POEMS

BY

GEORGE MARION M'CLELLAN

To Mrs. H. J. Tompkins
With the Compliments
of the School
Anna E. Nelson

Miss H. J. Swafford
from
Annie E. Wilson

POEMS.

BY

GEORGE MARION M'CLELLAN.

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RACE LITERATURE.

The author of these poems, if such they may be called, is fully conscious that there is no special merit in them. They do not represent any very continued effort and study, a thing necessary for meritorious composition, even where there is genius, and much more so, where there is only a passing ability. I have never had a chance to do what I might be able to do by hard work, if leisure and freedom from the constant struggle for daily bread were given. The poems in this collection have been written at odd times. Some of them at the noon-hour in the swamps of Mississippi, when a student teacher in vacation, during college days; some of them later in wayside depots in Connecticut and Massachusetts, while I waited for trains, during my travels as financial agent for Fisk University; others while about Nashville, and my native hills of the Highland Rim of Middle Tennessee.

This accounts for the local color so widespread, where such local color appears. I have been too full of things and obligations in other lines than that of poetry-writing to do much in that direction. The only apology, then, I have to offer for seeking to call attention to what I have written, is the criticism that the Negro has contributed essentially nothing to literature. The criticism itself is true enough and must remain so for a long time to come, but the spirit of it has often been unkind. Indeed in some cases where it has been urged as a proof of the Negro's incapability of ultimate high development, the criticism has become a demand as glaringly absurd as it is lacking in a generous and comprehensive judgment.

Thirty years ago from this day of writing, 1894, the Negroes of the United States were slaves in the grossest ignorance and degradation. Is thirty years enough time for children to be born of such parents, to get an education and produce a race literature? It only takes a moment's reflection to see the absurdity of such an arraignment of the race on this score, as that which appeared in the April number of the *North*

American Review, 1892, by a Southern gentleman of some merit in letters.

It is time that there should begin to appear some literary attempts of passing merit from representatives of the Negro race. But superior excellence in literary instinct and capacity is a plant of slow growth, the cultivated gift of many generations. There are no environments that can keep true genius in the background, let it be under a black or white skin. But Negro writers of that great common class who, with ordinary ability, must achieve success by hard labor, will be at a great disadvantage necessarily in having to compete with the great writers of the white race who are already centuries ahead. They must suffer in such a comparison. Our situation as a race is without parallel in history. A race's literature is the expression of its national and social life. Its subjects are drawn from its heroes and their historic achievements. As a race we have never had a national life. We have no heroes to form worthy subjects of epics and dramas. We have no great and inspiring history.

The Israelitish race offers the nearest parallel to that of ours. But that race

has no inspiring history at the time of the Exodus, except that event itself and the covenant with Abraham. All that is especially noteworthy in the history of that race followed the crossing of the Jordan in the outcome of its national life.

Aside from the story of our emancipation and the hardships of our enslavement, of what subjects have we to sing to make a literature peculiarly native to us? To produce a Negro literature, we must have time to produce song-material, as well as singers. In this little attempt of mine I have not tried to sing Negro songs purely, but songs of beautiful landscapes, wherever I have seen them, and felt song-inspired by them, or of touches of human loves and feelings, as I have felt them. For what these songs are worth I can but hope they will be kindly received. In a few more years I hope to give expression of better and worthier things.

GEORGE MARION MCCLELLAN,
Nashville, Tenn.

PASSING SONGS.

THE JUNE.

The June has come with all its brilliant dyes,
Its honeyed breath, its balmy gusts and sighs,
In fields and stretching up-lands, glade and glen,
And by the high and lowly haunts of men,
With all-surpassing glory bloom the flowers,
And come are sun-lit skies and dreamy hours.
The morning earth is all begemmed with dew,
The toiling bee the blissful hours through
Hums softly on his self-beguiling tune,
While gathers he the sweetest sweets of June.
Low murmuring the crystal brooklet leads
Its way through fields and lane and emerald meads.
The clover fields are red and sweetly scent
The pasture lands, where browse the kine content.
The corn is swayed with breezes passing by,
And everywhere the bloom is on the rye.
Already on the bearded wheat is seen
The gold which tempts the farmer's sickle keen,
And I can almost see the gleaming blade
By which the golden grain is lowly laid;
And hear the singing scythe and tramp of feet,
And see the cone-shaped shocks of wheat.
All shimmering the landscapes far and wide
Bespeak fair promise for the harvest tide.

The June has come with summer skies and glow,
Reflecting bliss and Junes of long ago—
Bare feet, and careless roving bands of boys
That haunted lake and stream in halcyon joys,
The bow and arrow, hunting ground and snares,
The sudden flight of quails and skulking hares,
The wild and joyous shouts along the glen
Come back in all the month of June again.
Then other days and solitary dreams
Are come again with flash of flaming gleams,
Where red birds shot across the opening glades,
In quest of deeper thickets, deeper shades.
Again far inland, on and on I tread,
Where cooling shades and carpets green are spread
And modestly the violet blooms and sups
The dew; and glow the golden butter-cups;
And sweet the odor of the woods I scent
Where perfume of a thousand kinds is spent.

And stretched full length upon the ground
I lie and watch the leaves and hear their sound
And wonder what their whisperings include
To tell of life spent in such solitude.
Here dreaming on forgetting time and men
The June a million visions brings again,
In imagery so rare of that and this,
A self-forgetting turmoil, nameless bliss.
Unseen but felt, the spirit of the wood
Without a dogma teaches of the good
In God sublime. An all-pervading sense
Is everywhere of his resource immense,
His love ineffable—infinite power,
In storm resisting oaks, and purple flower

Scarce lifting up its head an inch above the ground
Is seen alike, and with the joyous sound
Which Robin-Redbreast from a tree top trills
Full orthodox confession comes and fills
The heart. The lip is mute but deep a sigh
The spirit sendeth upward to the sky
Baptized in faith, its adoration, love,
A credo of the soul, to God above.

The June has come with all its brilliant dyes,
Its honeyed breath, its balmy gusts and sighs.
The soft sunshine comes down aslant the hills,
With perfume sweet the honeysuckle fills
The summer atmosphere for miles around,
And all the groves and fields are sweet with sound,
While hills, and woods and vale and grassy slope
Are teeming everywhere with life and hope.
Come out, ye sons of men from street and ward,
Come forth again upon the welcome sward,
At least for one brief day leave toilsome care
In offices and stifling banks and wear
The boyish spirit over field and glen,
Drink deep once more of all his joys again.
The way is not so long—the brook in size
Has lost to longer legs and manhood eyes,
But its low murmuring the morning through
Is still a lullaby; and love is true
In brook and field, and sky, and dale and glen
For all the changing, faithless sons of men.

In these no hot contentions, endless strife,
Nor aching hearts, consuming greed of life,
No soul-corrupting lusts, debasing sin,
Nor blighted lives where innocence has been

Are ever brought by June. But to assuage
The sorrows of mankind from age to age
A subtle charm, a bliss, a merry tune
Abideth in the country lap of June.
Come out where kindly nature deftly weaves
Her cooling bowers with the tender leaves
Ye tired wives and husbands vexed with care,
And find life's true elixir in the air.
Let tinkling bells of flocks and browsing herd,
The song of brooks and twitter of the bird
Unite with children voices in their shout
Of mirth and joy on all the sward about,
And let the maidens come with rosy cheeks
And merry boys with gallantry that speaks
Of dawning love, and sentiment the best
That ever came to swell the human breast;
Let all come forth in holiday array
From care, and feel the bliss of one June day.

AN OCTAROON'S FAREWELL.

O love, farewell, a long farewell,
Ten thousand times good-night,
God's benediction with thee dwell,
And guide thy steps aright.

We part to-night; it must be so,
'Tis best for thee and me,
But my true heart can never know
Love lessening for thee.

Love's promises were but a myth,
A mockery and sham;
I've lived to learn I'm tainted with
The cursed blood of Ham.

Dear love, how could I know when I
Gave to thee all my heart,
That far as earth is from the sky,
Our lives must lie apart?

Yet I can never rue the day,
Though all the world I miss,
For death itself can not outweigh,
My momentary bliss.

THE MARCH'S PROMISE.

When gray clouds break on Southern skies
  And winds of March begin to blow,
Our fancies run to summer sighs,
  That whisper and delight us so.

For in this stormy month of winds,
  The first new pulse of life is felt,
When spring with all her sweets begins,
  Where winter's ice and snow have dwelt.

The bluebird carols out his note,
  A prelude to the country round,
Of chimes a few more days remote,
  To which the forest will resound—

The plowman's song, the forest chime,
  The upturned sod, the country scene,
Bespeak a resurrection time
  In air and sky and sprouting green.

O, blessed hope of life anew
  That comes from death when spring begins;
Life after death a promise true
  Is brought in March's stormy winds.

DOGWOOD BLOSSOMS.

To dreamy languors and the violet mist
Of early spring, the deep sequestered vale
Gives first her paling-blue Miamimist,
Where blithely pours the cuckoo's annual tale
Of summer promises and tender green,
Of a new life and beauty yet unseen.
The forest trees have yet a sighing mouth,
Where dying winds of March their branches swing,
While upward from the dreamy sunny South,
A hand invisible leads on the spring.

His rounds from bloom to bloom the bee begins
With flying song, and cowslip wine he sups,
Where to the warm and passing southern winds,
Azaleas gently swing their yellow cups.
Soon everywhere with glory through and through,
The fields will spread with every brilliant hue.
But high o'er all the early floral train,
Where softness all the arching sky resumes,
The dogwood dancing to the wind's refrain,
In stainless glory spreads its snowy blooms.

A SERENADE.

Dear heart, I would that thou couldst know
How like the burning glow of Mars,
My love here keeps a watch below
Thy window and the midnight stars.

How sweet the breath of night is now,
Of sweets the rose and jessamine keep;
Go, winds, with these and kiss her brow,
And bear my love to her in sleep.

Oh! such a love, that loves her so,
With such a little space apart,
Should through yon open casement go,
And gently stir her dreaming heart.

Dear heart, sleep on without a fear,
If all unconsciously to thee,
My love must watch, to watch so near,
Makes even that a bliss to me.

ETERNITY.

Rock me to sleep, ye waves, and drift my boat
With undulations soft far out to sea;
Perchance where sky and wave wear one blue coat,
My heart shall find some hidden rest remote.
My spirit swoons, and all my senses cry
For Ocean's breast and covering of the sky.
Rock me to sleep, ye waves, and outward bound,
Just let me drift far out from toil and care,
Where lapping of the waves shall be the sound,
Which mingled with the winds that gently bear
Me on between a peaceful sea and sky,
To make my soothing slumberous lullaby.
Thus drifting on and on upon thy breast,
My heart shall go to sleep and rest and rest.

SUSTAINING HOPE.

Farewell, Dearest and Best,
What matters it whether the name be Dove,
Dear-heart, and all sweet words at love's behest,
Since none can voice my love?

To stay is past my power;
Oh, love, my own Dear-heart, farewell, good-bye!
For thee I'll breathe through every passing hour,
A fond and secret sigh.

But, Dear, though it be long,
This hope 'mid distant scenes and fellow-men
Will lead me on, in solitude, or throng,
That we shall meet again.

A SUMMER AFTERNOON.

Sing on, sweet bird, and soothe my soul,
With thy melodious tune,
Chant me thy rhapsodies this whole
Delightful afternoon.
And hiding in thy secret bower,
In modesty's retreat,
Thy music, melting by the hour,
Is ravishingly sweet.

Comes perfume from the climbing rose
That interlacing meets
Above my head, where comes and goes
The bee in search of sweets.
The cooling Zephyrs stealing by,
Faint-scented odors bear,
Which make with every gusty sigh,
Exquisite all the air.

Wide as the naked eye can reach,
Are landscapes stretching far,
Too beautiful for human speech
To paint them as they are.
And here beneath this climbing rose
A dreamy blissful state
Comes on, as when one for repose,
Has drunk some opiate.

If thou couldst charm my lover here
To lean upon my breast,
Thy music, bird, would be more dear,
And I would be more blest.

And singing on in thy retreat,
Thy melting, sensuous tune,
My dreamy bliss would be complete,
This lovely afternoon.

A SEPTEMBER NIGHT.

The full September moon sheds floods of light,
And all the bayou's face is gemmed with stars
Save where are dropped fantastic shadows down
From sycamores and moss-hung cypress trees.
With slumberous sound the waters half asleep
Creep on and on their way, twixt rankish reeds,
Through marsh and lowlands stretching to the gulf.
Begirt with cotton fields Anguilla sits
Half bird-like dreaming on her summer nest
Amid her spreading figs, and roses still
In bloom with all their spring and summer hues.
Pomegranates hang with dapple cheeks full ripe,
And over all the town a dreamy haze
Drops down. The great plantations stretching far
Away are plains of cotton downy white.
O, glorious is this night of joyous sounds
Too full for sleep. Aromas wild and sweet,
From muscadine, late blooming jessamine,
And roses, all the heavy air suffuse.
Faint bellows from the alligators come
From swamps afar, where sluggish lagoons give
To them a peaceful home. The katydids
Make ceaseless cries. Ten thousand insects' wings
Stir in the moonlight haze and joyous shouts
Of Negro song and mirth awake hard by
The cabin dance. O, glorious is this night.
The summer sweetness fills my heart with songs
I cannot sing, with loves I cannot speak.

Anguilla, Miss., September, 1892.

AS SIFTED WHEAT.

O sift me, Lord, and make me
Clean as sifted wheat:
My soul, an empty vessel, bring
To my Redeemer's feet.
However sinful I have been or be,
Thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee.

I am so closely hedged about,
Oh Christ, as thou hast been,
My soul hemmed in with flesh
Is so in love with sin.
Sin-stained am I, but sift me, Lord, complete
And make me clean as sifted wheat.

A BELATED ORIOLE.

Gay little songster of the spring,
  This is an evil hour
For one so light of heart and wing
  To face the storms that lower.

December winds blow on the lea
  A chill that threatens harm,
With not a leaf on bush or tree
  To shield thee from the storm.

Why hast thou lingered here so late
  To face the storms that rise,
When all thy kind, and yellow mate
  Have sought for southern skies?

Hast thou like me some fortune ill
  To bind thee to this spot,
Made to endure against thy will,
  A melancholy lot?

Chill is the air with windy sighs,
  A prophecy that blows,
Of cold and inhospitable skies,
  Of bitter frost and snows.

But there is One whose power it is
  To temper blast and storm,
And love to love a bird is his,
  And keep it safe from harm.

To Him thy helplessness will plead,
  To Him I lift a prayer,
For we alike have common need
  Of His great love and care.

A PSYCHE OF SPRING.

Thou gaily painted butterfly, exquisite thing,
A child of light and blending rainbow hues,
In loveliness a psyche of the spring,
Companion for the rose and diamond dews.
'Tis thine in sportive joy from hour to hour,
To ride the breeze from flower to flower.

But thou wast once a worm, as now am I,
And seeing thee, gay thing, afloat in bliss,
I take new hope in thoughts of by and by,
When I, as thou, have shed my chrysalis.
Then through a gay eternal spring of light,
Shall my immortal soul pursue its flight.

HEART YEARNINGS.

Oh ! for the welcome breath of country air,
With summer skies and flowers,
To shout and feel once more the halcyon
Of gayer boyhood hours.
I think the sight of fields and shady lanes
Would ease my heart of pains.

To cool once more my thirst where bubbled up
The waters of a spring,
Where I have seen the golden daffodils
And lilies flourishing,
My fevered heart would more than half forget
Its sighs, and vain regret.

Far, far away from early scenes am I ;
And, too, my youth has fled ;
For me a stranger's land, a stranger's sky,
That arches over-head.
For scenes and joys that now have passed me by,
I can but give a sigh.

But Oh ! for hearts that yearn and hearts that sigh,
For wayward feet that roam,
Hope whispers for the by and by,
A never-changing home.
And there no more in a strange land will break
The home-sick heart, and ache.

MY MADONNA.

It is a sacrilege in form I fear,
To make this photograph of him and thee,
From my own sunny south sent north to me,
In all my heart my own Madonna, dear;
Yet Raphæl could paint no face or brow
To make me worship it with glory lit,
Although the Holy Virgin sat for it,
As I do this, our baby's face and thou.
Though priests my worship may condemn to scorn,
I think the virgin with her mother love,
The Babe of Bethlehem, of woman born,
And later all my sins and sorrows bore,
If my great love for thee they watch above,
For it they both are pleased and love me more.

Hartford, Conn., December, 1893.

A MEADOW-LAND.

Delight of keen delights in summer hours,
  Is this long meadowy scene,
All rioting in festival of flowers,
  And pageantry of green,
With smiling skies above and summer blue,
With ancient fields below, yet ever new.

Thou mindest me of other scenes and days,
  In sunnier climes than thine,
Of mocking-birds and ever piping lays,
  Of figs and muscadine,
Of dreamy afternoons and dreamy love
In silent bliss with southern skies above.

Dear meadow-lands, it makes me sigh to know
  That this fair scene must die,
And sleep long months beneath the frost and snow,
  And inhospitable sky;
And yet why should I sigh and yield to pain,
Since all thy loveliness will bloom again?

For long before the red men trod thy soil,
  Or white men came to till
Thy blooming waste, and crown with patient toil,
  Surrounding vale and hill,
All rioting with gleeful vagrant flowers
Wert thou in bloom, through long and sunny hours.

'Tis mine to lie beneath a changeless snow,
  Sad, sad, to me the truth,
But thine to sleep awhile and wake to know
  A gay immortal youth;
Weep thou for me, for when to dust I'm gone,
Thy festive face will still be smiling on.

Long Meadow, Mass., August, 1893.

TO A BUTTERFLY IN CHURCH.

What dost thou here, thou shining sinless thing,
With many colored hues and shapely wing?
Why quit the open field and summer air
To flutter here? Thou hast no need of prayer.

'Tis mete that we who this stone structure built
Should come to be redeemed and washed from guilt,
For we this guilded edifice within
Are come with every kind of human sin.

But thou art free from guilt, as God on high;
Go seek the blooming waste and open sky,
And leave us here our secret woes to bear,
Confessionals, and agonies of prayer.

THE HARVEST MOON.

The dark magnolia leaves and spreading fig,
With green luxuriant beauty all their own,
Stirless, hang heavy-coated with the dew,
Which swift and iridescent gleams shoot through
As if a thousand brilliant diamonds shone.
Afloat the lagoon, water-lilies white
In sweets with muscadines perfume the night.
A song bird restless chants a fleeting lay;
Asleep on all the swamp and bayou lies
A peaceful, blissful, moonlight, mystic haze,
A dreaminess o'er all the landscape plays,
While lake and lagoon mirror all the skies.
There is a glory doomed to pass too soon,
That lies subdued beneath the harvest moon.

Columbus, Miss., September, 1892.

IN THE HEART OF A ROSE.

I will hide my soul and its mighty love
In the bosom of this rose,
And its dispensing breath will take
My love where'er it goes.

And perhaps she'll pluck this very rose,
And quick as blushes start,
Will breathe my hidden secret in
Her unsuspecting heart.

And there I will live in her embrace
And the realm of sweetness there,
Enamored with an ecstasy
Of bliss beyond compare.

AN AUTUMN DAY.

The golden-rod was flaming bright,
The autumn day was fine,
The air was soft and scented with
The purple muscadine.

We travelled far a wooded path,
The sky was bright above
And all things seemed to smile and breathe
A blessing on our love.

O! sweet and dreamy was that face,
Such tenderness expressed
In every line, and born to be,
Love burdened and caressed.

So happy in my happiness
I could not think it then,
That after parting on that day
We should not meet again.

For hope is ever found with love,
And there were visions fair
For us of boundless happiness
In that sweet autumn air.

But many years of shifting scenes,
Have come and gone since then,
And those dear, tender, dreamy eyes
I have not seen again.

And once I thought with bitterness—
My God, forgive the sin—
My barren life and hapless love
Would better not have been.

But looking back through all my years
Of weariness and pain,
I know that tender, dreamy face
I did not love in vain.

The lengthening days and months and years
Have brightened on my way
By living on in memory
One long past autumn day.

And late a faith has come to me,
I think it God has willed,
That all those autumn promises
Are yet to be fulfilled.

For I believe with all my heart,
The time I know not when,
With hearts still true, my love and I
Shall somewhere meet again.

THE FEET OF JUDAS.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
The dark and evil passions of his soul,
His secret plot, and sordidness complete,
His hate, his purposing, Christ knew the whole,
And still in love he stooped and washed his feet.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
Yet all his lurking sin was bare to him,
His bargain with the priest and more than this,
In Olivet beneath the moonlight dim,
Aforehand knew and felt his treacherous kiss.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
And so ineffable his love 'twas meet,
That pity fill his great forgiving heart,
And tenderly to wash the traitor's feet,
Who in his Lord had basely sold his part.

Christ washed the feet of Judas!
And thus a girded servant, self-abased,
Taught that no wrong this side the gate of heaven
Was e'er too great to wholly be effaced,
And though unasked, in spirit be forgiven.

And so if we have ever felt the wrong
Of trampled rights, of caste, it matters not,
Whate'er the soul has felt or suffered long,
Oh heart! this one thing should not be forgot,
Christ washed the feet of Judas!

A FAITHLESS LOVE.

The lovely May has come at last,
With songs and gleaming dews,
And apple blossoms bursting out
With evanescent hues.

A newer life, a newer charm
Is bursting every hour,
With pledge and faithful promises,
From leaf and bud and flower.

And hope is growing on the hill,
And blooming in the vale,
And comes new vigor and new life
On every passing gale.

But O my heart! my heart of hearts,
What hope is there for me,
For what was hope and what was joy,
For me have ceased to be.

The woodlark's tender warbling lay,
Which flows with melting art,
Is but a trembling song of love,
That serves to break my heart.

Gay flowers burst on every side,
The fairest of the fair,
But what are these to any heart
That's breaking with despair?

O May! my heart had found a rose
As lovely as the morn,
Which charmed awhile, then faithless went,
But left with me its thorn.

A SONG OF NASHVILLE.

Oh! Nashville, Athens of the South,
Thy valleys beauty fills;
How can I tell with human mouth
How well I love thy hills?

Thy hills with beauty far renowned
Where rugged glory rules,
Are from a dozen places crowned
With colleges and schools.

A modern Attica in truth,
The South may call thee well,
Thy benefits unto her youth
Will coming ages tell.

For to thy founts of learning here
Fair Attica's chosen seat,
Ambition turneth year by year
Full many a thousand feet.

To minds with aspirations led,
And ardor of the heart,
Are ever endless fields outspread
In sciences and art.

And year by year dispensing truth,
Thy guiding hand is great,
In that thou givest through thy youth
The destinies of state.

Oh Nashville, could I sing of thee,
Praise worthy of thy name,
Approximate what is to be
The future of thy fame.

Thy institutions, hillsides bright,
Beneath a Southern sky,
Make scenes of beauty and delight
To every traveler's eye.

O'er all thy byways round about,
Once on thy grassy slopes,
I was a wanderer in and out,
With all a student's hopes.

To-day I walked those same old rounds,
I walked in days gone by,
And heard from fields the same sweet sounds,
Beneath the same blue sky.

The mocking bird in bush and tree,
With melody and voice,
In ecstacy did welcome me,
And bade my heart rejoice.

The hills and dales were in the smile
Of spring as they had been;
And seemed to welcome without guile,
Their lover back again.

The lazy herds were feeding still,
On slope and grassy plain,
And strangely in my heart would fill
A pleasure kin to pain.

Old friends were gone and former ties,
Were broken and estranged;
But my old haunts and smiling skies,
Were constant and unchanged.

But not more constant, nor more true,
My fields, my skies above,
Than came your wanderer back to you,
Unchanged in heart and love.

TO KITTY WYSONG.

And hast thou indeed such disdaining,
To hold thy head so high?
In pride from one swift glance abstaining,
You pass me by.

I recall the days—it were choices
To us sweeter than rhymes,
To freely mingle our lips and voices,
In happier times.

You have gone up higher, but I lower,
And it is much, Kitty,
Queen-like to give scorn, but more,
To give pity.

And wearers, (for such is human strife)
Of poverty or crowns,
Pride is not best, so full is this life,
Of ups and downs.

And thy lot, proud heart, may be fair,
Which chance has left thee in;
But pass not disdainingly where
Thy love has been.

THE APRIL OF ALABAMA.

Fair Alabama, " Here we rest," thy name—
And in this stretch of oak and spotted ash,
Well said that long past swarthy tribe who came
Here, " Alabama," in these glamour wilds.
To-day thy April woods have had for me
A thousand charms, elusive loveliness,
That melt in shimmering views which flash
From leaves and buds in half grown daintiness.
From every tree and living thing there smiles
A touch of summer's glory yet to be.
Already overhead the sky resumes
Its summer softness, and a hand of light
All through the woods has beckoned with its blooms
Of honeysuckle wild and dogwood white
As bridal robes—

With bashful azure eyes
All full of dew-born laughing falling tears
The violets more blue than summer skies
Are rioting in vagrancy around
Beneath old oaks, old pines and sending out
Like prodigals their sweets to spicy airs.
And as to-day this loveliness for years
Unknown has come and gone. To-day it wears
Its pageantry of youth with sylvan sound
Of many forest tribes which fairly shout
Their ecstacies. But soon with summer smiles
Will such a gorgeousness of flaming hues
Bedeck those Alabama glamour wilds
As ever burst to life by rain and dews.

LINES TO MOUNT GLEN.

In this soft air perfumed with blooming May,
Stretched at thy feet on the green grass, Old Glen,
It is a joy unspeakable to me
To see again thy face and friendly crags.
My childhood friend, then height of heights to me,
I am come home to worship thee once more,
And feel that bliss in indolent repose
Of those long past delightful afternoons,
When first you smiled on me and gave to my
Imaginings such imagery, when I
Would lie down at thy base as I
Do now. My feet have wandered far since then,
And over heights with prouder heads than thine,
Such as would name thy majesty with hills.
But I, Old Glen, my early mountain friend,
Am come with loyalty and heart still true
As thy bald crags are to their kindred skies.
My own Olympus yet and pride thou art,
With thy Thessalian gates of clouds
Which hide the great Olympian Hall,
Where Hebe still sweet nectar pours
Out to the gods. And murmurs sweet and low
Of melting cadences Apollo from
His magic lyre sends gently wandering
In soft succeeding measures yet in air
Familiarly to me.

And yet, Old Glen,
A stranger at thy base I lie to-day
To all but thee, save this soft yielding grass,
And blooming waste, thy pageantry of flowers.
All these with yond bald eagle circling in

The upper air with keen descrying for
Some timorous skulking hare, are but old friends
Who laughed and played with me in childhood hours
Full many a summer day and told me tales
Of fairy lore. With such immortal friends
To welcome me again, what care I then
For yon rude plowman's stare and taking me
For some trespassing rake. This broad domain
Of circling hills and intervening vales
Is thine by ancient rights to shelter me,
And take me in thy lap when I have come
With love to worship thee. Before Rome was,
Or Greece had sprung with poetry and art,
Thy majesty with impartiality
Was here. The first soft tread of moccasin
On Indian feet, in ages none can tell,
That bent this yielding grass was thine to hear.
And all the sons of men who since have brought
Their pulsing hearts to thee with loves, with aches,
With tragedies, with childhood innocence,
Have had thy welcoming. To thee no race
May come with arrogance and claim first right
To thy magnificence, and mighty heart,
And thy ennobling grace that touches every
Soul who may commune with thee.

And so
It was Old Glen we came at first to love
In this soft scented air now long ago,
When first I brought my youthful heart to thee,
All pure with pulsing blood still hot
In its descent of years in tropic suns
And sands of Africa, to be caressed
By thee. And to your lofty heights you bore

Me up to see the boundless world beyond,
Which nothing then to my young innocence
Had aught of evil or deceptive paths.
With maddening haste I quit thy friendly side
To mix with men. And then as some young bison
Of the plain, which breathes the morning air
And restless snorts with mad excess of life,
And rushes heedless on in hot pursuit
Of what it does not know: So I, Old Glen,
As heedlessly went out from thee to meet
With buffeting, with hates and selfishness
And scorn. At first I stood abashed, disarmed
Of faith. Too soon I learned the ways of men,
Forgetting much I wish I had retained
Of once a better life. And in the fret
And fever of the endless strife for gain
I often sigh for thee, my native peaks,
And for that early life for me now past
Forevermore.

But for one day, my early friend,
I am come back to thee again, to feel
Thy gentle grace so indefinable,
So subtile is thy touch, yet to the heart
A never-failing gift to all who come
To thee. And so it is, Old Glen, that I am come,
But not with all-believing innocence
As in those unsuspecting days of yore.
And O Mount Glen! sin-stained my burning heart
With shame lifts up its face to thine, but with
A love as changeless as thy ancient crags
Does it still beat for thee. And I rejoice
To feel thy mighty heart here solace mine.
For when the day leads in the early dawn

With blushing rosy light and caroling
Of larks; and sleepy flowers half unclosed,
All wet with dew, unfold their buds and leaves,
There is enchantment in this lovely spot
Beyond, by far, all mortal utterances.
To come here then and lie down on thy side,
As I do now, and see the butterflies
Bobbing from flower to flower, and hear
The restless songs of birds as they in joy
Flit carelessly from bush and tree, is all
The bliss my heart could ask. Here I could lie
In such repose and let a lifetime pass.
And here, Old Glen, could I forget the fret
Of life and selfishness of men, and see
The face of him who is all beautiful.
And here in this perfume of May, and bloom
Luxuriant, and friendly rioting
Of green in all this blooming waste, is seen
A glimpse of that, which He, the Lord of all,
Intended there should be with things and men
In all this earth, a thing which yet will be,
A universal brotherhood.

THAT BETTER DAY.

Still courage, brother, courage still,
Repress the rising sigh,
Oppression now the race must bear,
But freedom by and by.
And art thou sore at heart from Southern wrongs?
Well, then I pray
Be comforted; all wrongs shall pass away.

God's freedom he will give to all,
Now mercy is disguised,
But he will smile and crown at last,
Our race so long despised.
And art thou stumbled over Southern hate?
Well, then I pray
Be comforted; all that shall pass away.

The time will come when man to man
Will clasp each other's hand,
And color-bane shall cease to be,
In all our goodly land.
Dost thou despair the death of prejudice?
Well, then I pray
Be comforted; that too shall pass away.

It takes a faith, a mighty faith,
To look for such a day—
But look, for sure as God is God,
All wrongs shall pass away.

MAY ALONG THE CUMBERLAND.

Embodiment of all the beautiful
That crowns the year, O May! is come with thee.
For miles and miles along the rugged hills,
Where in and out the Cumberland must wind,
And spring her first response of green doth find,
A rapt'rous beauty all the valley fills.
The yellow sun with summer at his heels,
Betokeneth the time about to be,
Siestas, days and nights alive with wings,
The stirring of a million living things.

The month is full of roses, perfumed air,
And crooning bees upon the clover's breast,
The morning woodlands ring with music sweet,
The Zephyrs whisper to the corn,
And echo back the hills the dinner horn,
But all in tune and harmony complete.
In blissful self-abandonment awhile,
Here on thy lap, sweet May, O! let me rest,
And dream and dream, till lulled by sight and sound
In unison to all the earth around.

May, 1891, Nashville, Tenn.

SERVICE.

Lord, let me live to serve and make a loan
Of life and soul in love to my heart's own.
And what if they should never know
How weary are the ways,
How pitiless the snow,
How desolate the days
Sometimes in reserve.
And what if some esteem above
Me others far less true,
And barter off my wealth of love
For passing comrades new?
I still would serve.

To be permitted once in life
To kiss a little child
And call it mine is worth the strife
In a million battles wild.
To have a woman's holy love,
One friend to half divine
The heart, is heaven from above
Come to this soul of mine.

And O, dear Lord, I thank Thee for the cup
Of hydromel thou givest me to sup;
Though rue soon pass my lips and fill
My heart with deadly pain,
My soul will rise to thank Thee still
For guerdon and its gain.
And though insentient clay the sward
My form will hold; for life,

For love, sunshine and rain,
My heart above all earthly strife
Soars up through joy and pain
In thanks to Thee, dear Lord.

A DECORATION DAY.

The reign of death was there,
Where swept the winter winds with pipes and moans,
And stretched in silence bare,
A colonade of gray sepulchral stones.

But then it was in May,
And all the fields were bright and gay with tune
That Decoration Day,
And blossoms wore their hues and breath of June.

A motley crowd that came—
But who more fit than they that once were slaves,
Despised, unknown to fame,
With love should decorate the soldiers' graves.

Black feet trod cheerily
From out the town in crowds or straggling bands,
And flowers waved and flaunted merrily,
From little Negro hands.

And far, far away
From home and love, deep in a silent bed,
Beneath the sky of May,
Was sleeping there in solitude, the dead.

But for the hearts that day,
Who in the distant North wept sore and sighed,
Black hands with sweets of May,
Made green the graves of those who for them died.

BY THE CUMBERLAND.

See through this lovely valley, dear,
This river ever goes,
And so on through a thousand years,
Just as to-day it flows.
I sigh to see it stretching on
Through time and to the sea,
When by its banks the moments are
So brief for you and me.

Of the long line of human hearts,
'Tis marvelous to think,
Which have so throbbed with hope and love
Along this sandy brink;
While one by one they slipped away
In all the ages gone,
With ceaseless glide and slipping flood
The river traveled on.

I know our time is brief and we
So soon must go, as they,
But, dear, my thoughts have been far more
Upon our bliss to-day.
For one short hour to hold your hand
And kiss away your tears,
In happiness is more than all
This river's thousand years.

IN SUMMER.

The summer shimmering to-day
Puts on the earth a rune,
Which blends in magic waves of light,
Beneath the sky of June.

Along the pavements of the street,
And in the crowded mart,
There is a joy of summer-time,
A comforting of heart.

To-day one hardly can believe,
Along these pavements old,
That March held such an icy sway
Of bitterness and cold.

The little gamin of the street,
Full keeping with the boy,
Forgetting all his winter woes,
Is hallooing for joy.

And I go back to youth again,
And get myself away,
To where the country fields are in
The green and blue of May.

And on I sweetly glide with them,
With changing song and tune.
With bursting buds and brilliant dyes,
That line the lap of June.

The morning trembles with its throbs
Of ever-gushing notes,
Which pour with shuddering sweetness from
A thousand feathered throats.

'Tis true the shadows of four walls
Are ever on me cast,
But they have a transparency,
To me of a sweet past.

YOUTHFUL DELUSIONS.

And where now restless, wilt thou roam
Thou young uneaseful heart?
'Tis better far to stay at home
So young a stripling as thou art.
And thinkest thou to go
Abroad to taste the sweets of life
And miss its lurking woe?

Yea, doubtless thou wouldst find a bliss
Of honey sweet awhile,
And many a love-born, smothered kiss,
Unknown to thee erstwhile.
And of a thousand hues
Would blossoms give thee morning sweets
With honey-dabbled dews.

And all-believing heart and young,
Thou wouldst unfold thy best,
To faith, and laugh till thou wert stung
With poison in thy breast.
Then who would be thee nigh
So far from home, to heal thy pain
And soothe thy bitter cry?

'Tis best, by far, to stay at home,
Dear over-trusting heart,
None but a prodigal may roam
So far from love apart.
Doubt not—abide thy day,
And what is best for thee to have
In time will come thy way.

LOVE IS A FLAME.

Love is a flame that burns with sacred fire,
And fills the being up with sweet desire;
Yet, once the altar feels love's fiery breath,
The heart must be a crucible till death.

Say love is life; and say it not amiss,
That love is but a synonym for bliss.
Say what you will of love—in what refrain,
But knows the heart, 'tis but a word for pain.

TO LOCHIEL.

Dear little babe, of all born things alive
  Most helpless thou—of life a slender thread.
Can such as thee so rough a sea survive,
  And come at last the way all feet must tread?
Yea, by the God whom I adore above,
  If I could fix thy destiny by choice
Thou wouldst be safe, my little love.

'Tis love ineffable I wrap thee in.
  To pitiless pain, and ache, and storm and blast
I'd bare my soul to save thy feet from sin,
  And bring thee safely home, Lochiel, at last.
But in thy chancing boon of birth, thy whole
  And everlasting destiny of life
Lies in thy self-directing soul.

PRAYER.

Wherever man on earth is found
Let him his tribute pay,
For he is in all nature bound
To bend to God and pray.

And every man on earth who dwells
In darkness or in light
Has in his breast a voice that tells
Him that to pray is right.

Though but all shadowy and dim
Of God the savage reads,
No savagery can take from him
The knowledge of his needs.

So let him pray if but to stone
And senseless stock of wood,
For in his mercy God will own
All motives that are good.

But he who knows the heavenly power
And feels the heavenly care,
Is doubly bound in every hour
To breathe some form of prayer.

The darkest doubts the soul may fill;
Still pray, though doubts be there,
For he is safest from all ill
Whose lips are moved with prayer.

'Tis best for every one who can
To pray with faith devout,
But God is gracious in his plan
For him beset with doubt.

Still pray, for long as any heart,
Can feel its deep despair,
Not from it can there once depart
Efficiency of prayer.

And all who strive, and strive and fall
In sore besetting sins,
Still pray—God's love is over all
'Tis prayer on prayer that wins.

A JANUARY DANDELION.

All Nashville is a chill. And everywhere
Like desert sand, when the winds blow,
There is each moment sifted through the air,
A powdered blast of January snow.
O! thoughtless Dandelion, to be misled
By a few warm days to leave thy natural bed,
Was folly growth and blooming over soon.
And yet, thou blasted yellow-coated gem,
Full many a heart has but a common boon
With thee, now freezing on thy slender stem.
When the heart has bloomed by the touch of love's
warm breath
Then left and chilling snow is sifted in,
It still may beat but there is blast and death
To all that blooming life that might have been.

SUNDAY MORNING.

Softly the cool breath of the early morn,
Swamp-scented air, fragrant with deep lagoons
And water-lilies, stole on through the fields
Of cotton, whispering a sighing song.
'Twas Sunday morning then, and everywhere
The May dew rolled away in diadems.
Another day was born with floods of light;
The grass with newer green all wet with dew
Gave welcoming. And rose hues spent with yesterday
Found blushes still and sent out night-born sweets
To mingle with a thousand other spicy
Airs and perfumes of the jessamine,
And wild aromas of the summer air.
And murmured low the sycamores o'erhead
With whisperings of passing summer winds.
The dapple sunshine kissed and kissed their leaves,
And golden gleams were on the fields. Rich were
The blackbird's notes and joyous sounds from all
The feathered tribes. In lazy lengths the bayou went
With stretches on, and murmuring low songs
Like those of love. There floated far and wide
The queenly water-lilies white, perfuming
All the Sunday air.

And like a dove
Of peace, fair Nitta Yuma sat amid
Her spreading figs and rich magnolia blooms
In rest; for there was come the hallowed day,
The Sabbath of the Lord.

Nitta Yuma, Miss., May, 1884.

ESTRANGED.

An autumn sky, a pleasant weather,
The asters blossom by the way;
We two between them walk together,
And watch the ships pass on the bay.

His summer song yet to the clover,
The hovered bee still murmurs there,
But there's that tells that summer's over
In this sweet dreamy autumn air.

When it was May and lovely weather,
And ships went sailing to the west,
We walked this path, we two together,
With happy throbs of heart and breast.

The spring was young and hope was growing,
And love went idling on the sand,
And there was blissful overflowing
Of heart in touch of lip and hand.

And yet the bee hums to the clover
Soft, all the dreamy hours long,
But there's that tells that summer's over
In all his drowsy, flying song.

An autumn sky, a pleasant weather,
But all the summer glow is changed,
Here where in love we walked together,
Before we two were so estranged.

A LITTLE NEWS VENDER.

Scarce ' bove a whisper—half a sound
Heard, causing me to hark,
To turn and see a baby face
Peering at me in the dark.

I bent my head with ready grace
With open ear and eye,
To learn what such a baby had
To say to passers by.

Above the clatter of the street
I caught the faint accent,
A little maiden vender's cry—
"The Post! The Times! a cent"—

And swift to strike a trade with me
As promptness could command,
Out from her tangled skirts came up,
A paper in her hand.

The wind was blowing merc'lessly,
And pitiless the snow,
In downy flakes was falling on
This little mite of woe.

"The Post! The Times! 'tis but a cent,"
She looked with eager eye
For sympathy and ready sale,
How could I fail to buy?

O! God, I thought must such be seen,
As this on such a night,
In this so rich a commonwealth,
So pitiful a sight?

Is bread so dear and life so cheap,
So circumstanced the strife
For food, that babes must barter off,
All that is worth in life?

For who can hope these peddling maids
Could once escape the price,
Backed up and forced by all street laws
Legitimate to vice.

No Communist to blame the rich,
Am I, though sad the sight,
But O! I know somewhere is wrong
And somewhere is the right.

God pity all the pitiful,
And send from door to door,
Him whom thou wouldst to minister
To the deserving poor.

Hartford, Conn., February, 1893.

THE COLOR BANE.

There was profusion in the gift
Of beauty in her face,
And in her very form and air
An inexpressible grace.

Her rustling silk, moire-antique,
The daintless taste would please ;
Her life in all appearances
Was opulence and ease.

It could be seen from head to foot,
And in her piercing eye,
That she had had advantage of
All that hard cash could buy.

But Oh ! it was so sad to see,
That in her heart was pain,
That caste should force this Negro queen
To cold and proud disdain.

That one so beautiful as she,
Could any sphere adorn,
Should so be made to hate a heart
And give back scorn for scorn.

For all her wealth and gifts of grace,
Could not appease the sham
Of justice that discriminates
Against the blood of Ham.

LINES TO A WHIPPOORWILL.

Poor Whippoorwill, what ancient secret woe,
Has been the burden of thy feathered tribe?
Is it misfortune of some long ago
Thy quaint and ever wailing notes describe?

Or is it for some faithless truant mate
Thy love bemoans in solitude remote,
And pining in thy solitary state,
Comes forth this woeful ditty from thy throat?

Poor Whippoorwill: I truly pity thee,
Whatever sorrow fills thy aching breast,
Taught sympathy by Him who pities me,
I glad would grant thy mourning tribe a rest.

And O! sad bird, there lingers with me still
A memory which makes me half rejoice,
As I recall the echo from the hill,
When first I heard thy strange mysterious voice.

With it the thought of many a summer night
Comes back, when planets and stars were out,
And on the green where floods the moon with light,
I hear again a wild and joyous shout.

Again romps there full many a village lad
In play upon the early evening tide,
And thinking thus my heart grows strangely sad,
For my companions scattered far and wide.

And I recall emotions, O! sad bird,
When Venus early sheds her distant light,
Which vaguely in my childish bosom stirred,
When rang thy awesome cry upon the night.

Too young to know the common lot of pain
To which the flesh of man and bird is heir,
My heart was only moved by thy refrain
To sympathy and vagueness of despair.

But time has taught me, bird, too well since then
The minor which thy wailing failed to do :
To-night, with thousands of my fellow men,
I am with thee, sad one, a mourner too.

And listening to thy voice down in the glen
To-night pour forth its ancient sorrowing strain,
I well could fancy childhood back again
But for my own benumbing ache of pain.

But, bird, I bid thee come and learn with me,
That which is worth far more than gems most rare,
However great thy sorrow here may be
It need not lead to darkness and despair.

Though dim the light, if we but trust His will
In time the Master maketh all to find,
That underneath the deepest pain are still
His purposes most wonderfully kind.

Cease, bird, thy long complaint and cry of woe,
And teach thy young a far more tuneful strain ;
Learn that which men are strangely slow to know :
Life's guerdon comes to all through ache and pain.

THE BRIDAL WREATH'S LAMENT.

O woe! ah bitter woe for us,
Who did the foolish thing,
To trust our folded leaves and buds,
To the first warm sun of spring.

Up from the lagoons of the South,
From lake and flowers about,
Came soft deceitful sighing winds
And gently called us out.

They whispered strange Floridian tales,
Of bayous and the brake,
Of spring's aroma and the rose,
And bade us to awake.

The sun so old for many springs,
Looked down on us and smiled,
And all our foolish swelling buds,
To leaf and flower beguiled.

We rivalled the Japonicas
Which budded half in doubt,
But reassured by southern winds,
Fast sought to beat us out.

But O! we spread our leaves and buds
Up to the open sky,
And looked with condescension on
Our lagging neighbors by.

Bedecked in all our finery
And blind with silly pride,
We laughed unconscious of our doom,
And of our woe betide.

But swift and stealthily as comes
A lurking foe at night,
Without a warning note swept down
A storm with bitter blight.

Now all the highway and the plain
Lie covered up with snow,
The sun is hid and leaden clouds,
Look down on all below.

Deceitful Zephyrs of the South,
Where are your kisses now?
The snowflakes make our winding sheet,
And death is on our brow.

But soon the true warm spring will come,
And violets in their beds
Will bloom: and flauntingly will
Lift the tulips up their heads.

The gladsome summer time will come,
The summer winds will sigh,
A thousand brilliant flowers will bloom
Beneath a summer sky.

But we, O! vain and foolish buds,
Who did the foolish thing,
To trust our folded leaves and flowers
To the first warm sun of spring,
So premature must pass away
To nothingness for time and aye.

MARCH WINDS.

Welcome, here, cold March winds blowing,
Welcome are the songs you sing,
Each discordant, shrill vibration,
Is a messenger of spring.

Blow, now, March winds, blow at pleasure
Rush o'er moorland, field and plain,
Far and wide bear ye the tidings,
That the spring returns again.

Spring, when all new life is given,
Thou art ever welcome here,
For thy voice is sweet with singing,
And thy face is ever dear.

In thy time sweet hope returning
Steals into despairing hearts,
And with subtile feeling touching,
Vigor and new life imparts.

'Tis a time when birds are mating,
And is heard the burnished dove,
Pouring out his heart in cooing,
Of his constancy and love.

'Tis a time when sounds are pleasing,
And when whispers fill the air,
Sounds whose sources have no telling,
For they come from everywhere.

'Tis a time when meadows glisten,
With the dew drops of the morn,
When the lilacs and the lilies,
And the modest rose are born.

Then it is sweet smelling flora
Maketh fragrant all the air,
Then it is that life feels lighter,
And a lessening of care.

Then it is that youth is happy,
And the fancies are as light,
As uncertain and as lofty,
As the careless school boy's kite.

Welcome, then, cold March winds blowing,
Soon thy howl away shall die,
Die in summer breezes sighing,
Soft as any lover's sigh.

Welcome, here, cold March winds blowing,
Welcome are the songs you sing,
Each discordant, shrill vibration
Is a messenger of spring.

LINES TO NIGHT.

In twilight lingers yet a hue
Of light that fades along the distant west,
The blushing rose sips up the evening dew,
And homeward flies the birdling to its nest.

The shepherd leads his flock unto the fold,
And sounding bells are heard along the hills,
And fainter grows the cloudlet tinged with gold,
A deeper twilight all the valley fills.

With clanking chains and drivers urging on,
The teams at longer intervals go by,
And soon the sounds that mark the day are gone,
In myriads the stars shine in the sky.

The heavens yield their faintest tints of blue,
And softer grows the murmur of the sea,
The west is robbed of every golden hue,
And silent, peaceful night begins to be.

The tired workmen to their huts return,
Where childish greetings wait them at the door,
And sweet a simple bliss which they well earn
Makes rich the humble cabin of the poor.

The cloth is spread, and o'er the frugal fare,
The grace is said and, yea, the feast is blest,
For at that festival unseen is there
To grace the board, a silent heavenly guest.

Around the family altar blest with love
They come with reverence and God adore;
There faith in phrases set, to God above,
Takes up the meek petitions of the poor.

O'er all who haunt the sea or land about,
In love alike for those who weep or sing
The silent darkness kindly stretches out
And folds the earth beneath her brooding wing.

Of all the gifts to man in heavenly grace,
O! soothing night, of blessing thou art blest,
The sinless child, and wretch in thy embrace,
Are cradled in forgetfulness and rest.

For humble slave and swain with labor spent,
For hearts bowed down with pain and aching woes,
In love and kindest mercy thou art sent
To give them all in sleep a sweet repose.

MAY.

The sweetest time of the year to me
Comes in the month of May,
The sky has then its brightest blue,
And earth its mildest day.

Not then is felt cold winter's chill,
Nor felt its summer's heat,
But all the earth is blithe and gay
And all the month is sweet.

When May is come, sweet, placid May,
The hills and vales are seen
With lofty peaks and mountain sides
To smile in living green.

The meadow streams, the rippling streams,
Through all the glad day long
Glide by their mossy banks and join
The earth in one sweet song.

'Tis then I love to wander forth,
Into some quiet vale,
And dream through all the livelong day,
And watch the cloudlets sail.

'Tis then those dreamy days gone by
When I was but a child,
Return and bring to me again
Old visions sweet and wild.

Those days when I would lie and watch
Beneath some shady tree,
The clouds float lazily along
In human forms to me.

Sometimes those forms a Bible name
Which I had heard or seen,
My childish fancy gave to each
One suited to his mien.

For sure I thought those holy men—
Those patriarchs of old
Were sailing round the skies in clouds,
For such to me was told.

But in those visions of them all
The sweetest one is this,
I hear again a voice, a call,
A call to hear is bliss.

A mother calls her careless boy,
One loth to leave his fun
To answer for some wickedness
Or on some errand run.

O! smiling May, how dear thou art,
Thou bringest back to me
A dreamy time, a time which now
In dreams can only be.

'Tis true ten thousand common joys
My restless soul make glad,
But all my joys unless in dreams
Are mingled with the sad.

So, May, when thou art come to me
I can but steal away
And live again in childhood dreams
At least for one brief day.

And O! that thou couldst stay with me,
Throughout the lagging year,
And let me work and love and dream
Out my existence here.

LINES TO A MOCKING BIRD.

Sing, sweet bird,
Thy melody is sweet,
Chant now thy summer song,
For summer days are fleet.
But while the earth holds gladsome summer yet,
From early morn to peaceful twilight dim,
Till God doth bid the burning sun to set,
Heard thou art chanting praises unto him.

Sing, sweet bird,
Sing all the summer long,
There is a gladsome joy,
A soothing in thy song.
O! for a life like thine—one free from care,
In dewy fields or clover wet with rain
Or in some blissful spot as there
I'd dwell unknown to human ache and pain.

Sing, sweet bird,
Mid clover, grasses green;
Soon pansies and the rose
Can nowhere here be seen.
And then away unto the far off south
Thou wilt wing thy self in flight
And leave me but to hear from human mouth
A ceaseless groan and fret from morn till night.

Sing, sweet bird,
With mirth and gladness vie,
While flowers blush and bloom
And summer breezes sigh.

O! could I sing for man in bowers green
Sweet songs as thou, and soothe his aching breast,
I'd gladly sing and pass away unseen
To some Elysian fields of peace and rest.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF DR. POWELL OF THE A. M. A.

One night, entranced, I sat spellbound,
And listened in my place,
And made a solemn vow to be
A hero for my race.

He plead as but a few can plead
With eloquence and might,
He plead for a humanity,
The Freedmen and the right.

His soul and true nobility
Went out in every word,
And strongly moved for better things
Was every one that heard.

Too soon has death made good his claim
On him who moved us so,
Too great and white the harvest yet,
To spare him here below.

Oh! why this waste?—forgive me, Lord,
I would not Judas be,
Yet who will plead as he has pled,
For Freedmen and for me?

And yet in death, I think he will—
This sleeping prince of thine,
In many a multitude be heard
Still plead for right and mine.

RESENTMENT.

You ask for summer instead of cold weather,
But that can never be,
The passion that once so bound us together,
Forever is dead in me.

O yes! I loved and sought to discover
To you my heart's distress,
But the love you cheaply gave to another,
Turned mine to bitterness.

It is now too late; and past forever
The time to gather in
The ties of love and bind together,
The life that might have been.

IN MEMORY OF KATIE REYNOLDS—DYING.

O! death,
If thou has aught of tenderness
Be kindly in thy touch
Of her whose fragile slenderness
Was overburdened much
With life. And let her seem to go to sleep,
As often does a tired child, when it has grown
Too tired to longer weep.

A rose but half in bloom—
She is too young and beautiful to die,
But yet if she must go,
Let her go out as goes a sigh
From tired life and woe.
And let her keep in death's brief space
This side the grave, the dusky beauty still
Belonging to her face.

She must have been
Of those upon the trembling lyre
Of whom the poets sung;
"Whom the gods love" and desire
Fade and "die young."
Her life so loved on earth was brief,
But yet withal so beautiful there is no cause,
But in our loss, for grief.

Nashville, Tenn., December, 1893.

A THANKSGIVING DAY IN NEW ENGLAND.

O, bliss! where hearts are all aflame
With love far deeper than a name,
Where speech from hearts so sweetly slips,
In loving words and touch of lips,
Where rise and find a transient rest,
The noblest passion of the breast,
I fain would dwell if not for aye,
At least on each Thanksgiving day.
O, love! wherever love is found
In all this toilsome world around
In ache and woe and endless strife
Thou art the balm in human life,
That maketh possible to bear
Our mingled load of joy and care.
No lot can wholly cheerless be,
Dear love, when it is blessed by thee.
To-day I've watched glad hurrying feet,
Trip gaily homeward love to meet.
The father's hand, the mother's kiss,
Thanksgiving day, New England's bliss
Calls to the old paternal chair
The single youth, the married pair,
And blithe they go with winsome grace
To see again the old home-place.
The snow comes down in feathered flakes,
On noisy street and silent lakes,
Through window panes the fire lights glow
Upon the fallen spotless snow,
And snug within from cold and storm
Love's own are gathered safe and warm,
And from the scene is banished care,
And all is joy beyond compare.

The youngsters romp with boisterous stride,
The mothers with ill-concealed pride
Half scold in their indulgent way,
For more decorum in their play;
For this the youngsters feel no need
And scarcely pay their parents heed.
They make the old home ring without,
With gayety and childish shout.
And when they to the loaded board
Come with their patriarchal lord,
The grace is said and all the guests,
A second time and more are pressed.
To more of all the good things nice
With sauce and aromatic spice.
And gathered thus on this glad day
The time speeds happily away.
The old forget their years of pain,
Feel in their children young again,
Perchance some tears a smile displace
For some beloved absent face,
But all are met with one accord
To happy be and thank the Lord.
And joy from other things apart
Is uppermost in every heart.
But Oh! all homes are not so blest
With love and gathered family guest;
And, ye whom God doth favor give,
Think kindly of the poor who live
In tenements and never see
The comforts God hath given thee.

Ah! lonely hours pass away
For many on Thanksgiving day.
My homesick heart gives useless sighs

For love beneath my southern skies,
And feels that longing which must come,
To aliens far away from home.
But still I know while fades the light,
And daylight deepens into night,
Love travels fast and cometh nigh,
In answer to my own heart's sigh,
And so 'tis sweet though far apart—
When love doth answer heart to heart.

AFTER COMMENCEMENT AT FISK UNIVERSITY.

The halls are all deserted now,
And silence reigns complete,
Where one could hear but yesterday
A thousand tramping feet.

The flowers, wreaths and evergreens,
Lie withered up and dead,
And with the hands that handled them,
Their beauty now has fled.

No sound of boisterous laugh and life,
Nor student jesting word
Breaks silence of the hall, save where
A nibbling mouse is heard.

The life that here but yesterday
With hope and college pride,
Rang out in song and careless mirth
Is scattered far and wide.

The long vacation time has come,
A timely season blest,
When tired brains may revel in
Forgetfulness and rest.

Thus Jubilee and Livingstone
In solitude complete
Are left with none to tread their halls,
But ghosts of absent feet.

THE WOODS OF OCTOBER.

The last sweet blush of summer in her glory
Still lingers in October woods and skies,
But changed in forests, hills and mountains hoary,
From green unto a thousand brilliant dyes.

The cloudless skies a restful peace betoken,
The Indian summer broodeth over all,
In earth and everywhere is plainly spoken
A placidness which only comes with fall.

In fields where to the breeze was lately swaying,
The wheat in all its golden beauty seen,
Are flocks and herds of lazy cattle straying,
And feeding on a second growth of green.

A bee is seen still out in hope of finding,
A blossom in the second growth of clover,
But nature's law too on the bee is binding,
His harvesting will also soon be over.

A few more days of autumn's hazy gleaming,
And all October woods to-day so fair,
The very imagery of death in seeming
Will stand dismantled, naked, bare.

O, who would think that all this beauty painted,
Upon these leaves in colors clear,
In every brilliant hue with death is tainted,
But for the dying lesson year by year.

That lesson let me learn to-day in earnest,
Which thou dost teach in every hue and dye,
Who knows but when thy glory here returnest,
Within the silent grave my head shall lie.

Farewell, October woods—soon bleak December
Will all the forest wrap in spotless snow,
But I, forgetting not, shall still remember,
Thy glory which to-day delights me so.

THE MESSAGE OF A DEAD ROSE.

The rose you gave me, dear, is dead,
The hope which it begot
Is gone. An aching heart and head,
Is my unhappy lot.

Perhaps you could not fully know,
The danger of your smiles,
How often hearts are poisoned so,
By thoughtless maiden wiles.

I would not think so hard of heart
You thoughtfully could be ;
To gratify a flirting art,
Such passion stirred in me.

Yet many a trusting heart has been
From honor made to rove,
In darksome ways and paths of sin,
By lightly feeding love.

This rose cut from its mother stem,
With thy unfeeling knife,
Has lost, though such a lovely gem,
All that could feed its life.

And faded its untimely death
Tells silently to me,
As is its fate and scentless breath,
So my heart's love must be.

THE SUN WENT DOWN IN BEAUTY.

The sun went down in beauty,
Beyond Mississippi's tide,
As I stood on the banks of the river,
And watched its waters glide;
Its swelling currents resembling
The longing restless soul,
Surging, swelling, and pursuing
Its ever-receding goal.

The sun went down in beauty,
But the restless tide flowed on,
And the phantoms of absent loved ones
Danced o'er the waves and were gone;
Nautical phantoms of loved ones,
Their faces jubilant with glee
In the spray, seemed to rise and beckon,
And then rush on to the sea.

The sun went down in beauty,
While I stood musing alone,
Stood watching the rushing river,
And heard its restless moan;
And longings, vague, intenable,
So far from speech apart,
Like the endless rush of the river,
Went surging through my heart.

The sun went down in beauty,
Peacefully sank to rest,
Leaving its golden reflection
On the great Mississippi's breast;

Gleaming on the turbulent river,
In the coming gray twilight,
Soothing its restless surging,
And kissing its waters good-night.

The sun went down in beauty,
The stars came one by one,
Speaking from the vault of heaven,
Of the mighty Father and Son;
Speaking to earthly mortals,
Whose souls like the river's tide,
Forever and ever are flowing,
But never are satisfied.

The sun went down in beauty,
But still in the calm starlight,
My feet were wont to linger
To the coming of gray midnight;
My heart was filled with musings,
Of past and coming years,
And the thoughts of friends departed,
Filled my eyes with tears.

The sun went down in beauty,
But still in visions fair,
My soul to the gate of heaven,
Was wafted through the air;
The gate of life eternal,
Where cease tumult and strife,
Where men borne down with sorrow,
Lay down the burden of life.

The sun went down in beauty,
Tinging the west with gold,

Gleaming as a symbol in heaven,
Of light in the Father's fold;
And, soul, why fret with emotions,
Of sorrow, joy or renown?
Soon life with all that is earthly,
Forever will be laid down.

The sun will go down in beauty,
'Mid summer and mid winter snow,
When we in the grave are sleeping,
Beyond its radiant glow;
Speak to our souls, my Father,
Their void with comfort fill,
And ease our anxious longings,
And bid them, "Peace, be still."

Tiptonville, Tenn., on the banks of the Mississippi, August, 1892.

OVER THE BAY.

The daylight dies and sinking in the west,
The sun is red and tinges all the bay,
And soft a sigh escapes a woman's breast,
And dreamingly her eyes are far away.
Then love alert and swifter than a sigh
Rocks tenderly a babe. With cooings low
He sleeps again to her sweet lullaby.

And night creeps on in livery of gray,
But still she lingers, gazing on the west,
While all the world is putting toil away,
And coming slowly on to home and rest.
But love with nimble feet eternally
All tirelessly skims on and on
O'er night, and league, and wave, to Jack at sea.

THE SECRET.

Go whisper to her gentle winds,
While you are passing by,
The mighty secret of my heart,
The burden of my sigh.

Take to her from this blushing rose,
Such sweets of scented air,
As are befitting for a queen,
And one divinely fair.

And from this lily of the vale,
Take her who is to me,
The emblem of all that is good,
And sweetest purity.

The violets of azure eyes,
Which ever sweets impart,
Take her their gentle modesty,
So like her guileless heart.

Take all the sweets which you can find
Along your airy way,
To her whose face and daily life
Are like the month of May.

Blow softly on her lovely brow,
And give her lips a kiss,
The thing were I to do, O winds,
Would count a wondrous bliss.

She does not know my secret flame,
But what is that to you?
Oh winds, but take her from my heart,
Its mighty love and true.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

O New Jerusalem! abode unseen,
Yet now as in all ages past,
Thou art the bourne to which in deep despair
Or hope, men turn their face at last.
It matters not what race, or clime or creed
In life has swayed the powers given,
'Tis always true that men about to die
Will turn a longing heart to heaven.

In youth ambition leads the mind along
The way of hope and sweet delights,
Fulfilling just enough its promises
To point out more desired heights.
And so for more of gold, or fame or power,
Or for the bare necessities of life,
Succeeding generations go the rounds
Of failure or successive strife.

But O, when age creeps on and life begins
The gliding downward to its west,
There comes a deep solicitude alike
To fill the rich or beggar's breast.
Far out beyond the stretch of space and time,
Beyond experience or ken,
The soul immortal thoughtfully must face
The common destiny of men.

The always poor and long despised of earth,
To whom so many woes of life are given
By faith or blind instinct are comforted,
And hope for better things in heaven,

And lives all hopelessly ensnared with sin
Too much to ever here undo,
When every other hope is gone will hope
To live in heaven their lives anew.

O, many are the weary souls and tired feet
From every rank and walk of life,
At last come gladly to that borderland,
Where men lay down all pain and strife.
Oft timorously with sore and fainting hearts
They wait the dipping boatman's oar,
But oh! the pilot there is kind who guides
The boat to that Celestial shore.

And there a king and kingdom without end
Shall be to all as thine and mine,
And never once a discord in His rule,
But always harmony divine.
The palace gates shall not be shut by night,
There hearts shall never beat with fears,
Nor ever ache, for O, the King is kind,
And wipes away all bitter tears.

O New Jerusalem! abode unseen,
Yet now as in all ages past,
Thou art the bourne to which we all must turn,
For all there is to life at last.
There deep and lasting is the law of love,
As all eternity is wide,
And all inhabitants for time and aye
With God himself abide.

THE GODDESS OF PENITENTIALS.

I saw and heard her often in my dreams—in my dreams at night, but oftener in my dreams by day. I saw her in my earliest childhood. She spoke to me then and told me things which my childish understanding could not comprehend. Sometimes her dark sayings stirred within me a feeling of uneasiness and vague apprehension of coming pain. When I looked at her wistfully for explanation, she would say, "Never mind. You will remember my sayings and understand them by and by."

In the summers of my childhood I remember times when I stood by a great bed of hollyhocks in bloom, charmed with their brilliant colors of many hues. I wondered why they should die, why such glory as theirs might not last forever. But I was too young for emotions of any kind to be very lasting, and my sadness on such occasions was but momentary. For at such

times, seeing a humming bird flashing like a ray of light among the flowers, sucking the honey-dew from the heart of the blossoms, I forgot all and chased it with breathless eagerness, hoping that I might clasp the shining, irridescent thing in my hands. Oh! faithful prophecy of other pursuits as vain in after years. Disappointed in this I stole upon a bee, and closed the bell-shaped mouth of the flower and imprisoned the little honey gatherer within. I took savage delight in its rage and terrified humming, unless it stung me in spite of my precaution.

At other times I would lie for hours watching a summer cloud float lazily along or remain at rest. Sometimes I watched a great procession of clouds pass by and saw in them human forms, human restlessness, human passions, and human sorrows. And now I know that some features of her face were in all my visions. All about me were straggling hills, quiet vales between and sheltered nooks, through which went the singing brooks on their way to fill the many mouths of the mighty and ever thirsty sea. There were mornings when I saw the earth sparkle with May dew and the glittering grass full of all the prom-

ise of summer. With my heart full of unutterable happiness I have gone forth then breathing the breath of the morning, sweeter than the burnt incense of many altars. And yet at times the very raptures of such hours wrought in me a kind of momentary pain. They were almost happy pains, but pains nevertheless full of suggestions of rue to come. It was the unconscious influence of her face, reflections of which I saw everywhere and in every thing.

When the first morning hours in my life were past, my thoughts began to go beyond the horizon of my native vale. The countries, the people, the heroes of whom I read stirred my heart with unutterable longings, and my indomitable imagination led into realms where there were only the great, the glorious, and all desirable things. The happiness of those visionary hours is indescribable. It is only a thing which the highly imaginative soul can feel, and this felicity is all the more blissful because it is beyond description; because it is not hemmed in by time and space, and is not trammeled by necessary results that should follow a concourse of incidents, but is an unhindered creation of the mind itself.

Work of all kind involving excessive bodily exhaustion was to me irksome in the extreme, and unbearable. I was called lazy, and so I was; but certainly not of the lazy belonging to that vicious kind whose body and mind are alike averse to all activity. The taunt of my fellows among whom my lot was cast in no sense disturbed my peace of mind. If to them I was a worthless idler, to me they were so many singing and dancing animals, the consummation of whose enjoyments was in sleep and feasting. In the dappled dawn of a summer morning they saw nothing but the coming of a hot day. In the profusion of roses and the luxuriant bloom of hollyhocks, they saw nothing but some flowers for the hands of girls and women to make bouquets for the mantlepiece on Sundays. In the straggling hills and mountain crags, they saw nothing but landscapes unfit for the cultivation of corn. While in all these things I saw not a world but a universe of beauty beyond compare, subjects for dreams without end and without limitation.

In the conceit of my youthful soul I thought myself better than my clod-headed fellows, and dedicated to a higher life than

they. I resolved to go out from among them and seek for companions of kindred spirits and an abode suited to my ambitions. Meditating upon this plan, one morning I walked out full of a sense of coming happiness and the transporting delights of Elysian fields through which my fancied pathway lay. I sought a sheltered nook and seated myself on the mossy bank of a babbling stream. It was the month of June and there was glory everywhere beyond all naming. I gave myself up wholly to the pleasant sensations coming from the cool shade, the lulling whispers of the passing breeze, the inimitable sweetness of the bird songs, the gurgling of the brook at my feet, the perfumed air, and the deep quiet of the woods beyond. How long I sat in this seducing state of happy indolence I do not know. But rousing from my revery I looked up and she stood before me, she, the Goddess of Penitentials. I knew her at once. I had never seen her gathered together before; but all the beauty of her face, all the exquisite mouldings and grace of her body, all the majesty of her mien, all the gentle sweetness of her mouth, all the melancholy of her eyes, and all the sorrow-

ful shadows of her soul, I had seen before. These gathered up from the summer clouds, from the blushes of the morning, from the mountain sides, from the quiet vales, from the hollyhocks, from the roses, from the diamond dews, and come together in the person of the Goddess, had lost nothing of their individualities and their familiarity to me. Neither was I surprised at her coming, but felt at that moment as if I had been waiting for her all my life. Of this I was the more convinced when she said, "Thou hast kept the appointment. All the days of thy life have I waited for this hour of meeting with thee." Then for a moment she was silent. There was an indescribable cadence of sadness in her voice. I fancied that she looked upon me with compassionate pity—with a feeling akin to that which a relentless headsman might bestow upon some doomed victim whom he pities but cannot spare. Her look inspired me with no fear, but all the passions of my soul were stirred to their deepest depths. I knew by some prescience that with her coming had come also the turning point of my life. I knew that all my past was passed forever. I knew

that there was before me a new life and one not of my dreams. Therefore I waited with breathless anxiety for her message, for a message I knew she had come to bring. She began once more:

"Thou hast kept the appointment. I am the Goddess of Penitentials and from the hour of thy birth I have watched over thee. At the moment thou camest into the world and breathed the breath of life, I was there and laid my hand upon thee and dedicated thee to my service—the service of human sorrows. That thou mightest the better serve in the kingdom for which thou art chosen, I endowed thee with fine and exquisite sensibilities. Thou wast given a keen perception of all beautiful things and in thy heart was formed a mighty capacity for love. Thou shalt have learning and the cultivation of æsthetic tastes. Thou shalt see and mix with the great and the wealthy, but in none of these things shall it be unto thee according to thy dreams. The ache of all human sorrows that ever throbbed in the heart of man must go through thy soul till by them it is pierced through and through and thus purified. Thou shalt have the tastes and cultivated capacity of

the refined and the wealthy; but in thy resources thou shalt be all thy life long the brother of the Pariah. Thou shalt have attainments that will recommend thee in many places that thy soul will desire. But on thy face to the day of thy death will be a sign which readeth thus: 'He is one from the tents of Ham'—an unjust version of which is: 'A child of hereditary disgrace.' Because of that sign thy excellencies, whatever they may be or wherever thou wouldest show them forth, even if secretly or openly acknowledged, must be denied their full rights, except, perhaps, by the compassionate few, whose very tender compassion will give thee a certain pain as well as pleasure. Of all the disgrace and degradation of thy race thou must be a part. Thou shalt see thy brethren often unjustly treated, denied the full rights and protection of the law.

"In some instances with no power to save, thou shalt be made to stand and see them racked with barbarous cruelty, even unto death, by the powerful wicked, whom God will judge and whose wickedness He will punish in hell. It shall be thy lot to feel thy brotherhood with the oppressed,

the despised and outcast vagrants of every clime.

In quieter ways, but with no less oppression to the soul, thou shalt see and feel all the sorrows common to the lot of man. Thou shalt look into the faces of men and women of high as well as low degree, and see the relentless touches of woe. There may be only professions of mirth and happiness, but by the secret signs which thou shalt see, the counterpart of which is engraved upon thine own heart, thou shalt know them to be thy brothers and sisters.

"But in all this, thy sorrowful lot, there is this compensation for thee. By thy knowledge, by thy keen sensibilities and quickened sympathies thou mayest become a great comforter and great healer. But even in this compensation thou wilt find pain. Thou shalt give love with a lavish hand and with such thou shalt heal many wounds, but such healing will beget in thee a great hunger which shall never be satisfied. Passing sentiments and impulses of grateful feeling will be given thee, but of the mighty love for which thou shalt long, thou shalt never taste. Thy ten lepers thou shalt heal, but only one will come back to

thank thee. But in the forgetfulness of the nine thou shalt be blest, inasmuch as thou shalt then be shown the selfishness lurking in all thy acts where thou thoughtest were only goodness and self-sacrifice. Then thou wilt see that thou gavest love for the hope of love in return, and in the futility of such giving thou mayest learn to give as He did, who gave, knowing beforehand that the nine would forget him. So shalt thou through all the days of thy life go desolate of soul and learn wisdom through lessons of bitterness and the feeling of sorrow in all phases of life that touch thee. But by thy knowledge and capacities enlarged through suffering, thou shalt understand the woes of thy fellow-men and become to them a servant of servants in all things, who, at last, shall have exceeding great reward. These are the penitentials written in my book over against thy name. Go now into the world and perform them faithfully, and in the end thou shalt have a purified soul, a life everlasting."

As the sighing of the wind dieth away, so died her voice. I looked up, and she, the Goddess of Penitentials, was gone. I arose and walked forth into the shining

sun, which was still the sunshine of summer, but its warmth I felt not, for there had fallen on my senses and on my heart the chill of death. Condemnation was written on my face and I dared not meet my fellows whose taunts I had borne before with disdain and silent contempt. Now I was fallen in my own estimation below them, and to leave my native vale without a moment's delay I was fully resolved.

At the foot of the hill which led up from the valley, was old Silas, the swine herder. He greeted me as I passed him with his kind old voice. To me he had always been kind, but in my blind conceit I had never thought him worth notice. My heart was kindly disposed towards all, and old Silas was indebted to me for many a good deed. The favors I had done him were such as I would have done for any body; but in the simplicity of his heart they were special favors to him, and had greatly warmed his old heart towards me. And now as I bade him farewell, knowing that it was forever, though he did not notice that I bade him farewell, a great wave of regret swept over my heart and my eyes filled with tears. From this ignorant old man so low in the scale

of life, I learned my first great lesson—that the proudest heart may come to need the sympathy of the humblest creature on earth. At that moment my heart was almost breaking for love and sympathy, and knowing how abundantly old Silas would have given all, had I told him my intentions, I could scarcely keep back the truth. But he would have made my departure known and I dared not tell him, for in truth, I was running away from home.

Reaching the top of the hill, I turned and looked back on the vale below. There were the home, and all the scenes of my childhood, the low lying fields, the orchard, the meadow, and the quiet nooks of my happy dreams. Between me and all this I knew that to my spirit was a great gulf which could never be passed. A force which I could not resist led me on. Behold now the foolishness and insecurity of the human heart. Scarcely more than an hour before I was full of eagerness and impatience to leave my native vale, and now my heart was rent in twain because the hour of departure had come. I turned my face towards the blue-rimmed hills beyond where

lay the world into which I was to go. Remembering the prophecy of pain awaiting me there my heart fainted and I fell upon the earth to pray—not with the lips, but with the bitter cry of the soul whose agony too great for lips to utter God can understand. Somewhere it was spoken audibly to me, as if out of the air: "Faint-hearted one arise, go forth into the world and do thy duties, and in the end thou shalt have a purified soul and a life everlasting." I arose, and from the height of my vain imaginations went down into my valley of humiliation.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

The city was wrapt in snow. Everywhere it wore white robes—robes resplendent with whiteness, like those which they say are worn by those who stand about the throne of God. So was the city white and spotless. It was the eve of the Holy Christmas. More than ten thousand feet hourly trod the streets, staining the immaculate sheet let down from the four corners of the heaven. But a billion flakes a second silently fluttered down to cover up the stains and to keep the city white for the coming of the Holy Babe of Bethlehem, for it is said, that he is born again on every Christmas eve. And there are some who burn candles at Catholic altars so that the little Christ-child may not be in the dark and the Holy Virgin will be pleased. I would that the saying of his yearly coming was true.

Perhaps in the widespread usage at the

Christmas-tide in the presentation of gifts, the gladdening of little hearts, the partial remembrance of the poor by the rich, and in the general good feeling that prevails, it is true that the little Prince of Peace is born again in the hearts of men. Surely in the happy homes on the Christmas morning, from the merry patter of little feet, the laughing voices, and the overflowing happiness from the hearts of little children, in them at least, it can not be doubted that the Babe of Bethlehem is born again.

On this Christmas-tide there was the usual selling and buying, the usual throngs in the streets, till late at night. The show windows were marvelous to see. The rich and the poor, the happy and the sorrowful, the good and the bad, passed by and admired the beautiful sights. Perhaps, behind all this Christmas show was mainly the greedy love of gold and sordidness of heart. And yet in this display and celebration the hearts of the multitude passing by were more or less softened, and in unconscious ways re-echoed the angelic song of the midnight, heard by the Bethlehem shepherds so long ago—"Peace on earth, good will towards men."

In the passing crowds there were Simon Johns and his daughter Bess. Christmas had come and gone forty-five times for him and thirteen for her. They were among the poor and outcast who looked at the beautiful windows. He looked with indifference, and she with childish delight, until at times she almost forgot the unappeased hunger which gnawed at the very vitals of her life. That Christmas night they were homeless and out in the snow.

At the windows of a baker's shop, Bess stopped to gaze at the brown loaves of bread with a hunger no words can ever express. But in the father there was a thirst for drink greater than Bess' hunger. His craving was a madness for which there is no name which can bear an adequate meaning to the mind of man who never felt the raging of the whiskey demon. At times he would have given his very soul for a drink of whiskey, if such a bargain he could have made. And such was his thirst on that Christmas night. But there was one thing which he would not have given—the one thing which still kept him a human being from whom the image of God was not wholly effaced. In the mo-

ments of his greatest craving, when his own soul would have been as a feather in the scale over against a drink of whiskey, he would not have given Bess for a drink. All through his downward course, even into the bottom of the gutter, she had been at his side. Nothing could destroy his love for her.

Cold and hungry, on and on they went through the snow-muffled streets, until they came to the Chattanooga depot. There in the "Colored Waiting Room" they hid in the crowds waiting for the trains and for awhile they were sheltered and warm. But by and by the trains had carried away the very last passenger to his home, and the night watchman came round to lock the waiting-room doors. His wrath arose when he saw Simon Johns and Bess, for he had driven them out before and forbidden them the use of the passenger's room. When he began to drive them out again, and raised his foot to kick the half dazed and drink-wrecked man, Bess stepped between them to shield her father. There was something in her look, something in her pinched and pleading little black face that caused the watchman's foot

to drop. Out into the cold again they went. "Let us go to the Louisville depot, father; may be we can slip in there." Down to Cedar street they went and past the corner of "Hell's Half Acre," and along Vine and Gay streets, by the great white Capitol. Like some old Greek temple with its Corinthian pillars, Tennessee's pride and glory, towered upward in the night. A huge pile it was with its dim outlines in the snow which fell over it, and around it, whiter than its own marble pillars and porticoes.

Down through Capitol avenue and to College street these two homeless vagrants tramped on. At College and Line there was a by-way of Hell in full blaze as they were about to pass. The clinking of glasses and the fumes issuing through the half-screened doors aroused in Simon Johns a legion of devils beyond all control. In he went with Bess clinging to him. "A drink," he cried. But the bar-tender knew him too well and refused him. "This is Christmas eve, man; give him a drink,"cried a voice, as a piece of silver was thrown on the counter.

Oh the magic in a drink of whiskey! Simon Johns was no longer dazed and

stupid, but trembling with excitement and the working of every devil of the legion, as the wolf with one taste of blood, he clamored and plead for one more drink. One thing only silenced that clamor for the moment. Some one in that wild company made a brutal address to Bess, but he was quickly hustled back by a few who knew Simon Johns too well, not to know that the forward reveler who abused the child was inviting death to come in their midst.

"Give us a song," shouted one who knew Bess, and who had seen her in a saloon many times before, but always there an innocent child trying to save her father. "Yes, give us a song, a Christmas song," they shouted and a table was produced for her to stand upon. A rough but not unkind hand lifted her upon it. It was not the first time she had been in a saloon and she had sung there many times for pennies, for she had the voice of a meadow lark. But that night the wild excitement half frightened her and she stood upon the table uncertain for a moment.

"Sing, Bess, sing a Christmas song," said her father. Bess had been a faithful

member of a mission Sunday school in old Howard Chapel once. But that was before she grew to be so big and so ragged. But the songs she learned there were still fresh in her memory. There were other things fresh, too. More things than those often discouraged teachers over the little ragamuffins that used to assemble with Bess ever suspected. But that is God's way often.

May be only one out of a large crowd of street Arabs will be saved where much effort has been put forth to save so many. But the one is always worth the effort put forth. That one may become God's messenger in some time of great need to carry His gospel where those who taught could never go. And so was Bess his messenger on that night. On that wooden table amid the wildest confusion, her voice untrained, but with a native sweetness so common to many Negroes, she lifted up and sang as one inspired of God. And who can safely say that she was not inspired at that moment? Over the fumes of whiskey and tobacco, and oaths more vile than either, rose her voice like a lark's:

"Jesus my Saviour to Bethlehem came,
Born in a manger to sorrow and shame,
Oh, it was wonderful, how could it be,
Seeking for me, for me.

Jesus my Saviour on Calvary's tree
Paid the great debt and set my soul free,
Oh, it was wonderful, how could it be,
Dying for me, for me."

On and on she went through all the verses of that beautiful song, swelling in the chorus, "Oh it was wonderful, how could it be, Dying for me;" letting her voice die away on those last words with a sweetness and pathos which a stage artist could not have surpassed. Every oath was dead on the lips of those profaning men while Bess sang to them. The little innocent Babe of Bethlehem had suddenly come into their presence and then later they saw him dy- on the Cross for them.

When the first song was ended, without change of pitch the little black singer broke into another song more joyous. "In the sweet by and by," she went on trilling to them. Gathering greater and greater inspiration from her theme as she went on, in the sweetness of the voice of a nightingale, she sang to them of that land which is fairer than day. Out of the hard ex-

periences of her pitiful life and the impulses of her mystical nature she had constructed her own eschatology of the heaven. And in this moment of ecstacy she poured out a melody full of imaginary heaven, a heaven of green fields full of all the sweetness of summer, where the biting snows never come and where there are no hunger and the pinchings of poverty. Indeed there were no evils of any kind in that sweet by and by of which she sang. In those sin-stained men, feelings and impulses long since dead were awakened to life by this unexpected Christmas carol, and in some of them at least a sense of their lost condition suddenly forced itself before their minds with all its dark suggestions. What sweet by and by was there for them? They were all hardened men, full of oaths, full of drink, full of strife and unbridled passions, and some of them had hands stained with blood. And yet while that little black singer stood in their midst pouring out the raptures of her song, there were lips vile with drink and oaths, that trembled, and there were tears that trickled down faces long seared with vice.

In that den of iniquity there were sons of

Ireland, Italy, American-born whites, and Negroes, come to all stages of manhood in sin and vice. But all of them had once been little innocent boys. In the soft sunshine of far away Italy some of them had played in green fields and with childish delight listened to the nightingale sing her sweet and sad measures. And there in the old church-yard were little green mounds under which were peacefully sleeping little brothers and sisters who never grew up, who never crossed the wide sea, and who were never stained with drink, oaths, and sinful vices. There were others who in the "Old Country," St. Patrick's blessed Isle, who had been faithful little boys at the Cathedral, and with innocent young hearts and voices had joined in the priest's chanting at the solemn mass before sin had led them so far from home and so far from God. There were American white boys who had been happy and good on the farms, but yielding to their restlessness had come up to the city for better fortunes, but had found only a downward road to all shame. There were those who had been happy and sunny little Negro boys amid the plantations, who had wandered far

away from their old mothers who were still praying and agonizing for their salvation in some little church-cabin where Negro fervor and faith meet to wrestle with God and to tell Him the tales of their sorrowful life.

For a moment years of vice and sin rolled away from the memory of those sinful men, and all of them felt, for the moment at least, a touch of the sweetness of childhood's innocence again, and with it a yearning for that better life which they had thrown away. It was God's call to them—perhaps his very last call to some of them to become better men, and the judgment day may show that little black singer wearing a crown shining with stars, given to her for having led some of those lost and benighted men out of darkness into light by singing her Christmas carol that night.

And Simon Johns—all the legion of devils in him were cast out and he stood clothed in his right mind. Without a word he went to Bess and folded her in his arms and went out into the night. The keen north wind struck them with a savage howl and Bess shivered and clung to her father. But the heart of Simon Johns was warm.

As he went down College street half blinded with the snow he felt that he was carrying Bess up the aisle of the Church to the altar again to be baptized. The snow-flakes made him think of Amanda's new white dress which she wore to the baby's baptizing, and Bess again was a little bundle of a cooing baby which he held half ashamed, but with a heart full of fatherly pride and love. He was young and full of hope then, and work was plenty. That was in the little home on Grannywhite street, before he knew drink and hard times.

On he went in that momentary happy dream till he reached the Louisville depot and found the door of the "colored-waiting-room" closed and locked. This brought him back to their real situation. Bitterly he recalled his first great sorrow over Amanda's death, the loss of his job of work soon after, and the hard times which followed. Then the discouragement which he sought to soften in drink and all his downward course flashed over his mind. He recalled his efforts to reform and how he had fallen again and again until he had lost all hope. Then, down and down he had gone, till the moment of that bitter

hour out in the snow. Keen remorse pierced his heart when he thought what he had brought Bess to—what he had done to the little baby God had given him.

"Oh! God pity me for Bess' sake. Try me once more," he moaned at heart.

"It is no use," whispered one of the cast out demons, "you will end this night's repentance in a drunken spree to-morrow. To-morrow is the holy Christmas and there will be plenty of free whisky all over the city and you will be drunk again."

"It shall never be, I swear it, by God."

"Why, father, what do you say that for?"

"Nothing, Bess."

A wild thought suddenly entered his mind and formed itself into a resolution as quickly. With Bess still in his arms he crossed the railway track. There was the little tower of the keeper of the crossing. He was snug and warm within and sat dozing over his stove. Simon Johns turned suddenly and walked down the track past the red light over the door of Linck's hotel towards the river.

"One step off of the bridge will do it," he said to himself.

His heart shuddered at the thought of the

terrified cry that would come from Bess in the fall. But then he would hold her tight in his arms, and the midnight waters of the cold Cumberland would soon hush her cry and shut out of his ears the whispers of the legions of devils. Then there would be that land fairer than day. But suddenly he began to wonder if he could go along with Bess into that fair country, if the keepers of it would let a sin-stained man like him pass. What if the icy waves of the Cumberland should separate him from Bess forever? The thought was too terrible for him, and like some frightened and hard-pressed animal the poor drink-wrecked man turned up Market street towards Market square. He was exhausted with the excitement and carrying Bess. He crossed over to the courthouse yard, watching narrowly for the policemen. But there was no need of that for that blue-coated gentry hired to watch the city by night were too safely housed away from the cold to molest Simon Johns, had he been meditating a much greater crime than hiding from the storm in the old courthouse. All the doors to the hallways of that grim old building were locked. Her justice and her protec-

tion were shut within. It was not a building in which Negroes generally found comfort at any time, and to-night for these two vagrants of that race there was no welcome. Indeed the old building might have been as fittingly called a temple of sorrows as a court of justice. In the days of slavery many broken-hearted Negroes had stood on her stone-steps and had been auctioned off to the far plantations of the South as so many cattle. Over her stone threshold many a poor sinful criminal had crossed to hear his doom and afterwards to be marched out to the penitentiary for life or to the gallows, leaving behind all hopes of life and a name to be blotted out of the book of remembrance. But that night that grim old building, the stage of so many life tragedies was as silent and peaceful as a tomb.

As Simon Johns and Bess crouched away in the angle of the wall and the stone steps, there were none to molest them but the wind and the driving snow which searched out every nook and corner, and penetrated every crack and crevice.

"O father, I am so cold," moaned Bess. But by and by she fell into a fitful sleep. Once when she gave a convulsive shiver

Simon Johns took off his old coat and wrapped it around her. A blast of wind as if enraged at his daring, with a shriek swept down on him, chilling his very bones. But his heart grew warmer as he thought Bess was sleeping and was warm. By and by the warmth of his heart began to steal all over his body and a sense of the sweetest sleep began to creep upon him. Somehow his heart began to be very glad and he wanted to shout and laugh, but he was too sleepy to do so. Such a peaceful rest kept stealing over him, till at last he was lost in that most lasting and the sweetest of all sleeps that ever comes to rest the weary. And the same sweet sleep was upon Bess and brought to her a beautiful dream.

The Madonna so full of all sweetness and that ineffable tenderness of maternity came and brought the little Bethlehem babe, who smiled and stretched out his hands for Bess to take him. Then the mother of the little Christ said,

"You sang a beautiful carol to him tonight and now I am come to take you with me to sing sweet carols to him for ever and ever." She and her father were so glad, and when they stood up they were clad in

beautiful garments—garments more beautiful than all the Christmas show windows. For the first time since Bess could remember all hunger was gone. Her father looked so young and happy. They crossed the square and went over the suspension bridge and on through East Nashville towards the rising sun. They had never seen the city look so beautiful before. Soon they came to the border of a new country and into a land of summer. They saw strange and beautiful trees, full of golden fruit. Birds of wonderful and brilliant plumage shot through the air and sang the sweetest songs. Bess began to warble after them to the delight of the little Christ child, and an inexpressible delight took possession of her soul. On and on they went with the beauty of the country ever increasing. At last they came to a park beautiful beyond all description. Here beneath a great tree full of white blossoms that filled the air with delightful perfume they sat down to rest. The Madonna gave them luscious fruit to eat.

"This," she said, "is that land fairer than day, and you are to live here for always and always."

And in this first hour of transporting delight, to the musical ripples of fountains and the sweet songs of birds, Bess and her father fell into a sweet sleep.

It was the morning of the Holy Christmas and the sun rose over all Nashville wrapt in snow. Early the saloons were thronged for a Christmas drink. And those who had money were generous in treats to those who lacked the amount necessary to buy a drink. A low class of Negroes and white people fought in the streets. Reeling here and there were men and women drunk with whisky. The patrol wagons were busy running in the Christmas revelers. Guns of all descriptions roared in the air and pandemonium was abroad. It was a common celebration. It is the way in which the South keeps the commemoration of the Holy Christmas. While a policeman was crossing the courthouse yard to stop a fight on the opposite side, he noticed a strange looking mound of snow in the angle of the courthouse wall and the stone steps. He went to it and gave it a kick. Simon Johns, who sat leaning against the wall with Bess in his arms, fell over on his side.

ANNETTE.

"Annison is conjured." That was the story which went from cabin to cabin, all through the valley. For three days he had lain in a strange stupor, speechless and knowing no one. Annison was a handsome mulatto, and so was Annette, his betrothed. On the third day at sunset a bird flew into the room where Annison lay, and fluttered about in terror until it found its way out. A few moments later old Bull, Annison's dog, came in front of the door and howled three times. Then Annette knew Annison was doomed. These were two sure signs of death.

Out in the darkness and down the lonesome path of Lunny's Hollow, Annette with unspeakable anguish sped on and on to old Martha's cabin. Martha knew she would come that night. She was the arch princess of conjurers among the Negroes of the Hollow. Martha was ignorant, but a

keen reader of human nature and a shrewd old woman. That mysterious power, given a few, by which they can sway the faith, spirit and souls of others, was old Martha's in a marked degree. Through all the ages from her ancestral Africa, and indeed further back from the families of Asia, this gift, false in all its claims, but nevertheless powerful and believed in by the ignorant of all nations, had come down to old Martha all the way to Lunny's Hollow. She went with Annette so see Annison on the second day of his sickness, and she saw what Annette's eyes blinded with love and hope did not see. Old Martha lived by her art, and never risked her reputation incautiously. Her only pledge was that she would consult her "kards and coffee-grounds" the next day to see who had tricked Annison, and to find out the nature of the spell he was under.

The next night when Annette with a face of woe burst in upon her, old Martha was ready for her.

"O Aunt Martha! a bird flew in the house at sunset, and old Bull howled three times before the door. Save Annison, Aunt Martha."

"I knowed all dat befo' you comed, Annette."

Old Martha's adopted daughter, Matilda Ann, was in the room, but she paid no attention to Annette. She had not spoken to her for months. She said Annette was "stuck up, kase she wuz yaller;" and once Annette had said that "Eph Divens is as ugly as ho-made sin." Eph was Matilda Ann's adored.

"Annette," said old Martha, "how much does you love Annison, and what would you do to save him?" There was something so playful in her tone, Annette's heart gave a mighty bound of hope.

"How much does I love him? How much would the world weigh if it was all gold? How much is the love which all the women of these valleys and mountains has for their husbands and lovers? That is how much I loves Annison. What would I do to save him? I would crawl to the end of the world on my knees, and die after I got there, if that much more was needed to save him."

"Would you, Annette?" in a tone bordering on derision.

There was a gleam of contempt in her

eyes, and of a sort of malicious pleasure which she would take in seeing Annette quail before the ordeal which she had in store for her. Old Martha had had the homage of fear and veneration for her power, but love never. Such avowals as that of Annette's aroused in her a feeling akin to resentment. She was not mean at heart, but she was human and had missed that something in life which softens all hearts. For the lack of it there had come into her heart a bitterness which she hardly knew existed, and the exact nature of which she could not have explained beyond that feeling of contempt and resentment which Annette had aroused.

"Well, I will tell you what will take Annison from under his spell and save him. Here is four bags. If you takes 'em to Sunset Rock on Shagg's Point and throws em, one at de east, one to de no'th, one to de west, and one to de south, 'zackly at midnight, and says what I tells you—'zackly at midnight, mind you—you and Annison will live together."

Annette gave a stifled scream of horror. Shagg's Point to the Negroes of Lunny's Hollow was the abode of all the evil spirits

in the hobgoblin world. For his life's sake no Negro would venture there alone at night. Martha knew this all too well, and then it was five miles from her cabin to Sunset Rock—and it was then half past nine. She would have been glad to have given Annette an easier task, but her reputation was at stake, and the task must be an impossible one. A bold and strong mountaineer would have found nothing impossible in this task with two and a half hours of time, but old Martha knew that Annette weak and terrified could not make the trip in time if she dared—that is, Martha thought she knew that, and ran no risk by imposing the task.

But there was something in Annette's heart that old Martha had never known: a something that had made many a maiden weaker than Annette perform greater feats than this one old Martha imposed. She underrated the powers of Annette's love. At first she did falter, and said, "O, Aunt Martha! ain't there some other way?" "No, dere ain't, and dat's a heap easier en crawling to the end of the world on your knees."

Matilda Ann had looked on in silence, but there is one sorrow that will move the

hearts of all women into sympathy with one another. Matilda Ann had been bitter towards Annette, but then there was a secret sadness in her own heart that plead for Annette. Annette had a little education and a gift of speech which poor Matilda Ann did not have. She was greatly moved by Annette's avowal of her love for Annison, and at that moment somewhere away down the Mississippi was her own Eph, who might be sick unto death, and she as Annette some day. She could not have expressed her love with Annette's eloquence, but she knew that in her heart that love was all there—that love which her slow tongue and thick lips could never truly utter. How much she was moved was summed up in her brief statement: "I will go along with Annette, mammy."

Only those who can understand her deep superstitions and full belief in all the reputed terrors of Shagg's Point could appreciate Matilda Ann's offer.

"No, Annette must go by herself, or Annison dies dis night."

"Give me the bags, then, Aunt Martha," said Annette with sudden force born of love and despair.

At the door she turned with the anguish of a lost soul and said, "Aunt Martha, if I don't get back, tell Annison I went there to save him."

For a moment old Martha's heart softened and she was tempted to call Annette back and tell her the truth. Then she muttered, "I se got to live; it won't do. Den dere ain't nothin' up dar to hurt her. Let her go long."

So Annette went out into the night and on and on in the dark. It was June. A shower of rain had fallen early in the evening and still there were shifting clouds in the sky. There was a sweet smell from the damp earth and the green woods. The wild flowers were hidden in the darkness, but they sent out a sweet and silent greeting to Annette. One by one the clouds at last were withdrawn and the sheets of mist about Shagg's Point glided away. The moon was peeping up over the head of the mountain, and Sunset Rock clearly defined against the molten sky jutted out as a personification of majestic solitude.

Suddenly Annette felt a cold chill of death pass over her. As she looked at Shagg's Point, for a moment she saw stand

out against the background of yellow sky, something—a mere speck it was, yet in shape like that of a man which passed from Sunset Rock to a shadow beyond. She thought it was a spirit and she knew she was going to her doom; but she murmured the one name, "Annison," and went on. Still on and on she sped, climbing, stumbling, and falling, but always on, murmuring the name that was love and life. At last a few minutes before midnight, sore and worn, she reached the crown of Shagg's Point. There before her Sunset Rock, with the moonbeams sweetly asleep upon it, lay stretched out, a mighty cliff over a frightful abyss. The scene was so peaceful Annette approached half in hope that the spirits were all absent.

How far away sometimes are the evils for which we look, and how near are those which we do not suspect. Out from the copse near Sunset Rock, two keen, glittering, cruel and merciless eyes were watching Annette as she approached. At first in them there was amazement, a moment of fear; but soon there was a gleam of gloating triumph. Bill Hoard, the notorious murderer and outlaw of the mountains,

knew Annette of the valley. He knew old Martha and Annison. He knew the superstitions of the Negroes, and all their terrors of Shagg's Point. He did not know of Annison's sickness; but he knew that some terrible and desperate measure forced Annette to Shagg's Point at midnight.

"Ah, ha! my fine lady. When I asked you to come and live with me, you called me a low-down thief, and the scrapings of poor-white-trash. When I told you any sort of a white man was good enough for a nigger, you spit in my face, for which I knocked you down. And now you have come all the way to Shagg's Point at midnight to hunt Billy up. The giant's cave is not as good as the cabin I invited you to, but you won't mind that, my fine lady."

Poor Annette! Was there no pity in heaven—no hand to save? But who can truly say that unseen in the soft moonlight, the most compassionate pity was not walking by Annette's side? What is pity and what is salvation? Eternity alone can give full answer. Out on Sunset Rock she walked. Her fear was almost gone. On the east, the north, the west, there was a ledge of rock over which one might step to

an abyss of three thousand feet below. To the south only was there a retreat from Sunset Rock. Annette turned first to the east where the sky was golden with gleams, and murmured her charm and then threw her first bag. With the throw to the north went a mighty wave of love, for there far down in the dark shadows of the valley was Annison whom she was saving. Then to the west she repeated her charm. Now half-gleeful she turned to the south to complete her work of magic. The incantation died on her lips. Horror palsied her uplifted hand. There in the dreamy moonlight, with a tiger's tread, sure of his victim, stealing upon her, was a man, who to her dilated vision was the father of giants. There was one swift moment of silent agony, and then with a scream that went up to the stars Annette was over Sunset Rock.

How lovely was the June morning with its soft blue sky and meadows of green grass in the valleys. On Shagg's Point the hemlock boughs gracefully nodded to the cool breezes which swept down the sides of the mountain to the valleys below, carrying such a sweet breath of new life. Racing up and down an old chestnut, two gray

squirrels were chattering and playing like a newly married pair. The trees were full of birds which filled the air with chirping and singing, where the leaves were trembling and shaking out silvery glitters and dancing shadows to the ground.

Under Sunset Rock more than a thousand feet below on a shelf of the mountain side, there was a little patch of broken stones and earth, which, doubtless, had fallen in some little avalanche from the brow of the mountain long ago. Growing out from among the stones and earth were some mountain laurels. And there was a little stream of water that trickled from a cleft in the rock wall. Here in a niche was the home of a family of wrens which had dwelt there undisturbed for ages in all the bliss of bird life. By the edge of that short stream, down to the very edge where it leaped to the depths below, the wild lobelia flamed in crimson glory. Everywhere there was earth enough for their tiny roots, the violets were rioting in gay profusion. And what was that lying half hidden among their green leaves and purple eyes? What was it in this peaceful abode which was causing such a chattering and wild con-

fusion among the wrens? It was only a little mangled body of a beautiful quadroon girl. That body, now mangled beyond all recognition, at midnight had stood on Sunset Rock, the temple of a mighty love.

The reputation of old Martha, the arch princess of the conjurers, was maintained, for her word had come true. "Mind you," she had said, "If you is dar 'zackly at midnight, you and Annison will live together." Almost an hour after Annette had stood on Sunset Rock, just as a hand of the clock pointed ten minutes to one, Annison suddenly seemed conscious. He raised himself upon his elbow in bed, and with a smile, said, "Annette, how beautiful you looks." He laid down, turned over on his side and sweetly went off to sleep. Next morning word was sent ten miles down the valley to Nelie Fraction for Elder Dangerfield to come up to Lunny's Hollow to preach Annison's funeral.

A CHRISTMAS NIGHT.

Once more on the tall cliffs of Mount Paradise rest the melting rays of a setting sun. The bald tops of Gedor, Gibeah, and Mais Elias, as a thousand times before, flame in the distance with burnished gold. Gedor and Gibeah, from their bald tops, without emotion look down on centuries that have rolled away before them, like the mist of the morning. What shifting scenes, what tragedies of life have been played out on their sides and in the vales below. What mighty forces have gone out from before them to subdue the world, and to bring to it, peace and good will towards men. And still old Gedor and Gibeah stand on and on in grim silence, waiting for the perfection of that peace to come. As if to bless their patient waiting, on their bald tops the sun pauses with a good night smile, and to give once more a parting benediction. In the ancient stillness one can almost hear a hospitable greeting of Abraham to all the

world—*Shalom Leka.* Far over the valleys, stretching away to the depressions of Cedron, where once were the vineyards and grain fields of Boaz and Ruth, and the sheep pastures of the boy David, the twilight falls again, deepening more and more until all objects are lost in the indistinctness; and once more a solemn and mysterious awe drops down over Bethlehem, and the Christmas night begins to be.

A FAREWELL.

The hills of the Highland Rim of Middle Tennessee—straggling spurs from the Unaka range, were lifting their lofty heads sky-ward, as they had been doing ever since the creation of the world. On their sides the green corn rustled and swayed to the passing breezes and the golden wheat waved in beautiful billowy undulations. The bright sun smiled down upon it with no cloud to dim his radiance. Slowly along the steep, winding path my friend and I walked in silence. He carried his gun—a little pretext for hunting—but, truly, he was out to take a last walk with me. Many a time before in a loving friendship of many years had we walked on this same pathway. Many a time before we both had gazed upon the inexpressible beauty of this same landscape, talking and dreaming of the future, with all of youth's hope and ambition. But this walk was a silent one.

Soon my friend tired and we sat down under the shade of a great chestnut. Long we sat there.

The sun moved upwards in the heavens and ever and anon his rays, like that of a great diamond, shot through some opening in the foliage. The branches of the trees above our heads, touched by an unseen hand of the winds, sang a low forest song. The hum of the insects and the twitter of the birds that belong to a summer's day in June, was all around us. Far below us in the Liberty Valley all the grain fields were in a glimmer. My friend and I sat beside each other in a dreamy silence. Once he started suddenly and cocked his gun at a grey squirrel which frisked out before us upon a mulberry tree. It scampered off and my friend sat down with a look on his face as if a second thought of compassion had come to him. He was an unerring shot, but O! in those hours life seemed so sweet to him. The slow and relentless hand of consumption was teaching him how to pity the living. He let the little squirrel pass which came frisking back again to bark at us. By and by a faint echo of distant thunder, suggesting a summer shower,

warned my friend to return to the house and me to pursue my journey. We arose to say good-by. Then there was a beating round the bush for some parting words. We both wanted to appear cheerful. I talked of my trip, soon to be made to Connecticut, and the long year of study there; He, of his summer's rest and recuperation to return to Fisk University. Thus we talked as we had talked before. But our souls—O our souls! They were looking at each other face to face, and understood well enough the quibbling, lying words of our lips. When we started out for that good-bye walk we both knew that it was the last time we should ever walk together in our mortal bodies. When our hands clasped in the good-bye, with a promise to soon meet again, we knew that we would be in our robes of white when we did meet. And that last touch of hands was too much for us. Our souls gave a mutual cry for little more truth. And I said, "Be brave to the end, Little Wood. Sail your boat worthy of the Captain. When you are flagged to come in the port, go in with your colors still up." "I will," he said, "and don't you forget that your vessel is a light one,

too." Again the thunder echoed along the hills and louder. We parted, my friend and I. At a bend in the path I turned to look again. Slowly homeward he walked. Yea, it was homeward that he walked. I stood and gazed till the gun and familiar form of "Little Wood" passed from my view.

Another June sun has smiled on the Highland Rim of Middle Tennessee, and on all the beautiful, rich Liberty Valley—as it has done a thousand times before. But it has made green for the first time the grave of my friend.

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