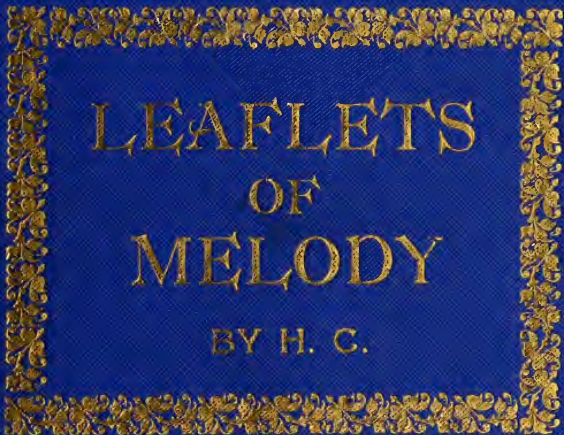


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By H. C. *Smith*
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From dewy meads the drowsy cattle stray
Toward barnyard gates, and rattling far along
The homebound wagon; children leave their play;
The little thrush too ends its evening song.

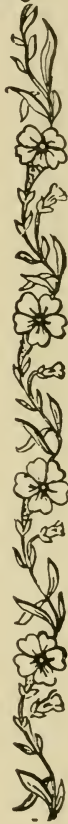


The Birds of Spring.

When the bright sun from southern fields, all fair,
Northward returns with his attendant train
Of golden banners gleaming in the air,
To take possession of his own again;
Then like a king remembering by chance
The friends who languish for his countenance,
He sends before him, gaily carolling
The sweet voiced birds, the little birds of spring.

In colors of the rainbow all bedight,
They perch themselves upon the leafless trees;
And of the coming summer, warm and bright,
Pour forth a flood of glorious prophecies.
The invalid, thanks God, upon his bed
Of pain, to hear their singing overhead,
And health and hope and happiness they bring
The sweet voiced birds, the little birds of spring.

When winter threatening turns upon his track
With blustering winds and blinding sleet, not now
Shall all his stormy threatenings drive back
The little birds, or shake them from the bough;





With faith unfeigned in the mighty power
Which sends them as bright heralds, hour by hour,
They patient sit, with head beneath the wing,
And bide their time, the little birds of spring.

And when at length the days of trial all
Are ended, and the summer skies are seen;
When from the boughs the apple blossoms fall,
And fields are carpeted with living green;
Then like the spirits of the blest, set free,
Singing aloud in heavenly harmony,
So in the fullness of their joy they sing,
The sweet voiced birds, the little birds of spring.

As day by day the golden sun goes round,
To greet him, these uplift their tuneful lays;
Still with him goes the chorus of sweet sound,
And earth is belted with a song of praise.
Since Eden's loss, man's singing has become
The sighing of an exile for his home.
But not in sorrow do the sweet birds sing,
The sweet voiced birds, the little birds of spring.





The Country Church.



O'erlooking fields of summer green
The small white parish church is seen,
A pleasant neighbor, pointing still
To heaven from off its little hill
And sweetly every Sunday morn
Calling across the waving corn, "Come!"

On quiet country homes around
Like music falls the solemn sound
And in their holy-day attire
The prattling son and peaceful sire,
Matron and maid with gladness go
To the good friend who bids them so "Come!"

Within the church-yard cross and stone
Is firmly planted many a one
And many a true heart rests beneath.
But love divine has conquered death
And mourners to that quiet place
The church bids, with believin' grace, "Come!"



And still the sun more kindly beams
On earth; the green earth greener seems
And life itself even like a psalm
Moves on that day in happy calm
When softly through the golden air
The little church is calling there "Come!"





The Ship at Sea.

Alone across the stormy sea
Of night, a ship is sailing on,
No star in heaven a guide to be,
And pathway there is none.

A thousand miles from either shore,
Blackness of darkness all around
Through gloom of night and tempest's roar
How shall the way be found?

Surely by drifting never shall
A ship the promised harbor gain,
And surely in such darkness, all
Endeavor is in vain.

Behold ! upon the binnacle
A little light is shining clear;
It lights the compass, showing well
The helmsman how to steer.





And thus it is that o'er the tide
Of surging wrath she travels on
In safety, having this for guide
When greater lights are gone.—

The sun, the moon, the stars may go,
She tires not of the toilsome quest
And every hour draws nearer to
The haven of her rest.

Sail on ! Oh ship ! for thee the curse
Is lifted from a sea of night,
The darkness of the universe
Can not put out one light.





Falling Leaves.



A leaden, lowering, dreary sky
And through the somber solitude
A wailing voice whose every sigh
Shakes down the dead leaves in the wood,
Now day by day with forehead bowed
We pace the pathway of our fears
And hear the rustling of the shroud
Whose shadow Nature's visage wears,
Poor human heart which still receives
Sad fancies from the falling leaves.

But even as one who wanders o'er
The forest path may find beneath
A barren bush its hidden store
Of ripened nuts dropped from the sheath,
So we who muse within the breath
Of autumn woods may bring therefrom
Not heavy thoughts of darksome death
But cheerful hope for days to come;
Remembrance of the golden sheaves
Flings glory on the falling leaves.



Each year the earth turns to the sun
Its ripening fields and laden trees,
Still proving while the seasons run
That God fulfills His promises,
And well it is beholding these
For us to know, that not till all
The fair fruit ripens, is the breeze
Sent forth to bid the bright leaves fall.
And gathered are the golden sheaves
Before we see the falling leaves.

Above us shines the light of life,
The earth-born clouds will bring the rain,
No danger for the harvest, if
We cover in the perfect grain.
Toil on therefore in hope, oh! man!
Toil on! and while the days go by
Believe in God's unerring plan
And know that your reward draws nigh
If earth gives only falling leaves
In heaven we'll find the golden sheaves.





The Old House.

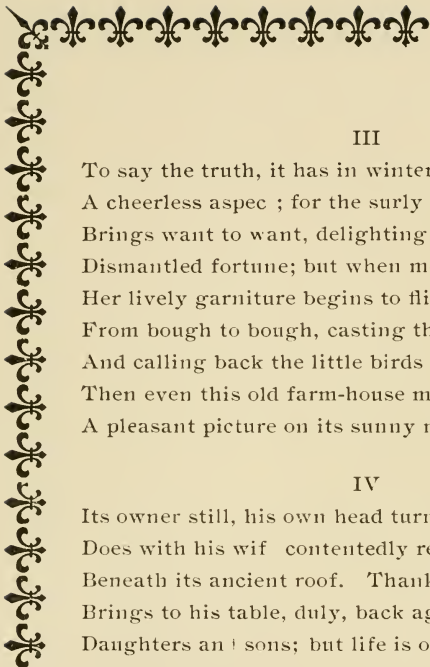
I

The very stars must fail. All visible things
Are singing their own requiem. Great or small
This is the song that every singer sings.
Yea! but before the leaves of autumn fall
From off the tree, the golden apples shall
Be gathered in! Virtue! thou fruit divine
For which the universe was planted; all,
All that the ages envelope is thine,
And thou shalt ripen ere the stars decline!

II

Not many miles, inland from Boston town,
There's an old farm-house, which is situated
Upon a low hill gently sloping down
Toward a quiet roadside. Having waited
Vainly for touch renewing, it is mated
To the old barn and sheds, which stand aside
And farther back, as if themselves they rated
Inferior. The front door, high and wide,
Two high and narrow windows does divide.





III

To say the truth, it has in winter time
A cheerless aspect ; for the surly king
Brings what we want, delighting to begrime
Dismantled fortune; but when merry Spring
Her lively garniture begins to fling
From bough to bough, casting the blossoms round,
And calling back the little birds to sing;
Then even this old farm-house may be found
A pleasant picture on its sunny mound.

IV

Its owner still, his own head turning gray,
Does with his wife contentedly remain
Beneath its ancient roof. Thanksgiving Day
Brings to his table, duly, back again,
Daughters and sons; but life is on the wane
With the stout yeoman. now, and as he nears
The end of life's long journey, he is fain
To pace along composedly, nor fears
How he or his to other eyes appears.

V

With what a sense of comfort does he close
His door at night, when, gathering overhead
Comes the first storm of winter. Well he knows
His cattle all are warmly housed and fed.



And nothing more from his kind hand will need
Until the morning. In his old arm chair
Beside the fire, and his newspaper spread
A map of the world before him, he sits there
King of the commonwealth, *sans* count or care.

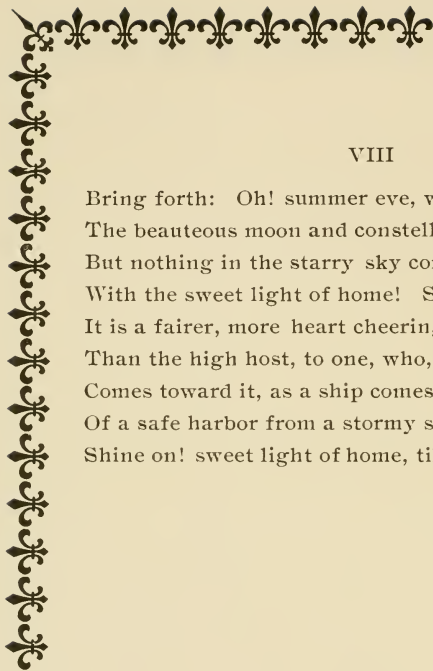
VI

Happy sits he, and while in vain, without,
Against the door the rough wind loudly knocks,
Pausing to wipe his specs, he thinks about
The wet winds driving the wild fowl in flocks,
Down by the sea among Cohasset rocks,
In stormy autumns of the long ago.
His good wife knits his warm gray woolen socks;
Their little grandchild pets her kitten, so,
That in her lap it lies, there, purring low.

VII

Now what care they, although the winds are howling
O'er Baldpate hill, and down the Boston road?
Shrieking round barren rocks, or lowly growling
Through hollows in the wood? On them bestowed
Deepening contentment in their poor abode,
As the black cloud, o'erspreading like a pall,
Against the lighted window panes, its load
Of freezing raindrops wrathfully lets fall.
Dark storm without; within, peace over all.





VIII

Bring forth: Oh! summer eve, with balmy airs,
The beauteous moon and constellations bright!
But nothing in the starry sky compares
With the sweet light of home! Surely at night
It is a fairer, more heart cheering sight
Than the high host, to one, who, wearily
Comes toward it, as a ship comes toward the light
Of a safe harbor from a stormy sea.
Shine on! sweet light of home, till heaven's light
[darkens thee!



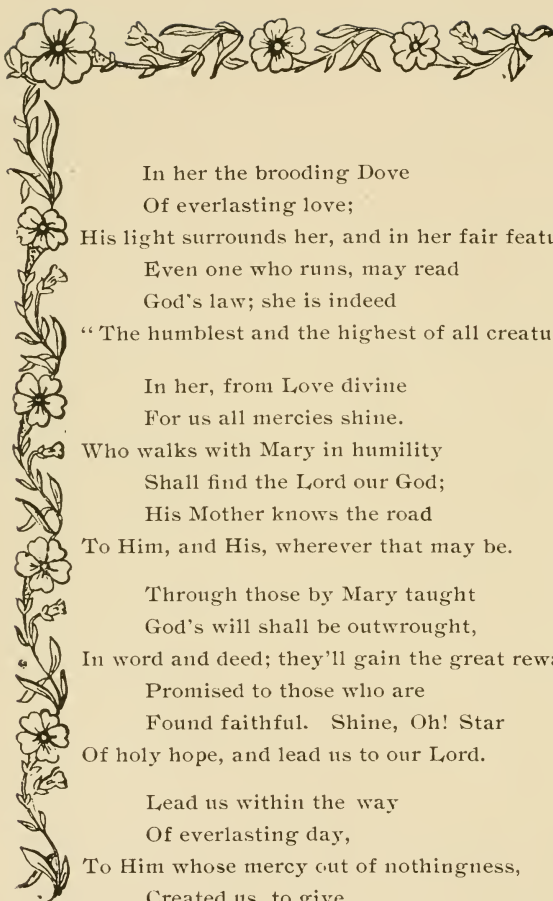


Light and Love.

At the close of yesterday
The moon's pale crescent lay
In the west slow sinking with a strange half light;
Like a candle dying out
In a sick man's room, about
The watcher bringing wierd shapes of the night.

Short while ago 'twas seen
Full orb'd, in heaven serene,
Filling with brightness all the fields beneath;
Waxing and waning so
Still with us does it go,
Yet never finds the full eclipse of death.

Inconstant moon! thou art
Like Eva's changeful heart!
There is "a Woman clothed with the Sun,
The moon beneath her feet."
In Mary, mother sweet,
The New Day of salvation is begun.



In her the brooding Dove
Of everlasting love;
His light surrounds her, and in her fair features
Even one who runs, may read
God's law; she is indeed
"The humblest and the highest of all creatures."

In her, from Love divine
For us all mercies shine.
Who walks with Mary in humility
Shall find the Lord our God;
His Mother knows the road
To Him, and His, wherever that may be.

Through those by Mary taught
God's will shall be outwrought,
In word and deed; they'll gain the great reward
Promised to those who are
Found faithful. Shine, Oh! Star
Of holy hope, and lead us to our Lord.

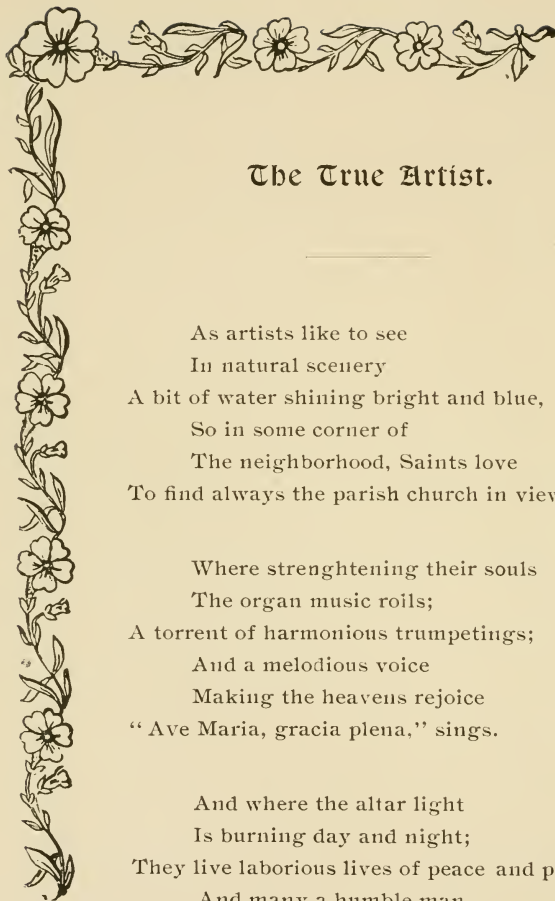
Lead us within the way
Of everlasting day,
To Him whose mercy out of nothingness,
Created us, to give
Himself to us. We live
Oh! Love, in Thine own infinite excess!



Oh! Sacred Heart of Love!
Thou kindest from above
Our earthly hearts with Thy celestial fire,
And all sweet thoughts upspring
Within us, and forth wing
In good deeds which accomplish God's desire.

Thou art Thyself the Power
Which perfects. Every hour
Spent out of Thee by us is spent in vain;
But every seed we sow
Within Thy light, shall grow
And ripened be, for our eternal gain.





The True Artist.

As artists like to see
In natural scenery
A bit of water shining bright and blue,
So in some corner of
The neighborhood, Saints love
To find always the parish church in view.

Where strenghtening their souls
The organ music roils;
A torrent of harmonious trumpeting;
And a melodious voice
Making the heavens rejoice
“Ave Maria, gracia plena,” sings.

And where the altar light
Is burning day and night;
They live laborious lives of peace and prayer,
And many a humble man
Works out the heavenly plan
To a completion most divinely fair.



Obedience.

A perfect work of art
From the creating heart
Comes forth self poised, and like the morning star
Goes gaily singing on
Its radiant way. The dawn
Of heaven's fair day it heralds from afar.

So Dante's glorious rhyme
Goes traveling through time
Toward the regions of eternity;
Discoursing while it goes
Of everlasting woes
And joys above, which shall unending be.

The stars are giving light
In their watches through the night;
Called, were they, and they answered, "Here we are,"
To Him who made them; and
With cheerfulness, each band
Shines forth in fair obedience near and far.





Oh that we might receive
God's grace, no more to grieve
His Spirit with our wayward wanderings;
But the one thing needful do!
The end God has in view
For us, decides the value of all things.





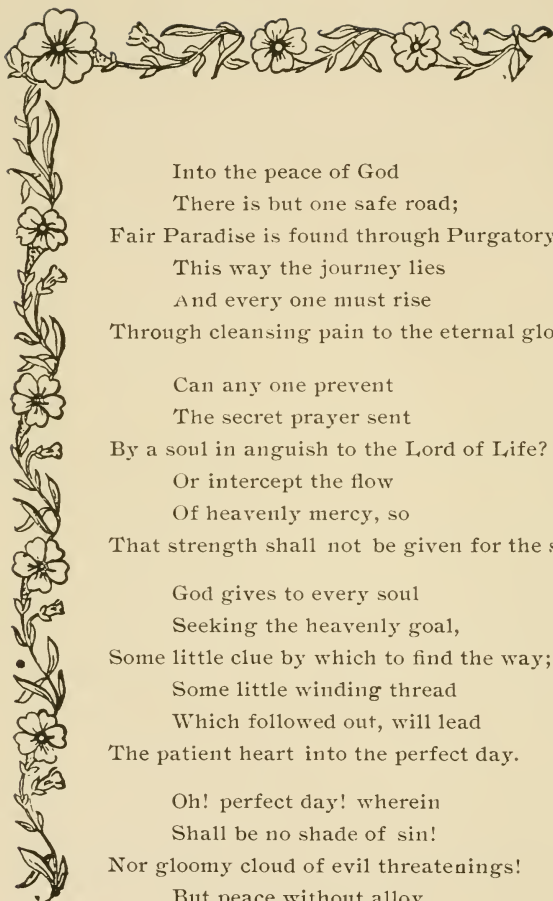
Perfection.

What dost thou wish to see?
Perfection? God gave thee
Thyself to perfect; look to thine own soul;
For this is the domain
O'er which as sovereign
Thou rulest now with absolute control.

If thou shouldst with much pain
For slaves their freedom gain,
Or out of poverty uplift the poor;
Until from every side
Came blessings, like a tide,
Uplifting thee at length to heaven's door;

What then? if thou hadst left
Thine own soul all bereft
Of discipline? What then if thou shouldst stand
Before God's throne at last
And see when time is past
In thine own soul a wild and barren land?





Into the peace of God
There is but one safe road;
Fair Paradise is found through Purgatory.
This way the journey lies
And every one must rise
Through cleansing pain to the eternal glory.

Can any one prevent
The secret prayer sent
By a soul in anguish to the Lord of Life?
Or intercept the flow
Of heavenly mercy, so
That strength shall not be given for the strife?

God gives to every soul
Seeking the heavenly goal,
Some little clue by which to find the way;
Some little winding thread
Which followed out, will lead
The patient heart into the perfect day.

Oh! perfect day! wherein
Shall be no shade of sin!
Nor gloomy cloud of evil threatenings!
But peace without alloy
And the melodious joy
Which in a heart at rest forever springs.



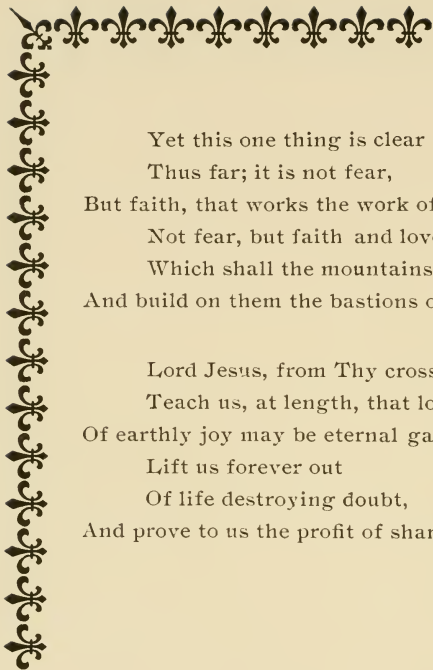
Loss and Gain.

When we beneath some cross
Of our own choosing, loss
Of strength find, and at length fall wearily
Tripped by some little chance
Of adverse circumstance
Which in the narrow path lay waiting nigh.

Then in our wretched state
Made more disconsolate
By the dark doubts which come from satan's power,
Like heavy stones out thrown
To crush us, there, alone,
And keep our lives disabled from that hour.

We doubt the choice we made,
We doubt our doubt, and stayed
Betwixt our doubts, remain in fixed surprise;
Or wander to and fro
Like hopeless spirits through
"The air of Hades tremulous with sighs."





Yet this one thing is clear
Thus far; it is not fear,
But faith, that works the work of righteousness;
Not fear, but faith and love
Which shall the mountains move
And build on them the bastions of success.

Lord Jesus, from Thy cross
Teach us, at length, that loss
Of earthly joy may be eternal gain;
Lift us forever out
Of life destroying doubt,
And prove to us the profit of sharp pain.



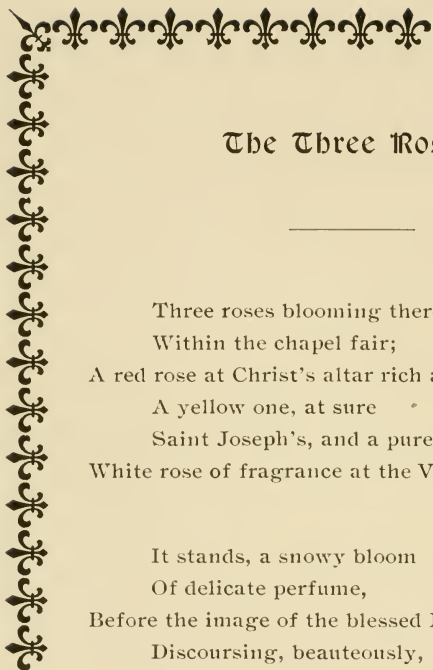


The Dawn.

Into the darkness came
A tongue of living flame;
It grew in glory as it multiplied
Itself upon the earth;
Which wakened with the mirth
Of choirs celestial at the Christmas tide.

And the New Day was born!
Let wanderers forlorn
Amid the shadows, turn their faces to
The Promise of the dawn.
The gloomy night is gone
And the old Eden blossoms in the New.





The Three Roses.

Three roses blooming there,
Within the chapel fair;
A red rose at Christ's altar rich and sweet,
A yellow one, at sure
Saint Joseph's, and a pure
White rose of fragrance at the Virgin's feet.

It stands, a snowy bloom
Of delicate perfume,
Before the image of the blessed Maid;
Discoursing, beauteously,
Of heavenly purity,
And love which lives, and blossoms in the shade.

So among faithful lands,
Erin mavourneen, stands;
The one white rose of charity divine!
And the darkness of earth's night,
Seems less dark, where the bright,
And sacred blossoms of her virtue shine.



The Mater Dolorosa.

Following the Holy Cross
She goes toward the loss
And full eclipse of all her earthly joy;
But clothed from head to feet
With blessedness complete,
She knows that our deliverance draws nigh.

She goes, the way made straight
For her, by cruel hate,
Into the darkness of Christ's death forlorn;
And then with look intent
Fixed on the Orient,
Awaits for us, His resurrection morn.

Like a fair morn, the grace
Of the uplifted face,
Touched by the light of glory from above
And in the sorrowing eyes
Beneath the shadow, lies,
The heart gleam of an everlasting love.





Oh! little one! storm tossed
And tempted, but not lost!
Fulfilled shall be God's promise to thy youth
And those who hate thee, through
Their hate of Christ, shall view
His triumph, and shall learn God's Love is Truth.

Think they, indeed, True Love
To conquer. They shall prove
Themselves the conquered, Love the conqueror
For as their King He shall
Returning, unto all
Reveal Himself, and reign for evermore.

In vain the closing stone;
In vain the seal thereon;
In vain the guards placed at the sepulchre;
Not dead, but robed bright
In everliving light,
Thy Son of Justice shall again appear.

Then faithful one thy worth
Shall be made know to earth;
Thy children's children in the east and west
Shall keep thy holy days
With thanks giving and praise
And call thee as thou art, forever blessed.



While Death is Approaching.

When the worst cometh
Death will relieve thee,
Therefore despair not
Nor rush into evil.
Let hate not embitter
Nor passion persuade thee,
Keep holy and peaceful
While death is approaching.

Like the crackling of thorns is
The laughter of folly,
And lovers of wisdom
Join not in the chorus,
But steady and truthful
In speech and in action
Their clear eyes look for ward
While death is approaching.

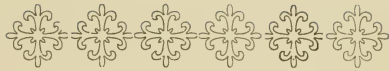




The knowledge of death is
To spirits unguided,
The gadfly which urges
To swifter destruction;
But thou, in God's comfort,
Walk forward and fear not,
Unhasting, unresting,
While death is approaching.

And Oh! soul remember
That thou shalt pass this way
But once, and should therefore
Do good as thou goest;
A white sheet of paper
Each day is, and on it
We write for God's reading
While death is approaching.





The Holy Poverty of Saint Francis Borgia.



When Francis Borgia, Duke of Gandia, had
Disrobed himself of his estates, and made
Himself of no account to them who look
Only upon the binding of the book;
One day at dinner, being placed beside
A lady of the court, clothed in her pride,
She unto him said somewhat pityingly
“ Francis, your case were hard, if it should be
That after such a sad exchange as this
You should likewise, the joy of heaven miss.”
“ My case were hard, indeed, the Saint replied,
If heaven were, at length, to me denied,
But as for the exchange, my friend believe
From it already I great gain receive !”





The Patience of Christopher Columbus.

Not for the empty breath of earthly fame,
But guided by the Spirit from above,
Across the stormy sea Columbus came,
To plant the faith whose fruitage is fair love.
Through long, long years, he felt the chastening rod
But in the lonely night-watch on the deck
This man renewed his covenant with God,
And saved his soul from everlasting wreck.
Oh! you faint hearted ones, who find despair
Embittering every crust you eat, and see
The spacious universe grow black and bare
Because of your own hopeless misery;
Learn of this man, and in life's darkest hour
Hold fast to God! In patience is great power.

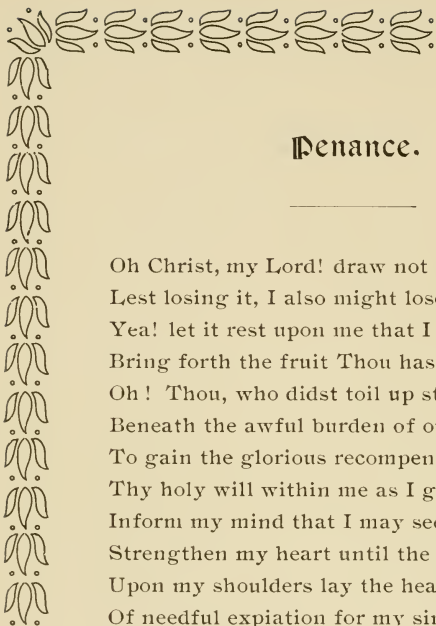




The Will of God.

It is God's will that we should forward go
With faithful heart, and ever willing feet
Through each day's labor, well content although
From earth's unrighteousness we fail to meet
A single word of commendation sweet.
Who saves his life shall lose it, and who gives
His life to God shall gain it so; complete
God keeps for us what from us he receives.
"Let him take up his cross and follow me."
Hark the clear bugle, echos backward thrown!
This is the keynote of the melody
Which leads the shining host to Life's fair zone,
Take up the Cross my soul, and forward go
Not with vain haste nor yet with foostep slow.





Penance.

Oh Christ, my Lord! draw not thy Cross away
Lest losing it, I also might lose Thee;
Yea! let it rest upon me that I may
Bring forth the fruit Thou hast desired of me.
Oh! Thou, who didst toil up steep Calvary
Beneath the awful burden of our woe
To gain the glorious recompense, now be
Thy holy will within me as I go.
Inform my mind that I may see the road;
Strengthen my heart until the end it wins;
Upon my shoulders lay the heavy load
Of needful expiation for my sins;
And let me, in each hour of trial, prove,
The strong salvation of Almighty Love!

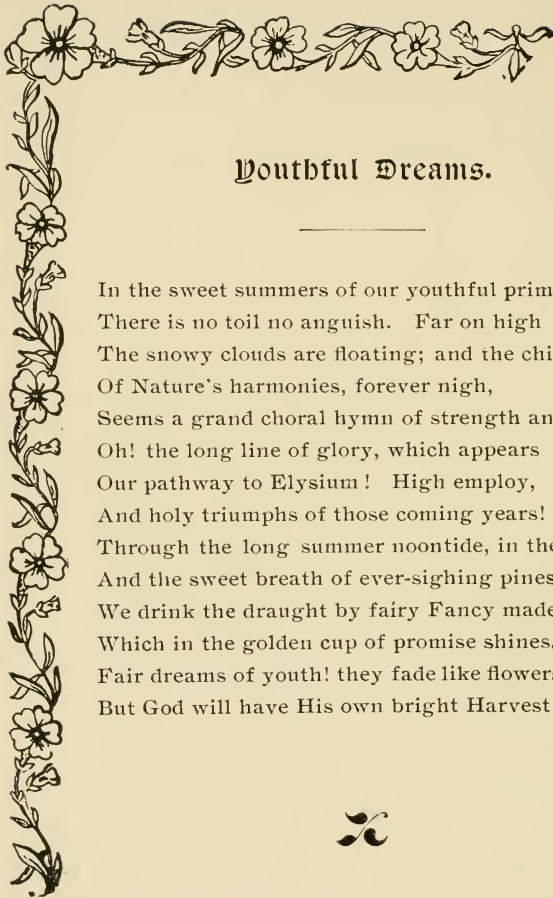




Harvest fields.

See how fair Nature, servant of our God,
Still patiently outspreads year after year
The living likeness on earth's naked clod
Of that which is, and was, and shall appear.
Yea! first shall come the blade, and then the ear
And then the golden harvest; all complete
Once more for us, dear friends, the symbol here
Of life's great end is shining at our feet.
Oh! fair fulfillment of the promises!
Oh! radiant beauty of the Saints, to come.
Oh! grand completion and true happiness
Most surely ripening for God's harvest home!
Shine on, bright Sun of Justice, until we
Who once were darkness become light in Thee.





Youthful Dreams.

In the sweet summers of our youthful prime
There is no toil no anguish. Far on high
The snowy clouds are floating; and the chime
Of Nature's harmonies, forever nigh,
Seems a grand choral hymn of strength and joy.
Oh! the long line of glory, which appears
Our pathway to Elysium! High employ,
And holy triumphs of those coming years!
Through the long summer noontide, in the shade
And the sweet breath of ever-sighing pines,
We drink the draught by fairy Fancy made,
Which in the golden cup of promise shines.
Fair dreams of youth! they fade like flowers of May,
But God will have His own bright Harvest Day.

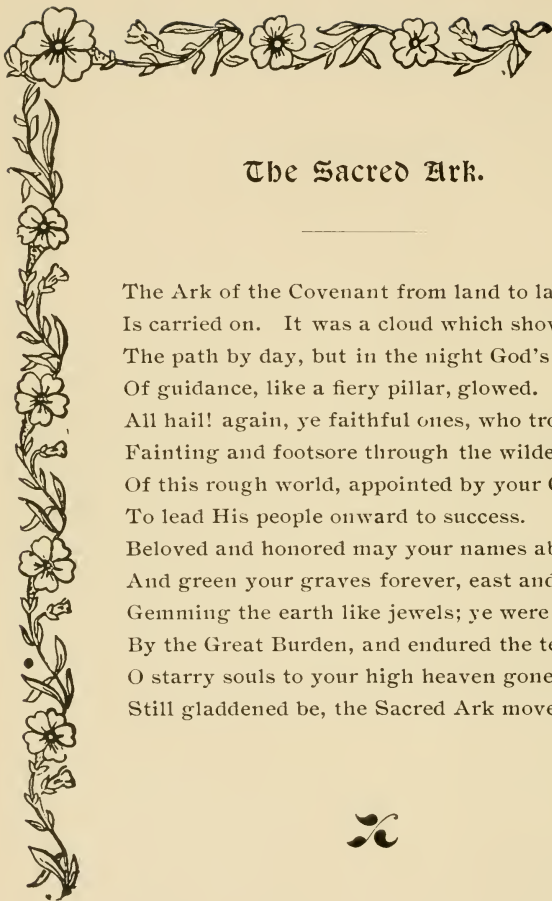




The Saints.

Our faith declares that Christ within His Saints
Still dwells among us. True life is begun
Not by the haughty spirit which o'er paints
Itself with praise, but by the work well done.
Seeking the prize that is by patience won,
The Saints pace on in the appointed way,
From morn till even; like the summer sun,
Sinking at last with undiminished ray
They live by faith, and since a thousand years
Are as a day within the sight of God,
They hinder not His work with hastening fears
But do their own part weil. Life's heavy load
Of care, they carry patiently, and death
To them is gain, as the apostle saith.





The Sacred Ark.

The Ark of the Covenant from land to land
Is carried on. It was a cloud which showed
The path by day, but in the night God's hand
Of guidance, like a fiery pillar, glowed.
All hail! again, ye faithful ones, who trod
Fainting and footsore through the wilderness
Of this rough world, appointed by your God
To lead His people onward to success.
Beloved and honored may your names abide
And green your graves forever, east and west
Gemming the earth like jewels; ye were tried
By the Great Burden, and endured the test.
O starry souls to your high heaven gone,
Still gladdened be, the Sacred Ark moves on.



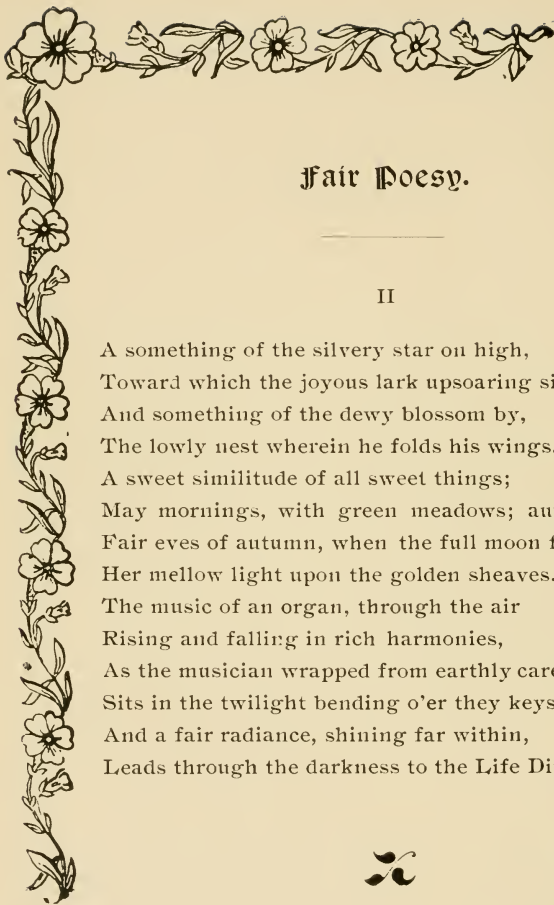


Fair Poesy.

I

Whether with Celtic music in the hush
Of a green valley, singing like a thrush;
Or like a star, in the Italian chime,
Moving melodiously through realms of time;
Fair Poesy is not the wild bird's song,
Nor "alleluia" of the happy throng,
But in her measures mystically meet
The song angelic, and the bird-note sweet.
Born of the earthly, but through power divine,
Rising from things imperfect, Song shall be
Made perfect, by the Sun whose glories shine
Through all the regions of eternity.
Eternal Truth, True Love, dying to give
Undying life. In His life, Song shall live.





Fair Poesy.

II

A something of the silvery star on high,
Toward which the joyous lark upsoaring sings;
And something of the dewy blossom by,
The lowly nest wherein he folds his wings.
A sweet similitude of all sweet things;
May mornings, with green meadows; autumn eves,
Fair eves of autumn, when the full moon flings
Her mellow light upon the golden sheaves.
The music of an organ, through the air
Rising and falling in rich harmonies,
As the musician wrapped from earthly care,
Sits in the twilight bending o'er they keys;
And a fair radiance, shining far within,
Leads through the darkness to the Life Divine.

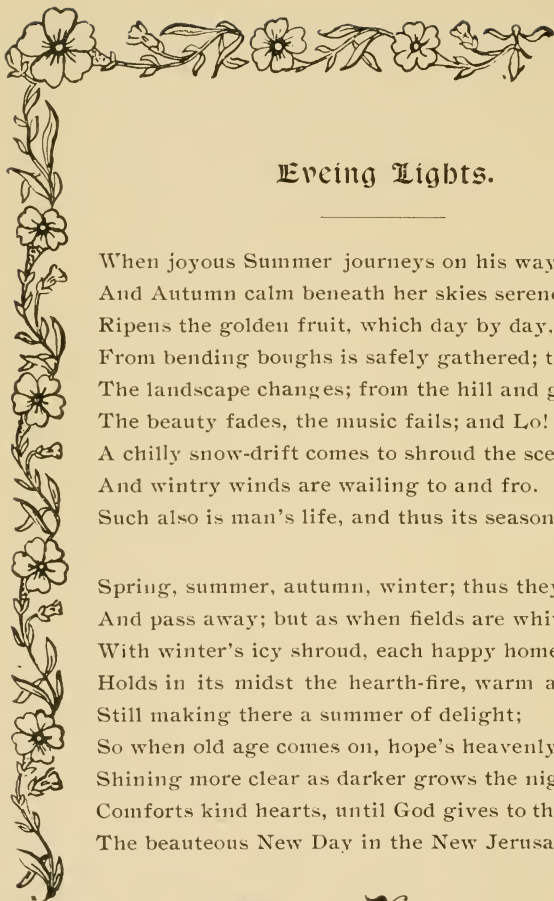




The Close of the Day.

Now o'er the world the star crowned summer Eve
Is slowly moving in her robes of gray;
Giving with gentle grace, a kind reprieve,
To all the weary toilers of the day.
From dewy meads the drowsy cattle stray
Toward barnyard gates, and rattling far along
The home-bound wagon; children leave their play;
The little thrush too ends its evening song.
For me likewise the summer day is closed.
The record written, every act made known,
Good against evil righteously opposed,
And sentence waiting at the great white throne.
Oh! may that record true, at length make plain,
That Jesus Christ for me died not in vain!





Eveing Lights.

When joyous Summer journeys on his way,
And Autumn calm beneath her skies serene,
Ripens the golden fruit, which day by day,
From bending boughs is safely gathered; then
The landscape changes; from the hill and glen
The beauty fades, the music fails; and Lo!
A chilly snow-drift comes to shroud the scene,
And wintry winds are wailing to and fro.
Such also is man's life, and thus its seasons go.

Spring, summer, autumn, winter; thus they come
And pass away; but as when fields are white
With winter's icy shroud, each happy home
Holds in its midst the hearth-fire, warm and bright,
Still making there a summer of delight;
So when old age comes on, hope's heavenly beam
Shining more clear as darker grows the night,
Comforts kind hearts, until God gives to them
The beauteous New Day in the New Jerusalem.

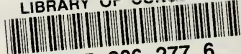
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