY sleep the sleep of peace;
And though our eyes may long to see
 Their faces once again,
We know they are forever free
 From all the griefs of men.
And so in calm content we rest—
God's will is always best.

Ah! why should eyes be wet
With tears for those who pass away
 From sorrows born of earth?
The faithful soul's most joyful day
 Is that of heavenly birth.
And clothed in sweet eternal rest,
It knows God's will is best.

The Best Beloved

DEAR souls, debarred by God's afflicting hand
From song-bird greetings of the joyous morn,
From healing draughts of perfumes freshly born,
And heaven's own beauty strewn o'er sea and land,
Fond hearts, though far away,
Are with you day by day.

We may not bring you back the soothing hours
When sleep is rest that fears no waking pain,
When measured music beats in every vein
And life goes singing through a field of flowers,
Nor may we say: Arise!
This the dear Lord denies.

We may not give you greetings face to face,
Perchance because of many a league that lies
Between us now, or yet perchance of ties
That bind our willing hands to time and place,
Yet are our hearts on fire
With love's supreme desire.

THE BEST BELOVED

And so we send you from our scanty store
The modest gift of poor but earnest prayer,
That God's sweet love may give you grace to bear
Your pains in memory of the pains He bore:
And make you still more dear
To Him whose heart is near.

We send assurance of remembrance true
In those blest moments which we hope to spend
In sweet communion with that changeless friend
Whose great heart throbs for prisoned souls like you:
Whose love, on eager wings,
Flies forth where sorrow stings.

Dear souls, be comforted! The world is fair,
Yet filled with dangers for unwary feet.
So in His wisdom and in mercy sweet,
Our Lord withdraws you from the tempting snare,
To lay your heads at rest
Upon His own dear breast.

The Month of Mary

Al! May! sweet May! when fragrant lilies grow
And rhythmic waters kiss the streamlet side;
When modest flowers near the hedgerows hide
And milder airs from brighter heavens blow:
'Tis ours with prayer and joyous hymn to show
How men revere the dove-like, trusting bride
Who went with Joseph from the temple's pride,
To charm the lowly and to cheer the low.

'Tis thine to bid the odorous blossoms spring
And breathe their incense at her queenly feet,
In eloquent though mute address of love:
'Tis ours to kneel before her shrine and bring
White souls all perfume-filled, as censers meet
For man's sweet homage to his Queen above.

Da Vinci's Virgin of the Rocks

FAIR Lady! how serenely sweet
Thy mother face, thy gentle eyes,
That turn so graciously to greet
The scene that here before thee lies.

Baptist and angel bend the knee—
Thus earth and heaven accord their part—
Before the Christ-God born of thee,
While love sits brooding in thy heart.

For these return thy tender love,
The flowers embrace thy garment's hem,
Mute waters pray and heaven above
Sheds fairest light on thee and them.

Yet, Mother mine, the crags are there,
Grim shadows of the cruel years
That came to cloud thy soul in care,
To pierce thy heart and draw thy tears.

Our Lady Veiled

THROUGH all the purple Passion days
My heart its purple wore,
Of bitter thoughts for sinful ways
And what my Saviour bore.
Ah! pain was mine still more
When, turned in love to thee,
No sweet, sad face could meet my gaze—
Thine eyes were veiled from me;
My Mother, in the Passion days,
Thy face was veiled from me.

But when the blessed Eastertide
Brought joys that were before,
And happy blossoms bloomed beside
His prison's golden door,

OUR LADY VEILED

Ah! joy was mine still more
When, turned in love to thee,
I saw thee, radiant as a bride—
Thine eyes spoke love for me;
My Mother, in the Eastertide,
Thy face spoke love for me.

When dawns at last the Morning light
And purple days are o'er,
Thy hand will lead me to His sight
Whom earth and heaven adore.
Ah! joy will come still more
When, turned in love to thee,
His lips will say my heart was right—
Thine eyes will beam for me;
My Mother, in that Morning light,
Thy face will shine for me.

Virgin Mother Mary

O VIRGIN Mother, pure and sweet!
As low before thee bending,
We cast our garlands at thy feet
In faith and love unending;
We sing the glory of thy name
Who bore our Lord and brother,
And since from Heaven the angel came
Has been our loving mother.
Blessed name to God most dear,
Sweetest name to sinners here,
Holy name that all revere,
Virgin Mother Mary!

In every vale, to deck thy shrines,
The fragrant flowers are springing;
From leafy shrubs and towering pines
The birds thy praise are singing.

VIRGIN MOTHER MARY

For thee, as offerings, maidens fair
Now pluck the scented roses,
And search the shaded nooklets where
The violet reposes.

Votive wreaths are fondly hung,
Silver bells are softly rung,
While thy joyful hymns are sung,
Virgin Mother Mary!

The murmur of the rippling rills,
Through moss and pebbles flowing;
The sunshine on the sloping hills
Where modest blooms are blowing;
The rustling of the leaflets green;
The breeze's soft complaining,
Express their love for thee, our Queen,
Who far in Heaven art reigning.
Purest maid of mortals born,
Help of wretched and forlorn,
Heavenly gems thy head adorn,
Virgin Mother Mary!

Two Mothers in Heaven

MOTHER of God! how my heart responds
To the thought of a long-lost day,
When I heard thy name in the tender tones
That trained my young lips to pray.
And now when this lonely world doth hold
No mother's soft voice for me,
I repeat thy prayer with the lasting love
She nursed in my heart for thee.

Dark are the eyes that beamed with light
And glowed with a nameless joy,
When she saw me come from the world, a man,
To kneel at her feet, a boy.
Cold is the hand that smoothed my hair
And stilled is that voice so mild,
For pale in death are the once sweet lips
That taught me to be thy child.

TWO MOTHERS IN HEAVEN

Mother of God! how she loved thy name!
And her life made brave by thine,
Brought courage and trust to many a soul,
Brought fervor and faith to mine.
For she taught my heart that its love for thee
Was the Lord's work well begun,
That would lead me on to a richer life
In the love of thy Saviour son.

She has gone, from sorrows that vex our days
Till we yearn for sweet release,
To rest secure in the smile of God,
Where the soul finds endless peace.
But still she loves me, her child and thine,
As once at her gentle knee,
And, true to her faith, my heart remains
Unchanged in its love for thee.

My Wooden Idol

A WOODEN statue, an image odd,
In colors of gorgeous hue,
That well might adorn a Chinese god,
So garish the gold and blue.

The nose is long and a hectic flush
Burns on the listless face
That never was taught by master's brush
To glow with artistic grace.

The hands upraised as in silent prayer
Are painfully long and thin,
And the diadem on her childish hair
Is fashioned of gilded tin.

The graceless figure is stiff and tall,
As there, in a carved recess,
It stands before me, enrobed in all
The beauties of ugliness.

MY WOODEN IDOL

Yet here I kneel and my love defies
The sneer and the claims of art ;
Its faults are dear to indulgent eyes
And its quaintness charms my heart.

And men may call me idolater,
Bowing down to wood and stone,
But my love for Him and love for her
Together have always grown.

And now as of old my every breath
Their influence sweet can tell,
My heart is a home like Nazareth
Where wedded in love they dwell.

He came from Heaven for love's sweet sake,
That men might have grace and light,
But the human form He deigned to take
Was not with His glory bright.

So this poor statue is far from her
Who is Queen of the choirs above,
Yet it causes my inmost soul to stir
With the holiest, purest love.

MY WOODEN IDOL

It brings me back to the wondrous days
When He walked with sinful men,
Till with rapturous, tear-filled eyes I gaze
On His lovable face again.

It lifts me up to her Son divine,
To His scorn of sham and fraud,
And bids me honor while life is mine
The beauty that's true to God.

Expectation

O HAPPY days! when flowers spring,
When song-birds flit on painted wing
 Among the languid, list'ning trees,
 And thrill those matchless melodies
That they, and they alone can sing!

Come with your sweetest airs and bring
One whom her heart can call its King,
 And trust with calm, confiding ease,
 O happy days!

Come with the blush of morn and cling
Around her till the bride-bells ring;
 Come with the sweets of honey bees
 Laden with nectar, and the breeze
Through wildwood blossoms murmuring,
 O happy days!

A Bride of Christ

I COME, dear Lord, in my bridal robes,
To this angel-guarded shrine,
And lay at Thy feet my poor, cold heart
To be Thine, and only Thine.

I come with a love as faint and frail
As this taper's trembling flame,
And one sweet hope that it burn and glow
In the fire of Thy sacred Name.

With one sweet hope for the days to come
When purified, Lord, by Thee,
I catch some gleam of the burning love
That glows in Thy heart for me.

A BRIDE OF CHRIST

What leads me here, is it with regret
That the fair, glad world I leave?
Ah! no. I come with the only fear
That ever my Lord should grieve.

I heard Thy voice and I knew who called,
And I felt no longer free,
For it spoke in the clearest, fondest tones:
"My beloved one, come to Me."

Ah! why, dear Lord, am I called to serve?
There are purer souls than mine;
There are brighter minds and fairer forms
To follow this light divine.

No voice replies and my heart is pleased,
For I have no wish to hear;
I only know that I heard Thee call,
And behold! my Love, I'm here.

After Benediction

CHIME again, sweet silver bells,
Waft your music to mine ear,
Tones that of His presence tells—
Tells my heart its Love is near:
Chime again, sweet silver bells,
Chime again, my Love is here.

Chime again, sweet silver bells,
Lest my yearning spirit sigh,
For my soul in rapture swells
When I know my Love is nigh.
Chime again, sweet silver bells,
We are here, my Love and I.

Chime again, sweet silver bells,
Let your voices bid me stay:
Keep me close to where He dwells
Hour by hour and day by day.
Chime again, sweet silver bells,
Lest my heart should turn away.

Rest in God

PURE as the lilies beside her coffin lying,
 Vying in perfume with fragrance from above;
Gentle as balm-laden winds through flowers sighing:
 Why should we weep when the lover takes His love?

Why should we mourn for a calm and holy ending,
 Changing the darkness to morning's wondrous glow?
Softly it came, as on seraph wings descending,
 To waft her away where her soul had longed to go.

Weary the days were since spirit voices calling
 Came faint and low as thro' arches cool and dim;
Now, in the sun-drops of glory round her falling,
 All is forgotten in the radiance of Him.

Angels rejoice in the gladsome song of greeting
 Breathed by her sisters long among the free;
Sweeter than music His gracious voice repeating:
 Welcome, beloved, to the bliss prepared for thee.

IN FREEDOM'S NAME

My Chosen Path

MY soul has yearned for thrones and kings
Which now but phantoms seem;
I've soared aloft on fancied wings
To realms of joy supreme,
I've longed the path of life to strew
With fragrance-breathing flowers,
And dreamed that love would light me through
The gloom of darkened hours.

But now I choose the hard, bleak road
Which saintly feet have trod,
To bear in love my yoke and load
With those who serve their God.
And though more tempting paths I've tried
Made fair by worldly art,
Yet none but this has satisfied
The cravings of my heart.

MY CHOSEN PATH

The way seems rough when day has gone
And rocks my steps impede,
But strong in faith I'll journey on
Where love divine may lead;
For as the stars through darkness gleam
When storms have spent their wrath,
So light from heaven will surely beam
And cheer my rugged path.

I dream not now of kingly power
Or laureled brow of fame,
But crave for grace that every hour
May conquer sin and shame.
The one sweet hope my heart shall know
Is Heaven's approving smile,
The one dear love while here below,
My green, old Mother-isle.

An Exile's Shamrock

ONE Saint Patrick's Day, a letter
From that island home of mine
Brought a faded spray of shamrock
As a fond remembrance sign,
And to me it looked so fair
Lying crushed and withered there,
As the lover finds rare beauty
In the dead for whom he grieves,
That mine eyes grew dim with longing,
And a tear fell on the leaves.

Ah! those drops that came up-welling
From my love-awakened heart
Seemed to rouse the dying shamrock
And fresh vigor to impart.
All the tints of green it knew
When from native soil it grew,
Came again to grace my garden,
And I watched with tender care
Till it flourished as if drinking
Of its own pure Irish air.

AN EXILE'S SHAMROCK

It has no bewildering colors
 To attract the passing eye,
And it hides among the grasses
 When the summer winds go by;
 But such memories it brings
 That, on airy-plumaged wings,
O'er the sea-crowned isle I hover
 And, absorbed in dreamy joy,
Roam again old smiling valleys
 With the ardor of a boy.

Ah! my cherished creeping beauty,
 Days will come that should be now,
When some hand will wreath a garland
 For our ransomed country's brow.
 Thou and I, my shamrock, may
 Never see the longed-for day,
But these chubby boys that kiss thee
 Have the faith that's strong in me,
And they yet may greet thy sisters
 On the hills they've helped to free.

Unbroken Vows

WHEN grandsires' tales in their awful truth
Shot flames through each red vein,
When my lips still blushed with the kiss of youth
Whose whisper fired my brain,
I longed, dear land, for a bounding steed
And a trusty blade at my side,
Which my strong, resistless arm should wield
Till thy brave old banner swept the field
In its ancient power and pride.

Then ripening days brought manhood's dream,
When the holy hills should feel
A human forest, with glint and gleam
On their foliage of steel.
Alas! the years, with relentless haste,
Sweep over our pallid brows,
And still in the garb of bending slaves
We gather around our fathers' graves,
To renew unbroken vows.

UNBROKEN VOWS

But God helps those who help themselves,
And for us that promise shines,
As the guiding light of one who delves
In the gloom of hidden mines.
We know there is wondrous strength in prayer
When the heart despondent bleeds,
For it makes the trembling being glow,
Till the buds of his soul's affection blow
And blossom into deeds.

We have prayed in faith and watched in hope,
We have worked in purest love,
And smiled at the barbarous rack and rope,
For the heavens smiled above.
And with steadfast hearts, though aching eyes,
We watch for an hour of fate;
It is hard, dear Lord, as the years go by,
Despised and powerless thus to lie
At a nation's outer gate.

On the Roadside

THE door of a straw-roofed cot is barred
And the bearded, dark-clad sentries stand,
Keeping their grim, ungracious guard
At a vacant house in a stricken land.
A rose-bush trained by fair hands to cling
Where the prisoner goldfinch loved to sing
Is crushed. In the boxwood bordered bed
The flowers are bruised and dead.

Along the road on a trampled sward,
The rough-tossed goods of a cottage lie,
Sweet proof of tyranny's coarse reward
For earnest labor and purpose high.
A mother hushes her babe to sleep,
And croons the sorrow she may not weep:
Silent, the father stands aside
In his calm, courageous pride.

ON THE ROADSIDE

Rugged and proud he stands, his knee
 Clasped by a timid but fearless child.
No faint-souled mourner of fate is he;
 His home dismantled, his hearth defiled,
Can bring no tear to the blazing eyes
That turn from earth to the melting skies:
 He knows what strength for the poor is there,
 And the strong lips quiver in prayer.

This Irish Heart of Mine

I HAVE strayed through every nation
Far away from friends and home,
And have paused in admiration
By St. Peter's wondrous dome;
I have roamed and read their stories
Where the Grecian ruins lie,
And have marveled at the glories
Of the blue Italian sky.

But an Irish hill side glowing
In the morning's golden ray,
With a minstrel streamlet flowing
Down below the verdant brae;
And a thatch roofed cot appearing
Where the wild moss-roses twine,
Make a scene far more endearing
For this Irish heart of mine.

THIS IRISH HEART OF MINE

Glorious dreams are in the pealing
Of those old cathedral chimes,
And in organ tones revealing
All the charm of southern climes ;
Luring love lies in the glances
Of dark eyes that shoot and gleam
As the broken sunlight dances
On a shaded woodland stream.

But the harp of Erin breathing
Tender strains that sorrow sings,
While a stranger hand is wreathing
Cypress leaves around the strings ;
And the blue eye's modest bearing
When it beams with love divine,
Have a charm beyond comparing
For this Irish heart of mine.

A Rapparee Love Song

I BOWED before you yesternight
As low as would an abject slave,
I offered you a heart as true
As ever man to woman gave.
You sat in all your wealth secure,
The while my tale of love I told—
You spurned the gift because 'twas pure,
Because 'twas broidered not with gold.
But ah! dear heart! in days to come,
When laurel round my brow shall twine,
You'll wish this hour had made you mine,
In glorious days to come.

'Tis true that now no princely halls
Await the bride who'll be my own,
And your proud heart could never part
With rank and name for love alone.

A RAPPAREE LOVE SONG

Yet still, in spite of outward pride,
I know that heart pulsates for me—
Your lip may curl, you cannot hide
The light no eye but mine can see.
And you'll confess, in days to come,
When lordlings bow before your shrine,
'Tis land and gold for which they pine,
In heart-sad days to come.

The war-cries roll across our land
Which long has bowed in conquered shame:
Outside your gates the charger waits
That yet will bear me on to fame.
I go, but 'mid the clash of steel,
My country's name and yours will be
Twin guiding stars, for love's appeal
Will fire your soul when she is free.
Farewell! and when, in days to come,
Your dreams of earthly grandeur fade,
Command my sword in shine or shade,
In love-lorn days to come.

A RAPPAREE LOVE SONG

What! these fair hands detain me now!

Those scornful eyes are dim with tears!

You've thrown aside the mask of pride

That would have darkened future years.

'Twas worth the pain of being spurned

Such gleams of joy as these to know;

But hark! O love! O life returned!

The call to arms, and I must go.

Adieu, my own, in days to come,

When laurel round my brow shall twine,

You'll bless this hour that makes you mine,

In golden days to come.

Where Beauty Dwells

THE blossoms are painted in rainbow hues
With delicate shades between,
And gladden our eyes
As they gracefully rise
From fairy-wand stems of green.
We prize them not for the tint of leaves,
Nor yet for the fragile stem ;
The odorous joy which the soul receives,
And exquisite beauty the mind perceives,
Give birth to our love for them.

The children of men have their varied hues,
As part of our Lord's dear plan ;
The light and the shade
Which His hands have made
Are symbols of love for man.
We judge them not by the tintured skin,
The straight or the wavy hair,
For God has created His home within
The lowliest being assoiled from sin,
And dwells in His glory there.

St. Benedict the Moor

To the Convent gate, near Palermo town,
A young lay brother came ;
His skin was black and his garments poor,
But the monks had heard his name.
They knew how blameless his life had been,
How chaste were all his ways,
For the fair Sicilian land was filled
With his glory and his praise.

They took him into their heart of hearts
And blessed the Lord who gave
To their humble home this saintly youth,
The son of a negro slave.
And their love increased as years went on,
And their veneration grew,
As they saw his wonderful face ablaze
With the Christ-light shining through.

ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR

He had always sought for the lowest place—
The kitchen was now his choice—
Where his soul could glow with a love divine
And his humble heart rejoice.
But the monks were men whose souls were free
From the world's unchristian pride,
And they begged their colored cook to be
Their Guardian and their guide.

O Church of God! 'tis in you alone
All nations and races meet,
To kneel as her children side by side
At the dear Lord's sacred feet.
'Tis in you alone no lines are drawn
That would keep men's souls apart,
For you lead them all to the fount of love
In the Saviour's bleeding heart.

O saint of the kitchen poor and bare!
Look down from the heavens and see
Your trampled race in the menial's place,
Though the law declares it free.

ST. BENEDICT THE MOOR

You loved to obey when others ruled
 In a saintly soul's retreat,
And the monks you served were Christ-like men
 Who would kneel to kiss your feet.

But the arrogant lords who rule to-day
 In purse-proud, fatuous pride,
Look down with scorn on brothers for whom
 Their suffering Saviour died.
And the weak, complacent world goes on
 With never a word of blame,
Nor a shout of wrath to wipe it out,
 As our country's only shame.

Still Enslaved

HAS not the Nation spoken
In thundering, final tone?
Were not the shackles broken—
His soul proclaimed his own?

Should then our Constitution
Be outraged and defied,
By men steeped in pollution
Of race and family pride?

Should men who serve the letter,
False to the spirit be?
'Tis base the soul to fetter
Of him whose limbs are free.

If liberty prevail not,
We play the traitor's part,
For words of love avail not
If hate be in the heart.

STILL ENSLAVED

Who feels himself the stronger,
Should he be madly blind?
That man is man no longer
Who does not love his kind.

Should man to beast be mated
Because he's lowly born?
The souls which God created
Should men presume to scorn?

The Lord to every creature
His gift of freedom gave,
Nor stamped on human feature
The symbol of the slave.

'Twas of divine election
That men should not lie prone
In token of subjection,
Except to God alone.

Though light and love eternal,
He left men free, as well
To rise to bliss supernal
Or plunge themselves in hell.

STILL ENSLAVED

What then? Is man the greater,
And should he dare to grind
In dust what earth's Creator
In justice would not bind?

Such gifts as God has given
Must be assured to men;
The chains that once were riven
Must not be forged again.

Souls of divine creation,
Shall they to earth be trod?
'Tis treason to the Nation,
To reason and to God.

IN SIMPLE TRIBUTE

Cardinal McCloskey

FOR half a century, the tender guide,
The soothing friend of many a burdened soul:
Calm where the storm-fed waves of passion roll,
Changeless through every change of year and tide.
In royal purple robed, or doubly dyed
And bleeding scarlet, or with simple stole,
Ever the same. Obedience and control
Showed him the footsteps of the Crucified.

O Priest! whose love-lit eyes have watched so long
Before the presence of the Lord; whose voice
For fifty years has taught the truly free;
Gentle thy tones, yet reaching far, and strong
In living faith: may Heaven our hearts rejoice
For years to come in still possessing thee!

A Rosary of Years

And thou shalt sanctify the fiftieth year
.....for it is the year of jubilee.
Leviticus XXV, 10.

JUST fifty years ago he knelt in prayer
Trembling with joy, while his anointed hands
Were bound in white and o'er his bending head
Brooded the mighty spirit of the Lord.
Then burst upon his view the teeming lands
Where men were hungering for the bread of life,
The harvest white afield, the workers few,
And robed in grace he walked abroad to serve
As bonded slave to even the rudest soul
That knew not God, or labored not to love
The great creating power whose seal it bore.

A decade passed and found him called to serve
As coadjutor to the great-souled chief,
Who planned in love that vast Cathedral pile
Which this our father, as a towering prayer

In white majestic marble, carved on high
To point for men their starry way to God.

The second decade bade him bear alone
A heavier burden in the Master's cause,
As watchful guardian of a twofold charge,—
The sheep and shepherds of a far spread field
Where mountains rise and mighty rivers flow—
Now guarded well by men who knew the toils
And wasting struggles of those early days.

Two decades passed; that flashing sword of flame,
The Christ-like spirit of th' immortal Hughes,
Rose to his God, and left a widening fold
To him whose light still warms the western sky.
And as the hand of time began to tell
The crowning decade of these fruitful years,
A voice came pealing from the sacred home
Where dwells the Vicar of our Saviour God,
Bidding him wear the princely scarlet robe,
Surpassing all the glow of earthly kings.

Such is the Heaven-sent rosary of years
His life has known within the Holy Place.

A ROSARY OF YEARS

Bead after bead has slowly passed along
The silver chain that has as yet no end;
Five golden decades, bearing to him each
Its meed of honors, till he reigns a Prince
Within the household of the living God.

Oh! sound your trumpets for the Jubilee!
Sound them as did the Israelites of old!
Sow not and reap not, let the harvest grow!
Throng to the holy place where dwells the Lord
And chant your praises for the precious boon
That such a man should live in these our times.

Tender and loving as a simple child,
Joyous and cheering as the dearest friend,
Kind and compassionate as man could be,
Clear and sagacious as a master mind,
Firm and unyielding as the giant hills
Where question is of God's eternal truth.

O earth be glad! O skies with radiance glow!
And flood the world with tidings of our joy.

Cardinal Farley

The just shall flourish like the palm tree: he
shall grow up like the cedar of Libanus.

Psalm XCI, 13.

CROWNED with the glory of a golden hour
That brought, amid the eternal hills of Rome,
That gift divine, the Priest's almighty power
He turned his face to this far western home.

And as he passed our harbor's guardian isle,
Dreamless of aught its opening soil might yield,
Fair heaven unveiled to greet with radiant smile
This youthful reaper for the Master's field.

Yet brief the stay, though large the service done,
When lo! the call to that secluded sphere
Wherein the Chief determines, one by one,
The field, the worker, and the title clear.

In this retreat his earnest mind was stored
With wisdom, garnered from the good and wise,
That showed him light by many a pass and ford
Through wilds impassable to mortal eyes.

In this retreat his breadth of soul and mind
Distinguished him as clearly called to bear
The burden light that Heaven had once assigned
To Father Clowry's priestly love and care.

Then Gabriel—the strength of God—became
For him a heaven-sent pillar cloud of light
That led him on by day, and glowed in flame
To guard his footsteps in the gloom of night.

So sped the days, so flowed the years along,
Bringing new burdens: each assurance new
From Christ's own Vicar that the wise and strong
Must wear the mantle of the tried and true.

And then the spirit of the saintly dead,
The gentle Corrigan, looked smiling down
To see, thus proved of God, thus onward led,
Another Hughes assume his purple crown.

CARDINAL FARLEY

And now, O peaceful shade! O mild voiced John!

Whose calm persuasion bade all passions cease,
Behold him here, who gleams new glory on
These crimson emblems of the Prince of Peace.

Behold this John, who in himself combines

The strength of Hughes, a forceful blazing sun,
With that of those who followed milder lines,
Who strove for right in gentler days and won.

The trained apostle, who with zeal aflame

For life and light where death and darkness are,
Sends chosen souls who bear the sacred Name
To wandering sheep upon the fields afar.

The gifted seer, whose far-eyed vision saw

How thought may drift upon a shoreless tide,
And thus prepared a harbor safe, where law,
Upheld by truth, must stand as changeless guide.

The pastor true, whose kindly, watchful eye

Discerned how waters calm might well be stirred,
And called sweet counsellors whose hearts supply
New warmth of joy to those who preach the Word.

CARDINAL FARLEY

The tireless worker, who with golden store
So crowned our temple of enduring stone,
That freed from bonds its graceful spires may soar
And chant allegiance to the Lord alone.

Prince of the Church! you bid your flock revere
Our Pontiff, prisoned by men's lust for gold,
Who stands for truth, unmoved by force or sneer,
The Christ-like Shepherd of a world-wide fold.

Prince of the Church! whose head is Christ the King,
To you our hearts are bound by love's sweet cord,
For you we pray, that gracious Heaven may bring
The gift of long, long years to serve the Lord.

A Jubilee Meditation

FIVE-AND-TWENTY years of service for the Fold,
Drawing weak and erring sinners from the cold,
Reaping graces, till the harvest time, untold.

At the altar craving pardon, craving grace,
For the priceless souls entrusted to his care,
Robed in splendor as befits the holy place
That is sanctified by sacrifice and prayer.
Raising up the Host divine
And the golden chalice filled
With that same redeeming wine
Which on Calvary was spilled,
While the ransomed of his Masses far above
Hear the angels sing of worship and of love.

A JUBILEE MEDITATION

By the bedside bringing comfort, bringing peace,
For the body and the burdened soul within,
With the Lord's own sweet assurance of release
From the nightmare and the loathsome load of sin.
Bringing joy that anxious ears
Sweep to sad, expectant eyes,
Drawing forth the gentle tears
That bespeak the soul's uprising,
And the yearning for His coming with the light
That will melt away the mist and chill of night.

Thus the years in love have held him and will hold,
Never wearied in the service—never old—
Till the silver leaves are burnished into gold.

An Areopagite

'Tis morn along the classic steep
That holds the marble gods of Greece,
And nature waking from her sleep
· Enjoys an hour of perfect peace.
'Tis morning and the sunlight falls
On fluted columns, breathing walls
And widely circling seats of stone,
Where grim Athenian sages gave
Judgments at once profound and grave
In presence of the great Unknown.

'Tis morning over Ares' Hill
And there a bearded Roman stands
With parted lips and lifted hands,
While all the wondering winds are still.
And age, in garb of flowing white,
And saffron-robed, inquiring youth
Listen to God's eternal truth
And catch a gleam of heavenly light.

AN AREOPAGITE

One gifted mind preserves that gleam,
For Christ is not a new-found dream
To him who long from error free
 The heaven-approaching path has trod;
Whose heart has waited anxiously
 For tidings of the Saviour God.
And Dionysius trembling hears
Of Him whose name he'd known for years.

In youth his penetrating mind
Had left his own compeers behind,
And soaring in the realms of air
Had found his chief enjoyment there.
Amidst the facts and theories
Of all the Greek philosophies
He roamed a devious path with ease.
For him old Athens twined her bays
In token of her highest praise.
The world had learned to speak his name
And Grecians gloried in his fame.

What wonder then, if with the years
 We find his dignities increase,

Till blazoned forth his name appears
Among the worshipped sons of Greece?
Robed in the garments of a sage
He climbs the sixteen steps that lead
Where men, the wisest of their age,
Gather in councilled state to read
The laws that Solon framed. Yet still
He looks beyond that templed hill,
Knowing that one eternal Being,
All wise, all powerful, all seeing,
Guided the forces of the spheres,
Guarded the ever changing years,
And earth-transcending love displayed
In all the works His hands had made.

The Sibyl leaves and Prophet's Book
Had taught the lettered world to look
For One who was to bear a sign
Proving His teaching all divine;
For One whose all pervading light
Would flash across the Pagan night;
For One whose mighty love would span
The vast expanse from God to man.

The hour had come: himself had seen
 The sun withdraw its light in fear
 And clouded stars in heaven appear;
 The pale moon pause and pass between
 Our earth and sun *from east to west*,
 Before that sun a moment rest
 And then recede to occupy
 Her lost position in the sky.

This Dionysius saw, and now,
 When years on his majestic brow
 Had turned the Grecian gold to white,
 He sees at last the longed-for light.
 He hears a voice that has the ring
 Of inspiration telling him
 The gospel tidings, that the King
 Had left His Thrones and Cherubim,
 Bringing sweet peace from God above
 To bless the creatures of His love.

In reverent awe his grateful eyes
 A moment seek the radiant skies,
 Then kneeling at the feet of Paul
 He cries: "O God and Lord of all,
 Knowledge and Truth and Love in one,
 Christ is indeed Thy only Son."

Such was the heart-consoling close
Of all his watching and the ray
That dances on the distant sea,
Bringing the world a perfect day
In all its shimmering glory, knows
Less glittering gleams of joy than he.

Here let us leave old Greece and cast
A glance along the recent past.

Legends there are about these walls,
Of no uncertain tone, that tell
How this our Dion came to dwell
Here, where the beam of sunlight falls
With special glory, and the day
In flushed reluctance dies away,
Knowing that evening skies distill
Their sweetest dews on Ida Hill.
Grave was his mien, and all his ways
Were such as tended toward the praise
Of Him in whose divine employ
He looked for labor; not for joy,
Save that which well-spent hours impart
In silence to the humble heart.

Years pass and Alma Mater tolls
A fond good-bye and breathes a prayer
For him who takes immortal souls
To be his life's devoted care.
And old New Hampshire's mountains greet
The blessing and the grace he brings,
While flowers sway to kiss his feet,
As courtiers at the feet of kings.

What wonder then, if Mother Church,
Ever with watchful eye in search
Of men to raise protecting hands
Over the tender flocks that stray,
If left alone, where robber bands
In darkness wait an easy prey;
What wonder, if she bid him be
A member of her Hierarchy?
Henceforth to sit in solemn state,
One of the truly wise and great,
Who sit with Christ on Sion's hill
To teach mankind God's holy will,
In words profound and luminous;
The Christian Areopagus.

He needs no Paul whose thrilling voice
Bade Dion's waiting soul rejoice;
For Christ's own word has been the guide
Of all his actions, and the close
Of life will find the light that flows
From out the Saviour's wounded side,
Shedding its radiance round his soul
While God's eternal ages roll.

Thus have we touched with loving hand
The trembling chords of life between
That hero of the Grecian land
And this our hero, whose serene,
Unclouded brow and form erect
We trust the years may long neglect;
Whose prayers we ask for future days
Against the world's seductive ways;
Whose kind indulgence here we crave,
All ceremonial rites to waive
And call him, if we may to-night,
Our own loved Areopagite.

An Albanian Ode

OVER the world-dividing sea

A Bishop took his joyous way,
To him whom bishops of the world obey,
And deem it glory thus to be
Servants of one who sits to-day
Where sat the fisherman who walked
With Christ on Galilee.

In princely purple robed, he kneels

Before the Vicar of the King of kings,
And as the Pontiff's hand is raised he feels
A rapturous joy uplift his soul
Beyond the stars and earth's control;
He hears the rustling whirr of myriad wings,
And to their soft accompaniment
The heavenly chorus sings.

Glory to God the Father,
Glory to God the Son,
And the sanctifying Spirit,
Whose holy will be done:
He built His Church on a mountain
Where the howling winds may rave,
But it rests secure through endless years
In the strength His promise gave.
The foes of heaven in vain assail,
For the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Angel

AND from every spot on that wondrous globe
And with every nation's tongue,
They come, arrayed in the purple robe,
To kneel and render the homage due,
Where Peter guarded the faithful few
When the spouse of Christ was young.
From vales where mighty rivers run,
And the giant mountains rear
Their heads to heaven they come, and one
From the western land is here.

Chorus

He comes, he comes from the western land
That stretches from sea to sea,
Where they know the Lord's protecting hand,
And the Church of God is free.
He comes from the western land,
He comes from a martyr's shrine,
From a spot all red
With a life's blood shed
For a love divine.

Angel

And let him now return
To where the Hudson rolls,
And his strengthened heart will burn
With a holy zeal for souls.
Let him bring a blessing from thy hand
For his scattered flock in that growing land,
And the faith will grow and bloom and blow
On the mountain side and the vale below
Wherever the seed may fall,
For the tender plant of religion thrives
In the nourishing soil of holy lives,
And the Lord will bless them all.

Chorus

The Lord will bless them all,
Wherever the seed may fall,
For the tender plant of religion thrives
In the nourishing light of holy lives,
And the Lord will bless them all.

Angel

And when another decade gilds the past
With golden memories of heavenly days,
This toiling guardian of a region vast
Will come again to gain his meed of praise.
Again a blessing he will bring from thee
To faithful hearts across the shining sea.
And hamlets fair and cities huge will rise
Along the valley where the Mohawk flows,
Or where the haunted Catskills woo the skies
In constant yearning for their cooling snows.
Bright homes will deck the green hillside
And eager throngs will pour,
A ceaseless human tide
To every temple's door.

AN ALBANIAN ODE

A thousand heaven-ascending spires
Will show where faith's undying fires
 In flames anew
 Are bursting through,
While the spreading fold thus blessed by heaven
Will need the pastoral care of seven,
 To do the work now done
 By this thrice-favored one.

Chorus

Oh! tender the heart that gives to men
 Such tokens of love divine,
O sanctified place! a seven-fold grace
 Will evermore be thine.

Angel

Five times thereafter will the earth adorn
Her breast with blossoms of the year's true morn,
 Then the lamb will yield its fleece
 For virgin hands to spin,
The snow-white band which brings as dower
The plenitude of the Bishop's power,
 To be his own till time shall cease
 And eternity begin.

Chorus

O joy! O joy! O joy!
When the earth is all abloom,
A courier swift will ride
With the Pallium by his side;
The mystic band,
Which the Pontiff's hand
Will send from the prince's tomb.
For the lamb will yield its fleece,
And virgin hands will spin
The snow-white band which brings as dower
The plenitude of the Bishop's power,
To be his own till time shall cease
And eternity begin.
Glory to God the Father,
Glory to God the Son,
And the sanctifying Spirit,
Whose holy will be done.

The First Decade

Perhaps I seem
To address thee with old saws.

Prometheus-Browning.

I

WHAT is so sad to tender hearts
As cold neglect where love is due?
What is so sweet as love that starts
Out of its tomb to live anew?

With many a smile and sweet good-bye
Our mother watched her children go,
And heard them, young and warm, defy
The years to quench their love's first glow.
Their footsteps rang along the halls,
They passed beyond the outer doors,
And then—the pale and voiceless walls
Looked down on cold, forsaken floors.

THE FIRST DECADE

Fresh faces came and, young and fair,
Brought newer beams of radiance there.
Bravely and well they did their part
To cheer the anxious mother heart;
To set the silent corridors ringing
 With notes of rapture and words of joy,
That rise, like music-fountains springing,
 Out of the soul of a manly boy.

So passed the time, while every year
 Brought new rejoicing and new regret;
Our smiles are often checked by fear,
 For warmest hearts can soon forget.
Boys passed beyond the outer gates
 Into the living tombs of men,
And, spite of long yet hopeful waits,
 They seldom sought her halls again.

They stood beneath cathedral domes
 And bent the knee in priestly awe;
They pored by night on ponderous tomes
 That hold the mysteries of the law.
They swept the heavens with searching eye
 To catch the secrets of the spheres.

THE FIRST DECADE

They delved beneath the earth where lie
Rich treasures from uncounted years.
They peered within this wondrous frame
That shrines a deathless human soul,
And learned how crude the childish claim
That man is free from God's control.
They charmed the ear with magic tones
That slept unwaked in silent strings,
And ruled their world from higher thrones
Than ever bore the weight of kings.

They walked through all life's devious ways
With deeds approved and songs of praise;
Yet was their love not deathly cold,
Nor youth's affections wrapped in mould,
And, while the years passed on, a few
Returned to pay their reverence due.

Then came a day, a joy-filled hour,
When, flushed with hope, that faithful few
Felt surging through their hearts a power
To bind the old and draw the new;
To keep young lives within the fold,
Lest their remembrance might grow cold.

THE FIRST DECADE

Attracting elders from grave pursuit
To smile at follies departed long,
Finding a voice for memories mute
To light the shadows with stars of song.

They met in love, they worked, they prayed,
And the wisest plans were fondly laid ;
But they found no easy task was theirs :
The young have loves and the old have cares.

Yet look around ! the work they've done
Proclaims its worth from sire to son,
And thus we hail with well-earned praise
The veterans of those hard-fought days.

II

We, who have come in recent years
To claim this mother for our own,
Who know her as she still appears
With newer glories round her thrown,
Must feel the debt of gratitude
We owe our steadfast brothers now,
That, with their spirit brave imbued,
Our lives may deck her honored brow ;

May emulate their burning zeal
Mere earth and self to soar above,
Till every silent heart shall feel
The warmth of pure, undying love.

Our soul's ambition then must be
To raise aloft our mother's name,
Till all the world shall feel and see
There's something more than heathen fame.
For every noble thought expressed
In virtuous deed or pregnant word,
Will find an echo in some breast
With high resolve and holy stirred.
Yes, even the feeblest effort made
For Alma Mater's name and cause
Will strengthen those in arms arrayed
For God and truth's eternal laws.

For, duped by knaves and held by signs,
Men scorn their father's heritage,
And place within polluted shrines
Mere idols of the present age;
Make Heaven a dream of vistas broad
Where lovers hear the pipes of Pan,

Where man is throned, the only god,
And God is, at His best, a man.
The spirit of this age! An asp,
With hooded eye and slimy fold:
This age, that teaches men to grasp
Each other by the throat for gold.

And this is progress; this the fire
That was to crown the mountain height!
This is the clamoring heart's desire,
This is the long-expected light!
It is not light. It is not truth,
But human passion, nurtured well,
That fires the rising blood of youth
And leads him to the brink of hell.
Oh! there is work for men of brains,
For men of nerve, for men of prayer,
When minds are dulled by siren strains,
And fiends would crush us, if they dare.

A decade's work is closed to-night,
A decade's work looms fair and bright;
The past is grand, the record high:
Shall we then idly wait to die?

Shall we not oft assemble here,
With smiles of joy and words of cheer?
Or must the chill of life's concerns
 Blight all young effort nobly born,
And must the soaring soul that yearns
 For higher things be laughed to scorn?
Not so. The work so well begun
 Will bloom as opening buds that know
The presence of the morning sun
 Before they feel his ripening glow.

Here we shall come, a growing host,
 To Alma Mater's shielding side;
To call her great shall be our boast,
 To know her great shall be our pride.
And higher, holier efforts now
 Must light the eye and nerve the hand,
To pluck the wreath from falsehood's brow,
 That truth may smile on all the land.

IN CONTEMPLATION

The Flight into Egypt

Arise, and take the child
and his mother, and fly into Egypt: and be
there until I shall tell thee.

St. Matthew II, 13.

THE Wise Men with their retinue had gone.
The scene that earth should not behold again
Was now enshrined within the wondrous past.
Rich gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh
Lay all unnoticed, and the heavenly souls,
Absorbed in God's great doings, sank to sleep.

Lo! as they slept, an angel of the Lord
Appearing unto Joseph saith: "Arise,
And take the child, and with His mother fly
To Egypt, and be there till I shall speak
Again to thee, for it will come to pass
Herod will seek and would destroy the child."

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Quick to obey that ever welcome voice
Joseph arose while yet the darkness hung
In heavy folds across the slumbering sky,
And gently waked the virgin heart that held
Even in sleep the tender lamb of God.

They lingered not, no golden wealth was theirs,
No train of servants to provoke delay,
But fled in silence from the sleeping town ;
And Joseph, pilgrim-like, kept watch and ward,
While holding close and warm her infant son
The young queen mother followed through the night.

That night of nature veiled the watchful eyes
Of those who could have harmed them as they fled :
That night of God's sweet history still holds
Their journey safe within its secret heart.

What helped them on, how fared they on the way,
How long their travel, and who brought them food,
Until they reached that vale and narrow stream
Which marked the end of Herod's stern domain,
And passed in safety to the Land of Night,
We know not now, nor man shall ever know.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

The yellow desert sand rose up and whirled
Its blinding clouds about them, and the sun
Brought scorching heat to dry their parching lips :
The palm trees waved their solemn leaves on high,
The birds went twittering to their daily toil,
The tigers skulked about in search of prey
And lions roared amid their rocky caves,
Unconscious that their Lord was passing by.

Where did the weary pilgrims rest at last,
What occupation passed their exiled hours,
We may not say. We know but this, that God
Was round about them, and their hearts were full
Of grace and living light and sweet content.
Their night of suffering was sun-lit day,
And must be theirs who tread the thorny path
Marked out by Him, that leads thro' pain to peace.

Young lives will yearn for sympathetic friends
Nor dream of faithless hearts : yet, woe to say,
The dearest friend is oft the unconscious foe.
Lip flows to lip, and soul responds to soul
Through many a flowery year of youth, and yet
How fair we deem the counterfeit of love !

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

If then the snow white of the heart be stained
And generous natures warped to meaner ends,
And if the gentle sound of God's dear voice
Should softly come in fancied friendship's sleep
Saying: "Arise and fly!" what choice is theirs,
Except to seek the shadows of that night
Which hides men from the tempting eyes of sin,
Knowing that lost to all the world calls good
His grace will light the way and guide them on!

Strong men and women of aspiring lives
Have some long-cherished dream, some high desire,
Some dearest wish, some place best loved of all.
On these and these alone their hearts are set,
In these and these alone they yearn to find
The pleasing zest, the soothing, calm delight
And rest of soul forever sought by man.

If then the tender voice of God should come
By one who bears His message and should say:
"Arise, and fly! arise, and leave the place,
The friends, the work, congenial to thy taste!"
What should men do, but lift their eyes and go
With noble speed? For though the poor heart chords

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Of human love and human pride should thrill
With trembling anger or with flushed complaint,
'Tis best to yield, to suffer, and be strong.
The eye is blindest when it seems most clear,
And God's blest will must not be crossed by man.
The heart's desire is not the highest good
For every soul: the sweetest peace on earth,
Even in pursuit of good, may prove to be
A wind-swept desert in the eyes of God.

The night to which the soul must fly from sin,
The night that comes from sorrows meekly borne
With trained obedience and hopes denied,
Is night to those alone who close their eyes
And trust no wisdom larger than their own.

It is the land of refuge—bleak perchance
And void of human comforts—yet it smiles
Both fair and warm with love for those who bring
The gracious Presence close in their embrace.
And they who serve with hopeful, earnest hearts
Are safer in their darkness, led by God,
Than in the day-dawn, by themselves alone.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

Their darkness is that dear Egyptian land
Where Joseph led his fair young Virgin spouse—
A casket rare to hold their heavenly gem.
Thrice blest are they who dwell content therein,
Till stars shine out along the murky sky
And angels whisper low: "Arise, and come!"

The Widow's Mite

Verily I say to you, that
this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.

St. Luke, XXI, 3.

OUR gentle Lord had spent the morning hours
Within the Temple, where His thrilling voice
Had waked responsive chords in fervent hearts
And brought new strength to many wavering souls.
Calmly and firmly He pronounced the words
That brought confusion to the Sadducees.
With holy scorn, in strong, majestic tones,
He lashed their brothers in hypocrisy;
Then sadly turned aside to rest awhile
Along the terrace of the Women's Court.

Three caskets open-mouthed were placed near by,
Wherein the faithful and devout might cast
Their offerings for the Temple. Seated there,
He watched the princes and the doctors pass,

THE WIDOW'S MITE

With fringes long and broad phylacteries.
Proudly they strode in haughty self-esteem
And gave their gifts with ostentatious hand
That all might see and mark and comprehend.

Absorbed in pride of power they dreamed not then
Of Him who sat, unnoticed and unknown,
Reading the secret of their hardened hearts.
Nor would they deign to turn a passing glance,
Except of scorn, on that poor widowed one
Who came with faltering step and downcast eye
To give her modest alms. She seemed beneath
Their lofty notice, for her garb was frayed
And must not touch them lest it soil their own.
What deep concern had they if two brass mites
Were all her living, all her hoarded gain?
What was her gift? An insult for the Lord
Compared with their much praised munificence!

They swept along and she was lost to view,
Despised and mean before the sight of men:
Ah! not despised nor mean before her God.
The gentle eyes of Jesus marked that gift
Which told its tale of sweet, unselfish love,

And turning toward His faithful ones He said,
In solemn tones made warm by heavenly joy :
“Amen, I say to you, this widow poor
Hath cast in here much more than all the rest,
For out of their abundance they have cast,
She, of her want, hath given all she had.”

Ah! gracious Lord, what music in Thy words!
What strength and solace to the prisoned soul!
How sweet they are to many a noble heart
That fain would work great wonders but is held
In chains of poverty or circumstance!

He sees the path that leads to greater heights,
But some grim power holds him sternly back.
He yearns to lift their burdens from the poor
And speak the word of life to darkened souls.

He longs to have the wealth that men misuse,
Not for himself but that his hands might raise
Befitting temples for the Lord of Hosts,
Might bring the widow and the orphan bread ;
Alas! while hearts are bare whose hands are rich,
His hands are empty though his heart be full.

THE WIDOW'S MITE

He chafes and frets because he cannot seize
The opportunities that come in throngs
To other doors. His generous soul is stirred
To indignation at the sight of wrongs
That hundreds could redress. Alas! they seem
To have no fervor burning in their souls
And his poor, willing hands are fettered still.

He sends a message to the great blind world,
Full of high faith and glad expectancy,
Laden with wisdom from the fount of truth,
Rich with unselfish love for all mankind;
His words ring loud and clear a little hour,
Faintly the echoes come from kindred souls
That seem to him like soaring mountain peaks
Along the windings of an upper range,
Then melt away: the roustering world rolls on
As if no ear had heard his message, yea,
As if his lips had never uttered speech.

O noble heart, look up! The Master's eyes
Are lit with love; His words are light and life:
"Amen. I say to you, this widow poor
Hath cast in here much more than all the rest."

THE WIDOW'S MITE

The pure, unselfish soul's desire to rise
To greater heights will bring its sure reward.
Silver and gold you have not but go forth,
Strong in the power and the name of Christ.

The opportunities that some neglect
May not be given to you, but yours will come
In God's good time. The wrongs you'd fain redress
Are known to Him and like a flash from heaven
His morn will break. The earnest word you spoke
Has found some soil where it may grow and bloom.

Nothing of good is lost. The widow's mite
Was small to men, but princely to the Lord.
Do what you can and be content to leave
The outcome to the Master's loving care.
Give what you have, the gift however small
Will be recorded in the book of God.

Christ and the Children

Suffer the little children
to come unto me, and forbid them not. For
of such is the kingdom of God.

St. Mark X, 14.

OUR blessed Lord had said a last farewell
To that ungrateful village where His youth
And early manhood had been sweetly spent
In rare seclusion from the worldly throng.
His work was well nigh done and now, aflame
With love divine, He turned to take the road
That led Him on to agony and death.
Yet as He journeyed toward the crumbling walls
Of lost, but still beloved, Jerusalem,
With all the coming scenes of shame and scorn
Crowding so darkly round His anguished soul,
The tender heart was overflowing still
With love's abundant and eternal stream.

He saw the rabble crowd with torch and club
That thronged to desecrate His place of prayer.
He felt the Judas kiss upon His cheek,
And shrank in shame beneath the fiendish scourge.
He felt the crown of thorns that pierced His brow,
And heard the frenzied shouts of beastly men
Who drowned their reason in a putrid pool
Of low desire and lust for earthly sway.
Yet could He turn with gentle, smiling eyes
To greet the trusting mother hearts that came
And asked a blessing for their little lambs.

Moved by intemperate zeal the chosen twelve
Rebuked the women with unseemly words,
But shrank aside confused when Jesus spoke
In strong and earnest tones: "Forbid them not,
Suffer the little ones to come to Me,
My Father's kingdom is for such as these.
Amen, amen, I say this word to you,
That whosoever, simply as a child,
Will not receive the kingdom of the Lord,
He cannot enter there forever more."
Then laying hands upon the children's heads
He blessed them lovingly and went His way.

Alas! how often, with unworthy aims,
Do men debar themselves from light and peace!
Absorbed in lesser things their minds are filled
With worldly maxims that can never lead
To aught but heedlessness of truth and love.

Some seek the lower depths and grovel there,
As if the pleasures of the sense were all
That man should strive or care to satisfy.
The velvet cheek and dimpled smiles of youth
Awake no yearnings for the old, sweet days
When life was blameless and the heart was pure.
These bring them back perchance to other years
And draw the cord of anguish round their souls,
Not for the innocence forever flown,
But for the sorrows born of long excess.

Some seek to soar above their early faith,
Its child-like confidence and simple prayers,
To reach what men have called a wider range
Beyond the limits of a narrowing creed.
Their minds are drawn by half-unconscious pride,
Their eyes are dimmed by what the world admires,
Their ears are deaf to all but man's conceit,

And blinded thus, they fail to understand
The Master's warning words: "Unless you be
Converted from your sins, and so become
As little children in the eyes of God,
You shall not enter where His glory dwells."

Some gifted still with fond and faithful hearts
Are strangely heedless of those orphaned souls
That need assistance on their toilsome way,
Sweet words of truth, soft hands to lead them on
Out of the darkness to the light of love.
Their lives are faultless, yet they never know,
Nor feel a burden other than their own.

Bowed with the weight of His approaching doom
And torn with anguish for the crimes of men,
Our patient Lord could turn away from pain
And pause a while to bless in tender tones
The artless children of the trusting poor.
Yet some who make profession of their love
Where men may hear and see, are deaf to cries
That come from many a hidden, aching soul
Who seeks the Lord's own breast to nestle there,
Safe in the warmth of that divine embrace.

Ah! many a heart that should be warm is cold,
 And thus rebukes the little ones of Christ,
 With those who yearn to bring them to His feet;
 While all in vain our sweet beseeching Lord
 Holds out to them His white entreating hands
 And softly cries in words of pleading love:
 "Suffer the little ones to come to Me."

Feed My Sheep

He saith to them: Cast the
net on the right side of the ship, and you shall
find.

St. John XXI, 6.

THROUGH all the silent night their vessels lay
Rocked by the drowsy wave of Galilee.
Their net was spread but harmlessly it hung
Down in the depths and trembled with the sea,
Swayed by the waters gliding to and fro
And softly smiling at the useless mesh.

The moon looked down upon the reverent hills
That gathered round His consecrated sea;
Now drawing close beside the water's edge
As if in love to touch that sacred wave;
Now standing back behind the level green
As though they held aloof in sacred awe.

The ripples glittered under silver beams
 And moved in burnished crescents toward the shore
 To break in silence on the pebbly strand.

Hour after hour that dreamy night went by
 Until the soft, white radiance stole away
 Into the cooler gray of waking morn.
 Their net was empty and with saddened hearts
 They turned to leave the cold, ungenerous deep,
 When lo! a stranger stood beside the sea
 And saith: "My children, have you any meat?"
 Sadly they answered, no; and then He saith:
 "Cast on the right the net and you shall find."

In silent wonder, yet with smallest hope,
 They cast again and when the waters closed,
 Such multitude of fishes thronged the net
 As made them powerless to draw it forth.
 Amazed, they turned to look again on Him
 Who stood so calmly there. What man was this
 Who knew so well the secret of the sea!

Love gives a keenness to the lover's eye
 That pierces through where other sight is dull.

So was it there. The loved and loving John
 Turning to Peter said: "It is the Lord."
 Whereat the Prince in his impetuous haste,
 Girding a coat about his naked loins,
 Cast himself out upon the buoyant wave
 And in a moment knelt before his God.

Hot coals were lying at the Master's feet
 A fish and bread thereon; then saith the Lord:
 "Bring hither of the fishes you have caught."
 This loving service done, they sat them down
 And dined together. Then the Master turned
 And saith to Simon Peter: "Lovest thou me
 More than these others?" Simon made reply:
 "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee well."
 Then saith the gracious Jesus: "Feed my lambs."
 Again He saith to Simon: "Lovest thou me?"
 And Simon said: "Yea, Lord, thou knowest my love."
 Then saith the gentle Saviour: "Feed my lambs."

Once more the Master saith, and this was thrice:
 "O Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?"
 And Peter, grieved at heart to hear the words
 So oft repeated as if doubt there were,

Cried out in anguish: "Lord, thou knowest all things,
 Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus spake
 In tones of love the sweetest: "Feed my sheep."

The morning smiled along the grassy plain
 That lay in soft green beauty by the sea ;
 The waters that had lain serene and calm
 Beneath the soothing stillness of the night
 Now danced for joy because the sun had risen,
 And sparkling with the fire of warmer love
 Sent up their message bright of happiness
 To greet the hills His sacred feet had trod,
 His knees had pressed in sweet embrace at prayer.

The singing brooks dashed gaily toward the sea,
 The palm trees bent to hear the whispering wind,
 The vines gave forth their joy in odorous breath,
 The lilies raised their chalices to heaven
 And all things fair proclaimed that earth was glad.

Aye, earth was glad and heaven was lit with joy
 To hear such gospel from the Lord's own lips
 And know that man would not be left alone
 To battle with the hosts of sin and shame.

FEED MY SHEEP

That love divine had with commanding words
Made sure the happiness of countless souls
Who else had withered in the frost of days,
Unwarmed by sunshine from that guiding light
Which lifts our sinful earth so close to God.

Through all the storied years that voice divine
Has breathed its message from the Fisher's throne.
That voice is ringing round the world to-day
And breaks the bread of life for those in need
To heal the wounded and assuage their pain.

Ah! loving Lord! defend and make us strong
To keep that message warm within our souls,
Since failing this we dare not hope to hear
Thy words of welcome: Child, abide with Me.

Draw from our ears whatever makes us dull
To hear Thy Church that pleads for Christian love,
And bids us view in every child of earth,
Though blind and sinful, an immortal soul.

Draw from our eyes the veil through which we see
Nought but the sinner's crime, the beggar's rags,

FEED MY SHEEP

And turn away in coldness from our doors
The weak abandoned ones Thy blood redeemed.

Draw from our tongues the sting of scornful words
That wound the spirit in the dawn of hope
And plunge the soul in darker deeps again.
Grant us to see with tender eyes like Thine,
And hear with ears attuned to gentler airs,
And speak with words that blossom in the sun
Of that great truth which radiates from Thee.

The following notes may have some interest for a few readers :

Page 53. Valentine Hill, at Yonkers, New York, was occupied by part of the American Army before the battle of White Plains.

58. The cornerstone of the new Seminary on Valentine Hill was laid May 17th, 1891.

87. A statue in the Chapel of the old Seminary at Troy, N. Y.

127. Rev. Bernard M. Bogan, Plainfield, N. J.

129. The Rt. Rev. Denis M. Bradley, first Bishop of Manchester, N. H., was an alumnus of the old Seminary on Ida Hill at Troy.

136. A visit Ad Limina by the Rt. Rev. Francis McNierny, Bishop of Albany, N. Y.

138. The life blood of Rev. Isaac Jogues, S. J.

142. The Alumni Association of the College of St. Francis Xavier, New York City.

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