

SONGS,  
LEGENDS,  
BALLADS.

*JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.*

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# SONGS, LEGENDS, AND BALLADS.

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BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

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TO  
MY DEAR WIFE,  
WHOSE RARE AND LOVING JUDGMENT HAS BEEN A STANDARD  
I HAVE TRIED TO REACH,  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.



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SONGS, LEGENDS, AND BALLADS.



# SONGS, LEGENDS, AND BALLADS.

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## THE RAINBOW'S TREASURE.

WHERE the foot of the rainbow meets the  
field,

And the grass resplendent glows,  
The earth will a precious treasure yield,  
So the olden story goes.

In a crystal cup are the diamonds piled  
For him who can swiftly chase  
Over torrent and desert and precipice wild,  
To the rainbow's wandering base.

There were two in the field at work, one day,  
Two brothers, who blithely sung,  
When across their valley's deep-winding way  
The glorious arch was flung !

And one saw naught but a sign of rain,  
And feared for his sheaves unbound ;  
And one is away, over mountain and plain,  
Till the mystical treasure is found !

Thorough forest and stream, in a blissful dream,  
The rainbow lured him on ;  
With a siren's guile it loitered awhile,  
Then leagues away was gone.  
Over brake and brier he followed fleet ;  
The people scoffed as he passed ;  
But in thirst and heat, and with wounded feet,  
He nears the prize at last.

It is closer and closer — he wins the race —  
One strain for the goal in sight :  
Its radiance falls on his yearning face —  
The blended colors unite !  
He laves his brow in the iris beam —  
He reaches — Ah woe ! the sound  
From the misty gulf where he ends his dream,  
And the crystal cup is found !

'Tis the old, old story : one man will read  
His lesson of toil in the sky ;  
While another is blind to the present need,  
But sees with the spirit's eye.  
You may grind their souls in the self-same mill,  
You may bind them, heart and brow ;  
But the poet will follow the rainbow still,  
And his brother will follow the plough.

---

## AT BEST.

THE faithful helm commands the keel,  
From port to port fair breezes blow ;  
But the ship must sail the convex sea,  
Nor may she straighter go.

So, man to man ; in fair accord,  
On thought and will, the winds may wait ;  
But the world will bend the passing word,  
Though its shortest course be straight.

From soul to soul the shortest line  
At best will bended be :  
The ship that holds the straightest course  
Still sails the convex sea.

---

### MACARIUS THE MONK.

**I**N the old days, while yet the Church was  
young,  
And men believed that praise of God was sung  
In curbing self as well as singing psalms,  
There lived a monk, Macarius by name,  
A holy man, to whom the faithful came  
With hungry hearts to hear the wondrous Word.  
In sight of gushing springs and sheltering palms,  
He dwelt within the desert : from the marsh  
He drank the brackish water, and his food  
Was dates and roots,—and all his rule was harsh,  
For pampered flesh in those days warred with  
good.

From those who came in scores a few there were  
Who feared the devil more than fast and prayer,  
And these remained and took the hermit's vow.  
A dozen saints there grew to be ; and now  
Macarius, happy, lived in larger care.  
He taught his brethren all the lore he knew,  
And as they learned, his pious rigors grew.  
His whole intent was on the spirit's goal :  
He taught them silence — words disturb the soul :  
He warned of joys, and bade them pray for  
sorrow,  
And be prepared to-day for death to-morrow  
To know that human life alone was given  
To prove the souls of those who merit heaven ;  
He bade the twelve in all things be as brothers,  
And die to self, to live and work for others.  
“For so,” he said, “we save our love and labors,  
And each one gives his own and takes his  
neighbor's.”

Thus long he taught, and while they silent heard,  
He prayed for fruitful soil to hold the Word.

One day, beside the marsh they labored long,—  
For worldly work makes sweeter sacred song,—  
And when the cruel sun made hot the sand,  
And Afric's gnats the sweltering face and hand  
Tormenting stung, a passing traveller stood  
And watched the workers by the reeking flood.  
Macarius, nigh, with heat and toil was faint;  
The traveller saw, and to the suffering saint  
A bunch of luscious grapes in pity threw.  
Most sweet and fresh and fair they were to view,  
A generous cluster, bursting-rich with wine.  
Macarius longed to taste. "The fruit is mine,"  
He said, and sighed; "but I, who daily teach,  
Feel now the bond to practise as I preach."  
He gave the cluster to the nearest one,  
And with his heavy toil went patient on.

As one athirst will greet a flowing brim,  
The tempting fruit made moist the mouth of him  
Who took the gift; but in the yearning eye  
Rose brighter light: to one whose lip was dry  
He gave the grapes, and bent him to his spade.



And he who took, unknown to any other,  
The sweet refreshment handed to a brother.  
And so, from each to each, till round was made  
The circuit wholly — when the grapes at last,  
Untouched and tempting, to Macarius passed.

“Now God be thanked !” he cried, and ceased his  
toil ;

“The seed was good, but better was the soil.  
My brothers, join with me to bless the day.”  
But, ere they knelt, he threw the grapes away.

---

## THE TRIAL OF THE GODS.

“ON a regular division of the [Roman] Senate, Jupiter was condemned and degraded by the sense of a very large majority.” — *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*.

NEVER nobler was the Senate,  
Never grander the debate :  
Rome's old gods are on their trial  
By the judges of the state !

Torn by warring creeds, the Fathers  
Urge to-day the question home —  
“Whether Jupiter or Jesus  
Shall be God henceforth in Rome?”

Lo, the scene! In Jove's own temple,  
As of old, the Fathers meet;  
Through the porch, to hear the speeches,  
Press the people from the street.  
Pontiffs, rich with purple vesture,  
Pass from senate chair to chair;  
Learnéd augurs, still as statues —  
Voiceless statues, too — are there;  
Vestal virgins, white with terror,  
Mutely asking — what has come?  
What new light shall turn to darkness  
Vesta's holy fire in Rome?

Answer, Quindecemvirs! Surely,  
Of this wondrous Nazarene  
Ye must know, who keep the secrets  
Of the prophet Sibylline?

Nay, no word!— Here stand the Flamens :

Have ye read the omens, priests?

Slain the victims, white and sable,

Scanned the entrails of the beasts?

Priest of Pallas, see ! the people

Ask for oracles to-day :

Silent ! Priests of Mars and Venus?

Lo, they turn, dumb-lipped, away !

Priest of Jove? Flamen dialis !

Here in Jove's own temple meet

In debate the Roman Senate,

And Jove's priest with timid feet

Stands beyond the altar railing !

Gods, I feel ye frown above !

In the shadow of Jove's altar

Men defy the might of Jove !

Treason riots in the temple

At the sacrilege profound :

Virgins mocked, and augurs banished,

And divinities discrowned !

Hush ! Old Rome herself appeareth,  
Pleading for the ancient faith :  
Urging all her by-gone glory —  
That to change the old were death.  
Rudely answer the patricians,  
Scoffing at the time-worn snare :  
Twice a thousand years of sacrifice  
Have melted into air ;  
Twice a thousand years of worship  
Have bitterly sufficed  
To prove there is no Jupiter !  
The Senate votes for Christ !

---

Not aimless is the story,  
The moral not remote :  
For still the gods are questioned,  
And still the Senates vote.  
Men sacrifice to Venus ;  
To Mars are victims led ;  
And Mercury is honored still ;  
And Bacchus is not dead ; —

But these are minor deities  
That cling to human sight :  
Our twilight they — but Right and Wrong  
Are clear as day and night.  
We know the Truth : but falsehood  
With our lives is so inwove —  
Our Senates vote down Jesus  
As old Rome degraded Jove !

---

## THE SHADOW.

THERE is a shadow on the sunny wall,  
Dark and forbidding, like a bode of ill ;  
Go, drive it thence. Alas, such shadows fall  
From real things, nor may be moved at will.

There is a shadow on my heart to-day,  
A cloudy grief condensing to a tear :  
Alas, I cannot drive its gloom away —  
Some sin or sorrow casts the shapeless fear.

## THE VALUE OF GOLD.

THERE may be standard weight for precious  
metal,

But deeper meaning it must ever hold ;  
Thank God, there are some things no law can settle,  
And one of these — the real worth of gold.

The stamp of king or crown has common power  
To hold the traffic-value in control ;  
Our coarser senses note this worth — the lower ;  
The higher comes from senses of the soul.

This truth we find not in mere warehouse learning—  
The value varies with the hands that hold ;  
The worth depends upon the mode of earning ;  
And this man's copper equals that man's gold.

With empty heart, and forehead lined with  
scheming,  
Men's sin and sorrow have been that man's gain ;

But this man's heart, with rich emotions teeming,  
Makes fine the gold for which he coins his brain.

But richer still than gold from upright labor —  
The only gold that should have standard price —  
Is the poor earning of our humble neighbor,  
Whose every coin is red with sacrifice.

Mere store of money is not wealth, but rather  
The proof of poverty and need of bread.  
Like men themselves is the bright gold they gather :  
It may be living, or it may be dead.

It may be filled with love and life and vigor,  
To guide the wearer, and to cheer the way ;  
It may be corpse-like in its weight and rigor,  
Bending the bearer to his native clay.

There is no comfort but in outward showing  
In all the servile homage paid to dress ;  
Better to heart and soul the silent knowing  
Our little store has not been gained by loss.

## PEACE AND PAIN.

THE day and night are symbols of creation,  
And each has part in all that God has made ;  
There is no ill without its compensation,  
And life and death are only light and shade.  
There never beat a heart so base and sordid  
But felt at times a sympathetic glow ;  
There never lived a virtue unrewarded,  
Nor died a vice without its meed of woe.

In this brief life despair should never reach us ;  
The sea looks wide because the shores are dim ;  
The star that led the Magi still can teach us  
The way to go if we but look to Him.  
And as we wade, the darkness closing o'er us,  
The hungry waters surging to the chin,  
Our deeds will rise like stepping-stones before us —  
The good and bad — for we may use the sin.



A sin of youth, atoned for and forgiven,  
Takes on a virtue, if we choose to find :  
When clouds across our onward path are driven,  
We still may steer by its pale light behind.  
A sin forgotten is in part to pay for,  
A sin remembered is a constant gain :  
Sorrow, next joy, is what we ought to pray for,  
As next to peace we profit most from pain.

---

## A SEED.

A KINDLY act is a kernel sown,  
That will grow to a goodly tree,  
Shedding its fruit when time has flown  
Down the gulf of eternity.

## CHUNDER ALI'S WIFE.

FROM THE HINDOSTANEE.

“I AM poor,” said Chunder Ali, while the Mandarin above him  
Frowned in supercilious anger at the dog who  
dared to speak ;  
“I am friendless and a Hindoo : such a one meets  
few to love him  
Here in China, where the Hindoo finds the truth  
alone is weak.  
I have naught to buy your justice ; were I wise, I  
had not striven.  
Speak your judgment ;” and he crossed his arms  
and bent his quivering face.

Heard he then the unjust sentence : all his goods  
and gold were given  
To another, and he stood alone, a beggar in the  
place.

And the man who bought the judgment looked  
in triumph and derision  
At the cheated Hindoo merchant, as he rubbed  
his hands and smiled  
At the whispered gratulation of his friends, and at  
the vision  
Of the more than queenly dower for Ahmeer, his  
only child.  
Fair Ahmeer, who of God's creatures was the only  
one who loved him,  
She, the diamond of his treasures, the one lamb  
within his fold,  
She, whose voice, like her dead mother's, was the  
only power that moved him, —  
She would praise the skill that gained her all this  
Hindoo's silk and gold.  
And the old man thanked Confucius, and the judge,  
and him who pleaded.

But why falls this sudden silence ? why does each  
one hold his breath ?

Every eye turns on the Hindoo, who before was  
all unheeded,

And in wond'ring expectation all the court grows  
still as death.

Not alone stood Chunder Ali : by his side Ahmeer  
was standing,

And his brown hand rested lightly on her shoulder  
as he smiled

At the sweet young face turned toward him. Then  
the father's voice commanding

Fiercely bade his daughter to him from the dog  
whose touch defiled.

But she moved not, and she looked not at her father  
or the others

As she answered, with her eyes upon the Hindoo's  
noble face :

" Nay, my father, he defiles not : this kind arm above  
all others

Is my choosing, and forever by his side shall be my  
place.

When you knew not, his dear hand had given  
many a sweet love-token,  
He had gathered all my heartstrings and had  
bound them round his life ;  
Yet you tell me he defiles me ; nay, my father,  
you have spoken  
In your anger, and not knowing I was Chunder  
Ali's wife."

---

## A KISS.

LOVE is a plant with double root,  
And of strange, elastic power :  
Men's minds are divided in naming the fruit,  
But a kiss is only the flower.

## BONE AND SINEW AND BRAIN.

YE white-maned waves of the Western Sea,  
That ride and roll to the strand,  
Ye strong-winged birds, never forced a-lee  
By the gales that sweep toward land,  
Ye are symbols of death, and of hope that saves,  
As ye swoop in your strength and grace,  
As ye roll to the land like the billowed graves  
Of a past and puerile race.

Cry, "Presto, change!" and the lout is lord,  
With his vulgar blood turned blue;  
Go dub your knight with a slap of a sword,  
As the kings in Europe do;  
Go grade the lines of your social mode  
As you grade the palace wall,—  
The people forever to bear the load,  
And the gilded vanes o'er all.

But the human blocks will not lie as still  
As the dull foundation-stones,  
But will rise, like a sea, with an awful will,  
And ingulf the golden thrones ;  
For the days are gone when a special race  
Took the place of the gilded vane ;  
And the merit that mounts to the highest place  
Must have bone and sinew and brain.

Let the cant of "the march of mind" be heard,  
Of the time to come, when man  
Shall lose the mark of his brawn and beard  
In the future's levelling plan :  
'Tis the dream of a mind effeminate,  
The whine for an easy crown ;  
There is no need for the good and great  
In the weakling's levelling down.

A nation's boast is a nation's bone,  
As well as its might of mind ;  
And the culture of either of these alone  
Is the doom of a nation signed.

But the cant of the ultra-suasion school  
    Unsinews the hand and thigh,  
And preaches the creed of the weak to rule,  
    And the strong to struggle and die.  
Our schools are spurred to the fatal race,  
    As if health were the nation's sin,  
Till the head grows large, and the vampire face  
    Is gorged on the limbs so thin.  
Our women have entered the abstract fields,  
    And avaunt with the child and home :  
While the rind of science a pleasure yields  
    Shall they care for the lives to come?  
And they ape the manners of manly times  
    In their sterile and worthless life,  
Till the man of the future augments his crimes  
    With a raid for a Sabine wife.

Ho, white-maned waves of the Western Sea,  
    That ride and roll to the strand !  
Ho, strong-winged birds, never blown a-lee  
    By the gales that sweep toward land !



Ye are symbols both of a hope that saves,  
As ye swoop in your strength and grace,  
As ye roll to the land like the billowed graves  
Of a suicidal race.

Ye have hoarded your strength in equal parts ;  
For the men of the future reign  
Must have faithful souls and kindly hearts,  
And bone and sinew and brain.

---

## TO-DAY.

ONLY from day to day  
The life of a wise man runs ;  
What matter if seasons far away  
Have gloom or have double suns ?

To climb the unreal path,  
We stray from the roadway here ;  
We swim the rivers of wrath,  
And tunnel the hills of fear.

Our feet on the torrent's brink,  
Our eyes on the cloud afar,  
We fear the things we think,  
Instead of the things that are.

Like a tide our work should rise —  
Each later wave the best ;  
To-day is a king in disguise,\*  
To-day is the special test.

Like a sawyer's work is life :  
The present makes the flaw,  
And the only field for strife  
Is the inch before the saw.

\* "The days are ever divine. . . . They come and go like muffled and veiled figures, sent from a distant friendly party; but they say nothing; and if we do not use the gifts they bring, they carry them as silently away."— *Emerson*.

## MY NATIVE LAND.

IT chanced to me upon a time to sail  
Across the Southern Ocean to and fro ;  
And, landing at fair isles, by stream and vale  
Of sensuous blessing did we ofttimes go.  
And months of dreamy joys, like joys in sleep,  
Or like a clear, calm stream o'er mossy stone,  
Unnoted passed our hearts with voiceless sweep,  
And left us yearning still for lands unknown.

And when we found one, — for 'tis soon to find  
In thousand-isled Cathay another isle, —  
For one short noon its treasures filled the mind,  
And then again we yearned, and ceased to smile.  
And so it was, from isle to isle we passed,  
Like wanton bees or boys on flowers or lips ;

And when that all was tasted, then at last  
We thirsted still for draughts instead of sips.

I learned from this there is no Southern land  
Can fill with love the hearts of Northern men.  
Sick minds need change ; but, when in health they  
stand  
'Neath foreign skies, their love flies home agen.  
And thus with me it was : the yearning turned  
From laden airs of cinnamon away,  
And stretched far westward, while the full heart  
burned  
With love for Ireland, looking on Cathay !

My first dear love, all dearer for thy grief !  
My land, that has no peer in all the sea  
For verdure, vale, or river, flower or leaf, —  
If first to no man else, thou 'rt first to me.  
New loves may come with duties, but the first  
Is deepest yet, — the mother's breath and smiles :  
Like that kind face and breast where I was nursed  
Is my poor land, the Niobe of isles.

THERE IS BLOOD ON THE EARTH.

THERE is blood on the face of the earth —  
It reeks through the years, and is red :  
Where Truth was slaughtered at birth,  
And the veins of Liberty bled.

Lo ! vain is the hand that tries  
To cover the crimson stain :  
It spreads like a plague, and cries  
Like a soul in writhing pain.

It wasteth the planet's flesh ;  
It calleth on breasts of stone :  
God holdeth His wrath in a leash  
Till the hearts of men atone.

Blind, like the creatures of time ;  
Curséd, like all the race,

They answer : "The blood and crime  
Belong to a sect and place !"

What are these things to Heaven —  
Races or places of men ?  
The world through one Christ was forgiven —  
Nor question of races then.

The wrong of to-day shall be rued  
In a thousand coming years ;  
The debt must be paid in blood,  
The interest, in tears.

Shall none stand up for right  
Whom the evil passes by ?  
But God has the globe in sight,  
And hearkens the weak ones' cry.

Wherever a principle dies —  
Nay, principles never die !  
But wherever a ruler lies,  
And a people share the lie ;

Where right is crushed by force,  
And manhood is stricken dead —  
There dwelleth the ancient curse,  
And the blood on the earth is red !

---

## THE RIDE OF COLLINS GRAVES.

AN INCIDENT OF THE FLOOD IN MASSACHUSETTS, ON MAY  
16, 1874.

NO song of a soldier riding down  
To the raging fight from Winchester town ;  
No song of a time that shook the earth  
With the nations' throe at a nation's birth ;  
But the song of a brave man, free from fear  
As Sheridan's self or Paul Revere ;  
Who risked what they risked, free from strife,  
And its promise of glorious pay — his life !

The peaceful valley has waked and stirred,  
And the answering echoes of life are heard :

The dew still clings to the trees and grass,  
And the early toilers smiling pass,  
As they glance aside at the white-walled homes,  
Or up the valley, where merrily comes  
The brook that sparkles in diamond rills  
As the sun comes over the Hampshire hills.

What was it, that passed like an ominous breath —  
Like a shiver of fear, or a touch of death?  
What was it? The valley is peaceful still,  
And the leaves are afire on top of the hill.  
It was not a sound — nor a thing of sense —  
But a pain, like the pang of the short suspense  
That thrills the being of those who see  
At their feet the gulf of Eternity !

The air of the valley has felt the chill :  
The workers pause at the door of the mill ;  
The housewife, keen to the shivering air,  
Arrests her foot on the cottage stair,  
Instinctive taught by the mother-love,  
And thinks of the sleeping ones above.



Why start the listeners? Why does the course  
Of the mill-stream widen? Is it a horse —  
Hark to the sound of his hoofs, they say —  
That gallops so wildly Williamsburg way!

God! what was that, like a human shriek  
From the winding valley? Will nobody speak?  
Will nobody answer those women who cry  
As the awful warnings thunder by?

Whence come they? Listen! And now they  
hear

The sound of the galloping horse-hoofs near;  
They watch the trend of the vale, and see  
The rider who thunders so menacingly,  
With waving arms and warning scream  
To the home-filled banks of the valley stream.  
He draws no rein, but he shakes the street  
With a shout and the ring of the galloping feet;  
And this the cry he flings to the wind:  
"To the hills for your lives! The flood is  
behind!"

He cries and is gone ; but they know the worst —  
The breast of the Williamsburg dam has burst !  
The basin that nourished their happy homes  
Is changed to a demon — It comes ! it comes !

A monster in aspect, with shaggy front  
Of shattered dwellings, to take the brunt  
Of the homes they shatter — white-maned and  
hoarse,

The merciless Terror fills the course  
Of the narrow valley, and rushing raves,  
With Death on the first of its hissing waves,  
Till cottage and street and crowded mill  
Are crumbled and crushed.

But onward still,  
In front of the roaring flood is heard  
The galloping horse and the warning word.  
Thank God ! the brave man's life is spared !  
From Williamsburg town he nobly dared  
To race with the flood and take the road  
In front of the terrible swath it mowed.

For miles it thundered and crashed behind,  
But he looked ahead with a steadfast mind ;  
"They must be warned !" was all he said,  
As away on his terrible ride he sped.

When heroes are called for, bring the crown  
To this Yankee rider : send him down.  
On the stream of time with the Curtius old ;  
His deed as the Roman's was brave and bold,  
And the tale can as noble a thrill awake,  
For he offered his life for the people's sake.

---

## STAR-GAZING.

**L**ET be what is : why should we strive and  
wrestle

With awkward skill against a subtle doubt ?  
Or pin a mystery 'neath our puny pestle,  
And vainly try to bray its secret out ?

What boots it me to gaze at other planets,  
And speculate on sensate beings there?  
It comforts not that, since the moon began its  
Well-ordered course, it knew no breath of air.

There may be men and women up in Venus,  
Where science finds both summer-green and  
snow ;  
But are we happier asking, "Have they seen us?  
And, like us earth-men, do they yearn to  
know?"

On greater globes than ours men may be greater,  
For all things here in fair proportion run ;  
But will it make our poor cup any sweeter  
To think a nobler Shakespeare thrills the sun?

Or, that our sun is but itself a minor,  
Like this dark earth — a tenth-rate satellite,  
That swings submissive round an orb diviner,  
Whose day is lightning, with our day for  
night?

Or, past all suns, to find the awful centre  
Round which they meanly wind a servile road ;  
Ah, will it raise us or degrade, to enter  
Where that world's Shakespeare towers almost  
to God?

No, no ; far better, "lords of all creation"  
To strut our ant-hill, and to take our ease ;  
To look aloft and say, "That constellation  
Was lighted there our regal sight to please !"

We owe no thanks to so-called men of science,  
Who demonstrate that earth, not sun, goes  
round ;  
'Twere better think the sun a mere appliance  
To light man's villages and heat his ground.

There seems no good in asking or in humbling ;  
The mind incurious has the most of rest ;  
If we can live and laugh and pray, not grum-  
bling,  
'Tis all we can do here — and 'tis the best.

The throbbing brain will burst its tender raiment  
With futile force, to see by finite light  
How man's brief earning and eternal payment  
Are weighed as equal in th' Infinite sight.

'Tis all in vain to struggle with abstraction —  
The milky-way that tempts our mental glass ;  
The study for mankind is earth-born action ;  
The highest wisdom, let the wondering pass.

The Lord knows best : He gave us thirst for  
learning ;  
And deepest knowledge of His work betrays  
No thirst left waterless. Shall our soul-yearning,  
Apart from all things, be a quenchless blaze ?

## DOLORES.

**I**S he well blest who has no eyes to scan  
The woful things that shadow all our life :  
The latent brute behind the eyes of man,  
The place and power gained and stained by  
    strife,  
The weakly victims driven to the wall,  
The subtile cruelties that meet us all  
Like eyes from darksome places? Blest is he  
Who such sad things is never doomed to see !

The crust of common life is worn by time,  
And shines deception, as a thin veneer  
The raw plank hides, or as the frozen mere  
Holds drownéd men embedded in its slime ;  
The ninety eat their bread of death and crime,  
And sin and sorrow that the ten may thrive.

O, moaning sea of life ! the few who dive  
Beneath thy waters, faint and short of breath,

Not Dante-like, who cannot swim in death  
And view its secrets, but must swiftly rise, —  
They meet the light with introverted eyes,  
And hands that clutch a few dim mysteries !

Our life a harp is, with unnumbered strings,  
And tones and symphonies ; but our poor skill  
Some shallow notes from its great music brings.  
We know it there ; but vainly wish and will.

O, things symbolic ! Things that mock our  
sense —

Our five-fold, pitiable sense — and say  
A thousand senses could not show one day  
As sight infinite sees it ; fruitful clay,  
And budding bough, and nature great with child  
And chill with doom and death — is all so dense  
That our dull thought can never read thy words,  
Or sweep with knowing hand thy hidden chords ?

Have men not fallen from fair heights, once trod  
By nobler minds, who saw the works of God,



The flowers and living things, still undefiled,  
And spoke one language with them? And can we,  
In countless generations, each more pure  
Than that preceding, come at last to see  
Thy symbols full of meaning, and be sure  
That what we read is all they have to tell?

---

## LOVE, AND BE WISE.

NOT on the word alone  
Let love depend;  
Neither by actions done  
Choose ye the friend.

Let the slow years fly —  
These are the test;  
Never to peering eye  
Opened the breast.

Psyche won hopeless woe,  
Reaching to take ;  
Wait till your lilies grow  
Up from the lake.

Gather words patiently ;  
Harvest the deed ;  
Let the winged years fly,  
Sifting the seed.

Judging by harmony,  
Learning by strife ;  
Seeking in unity  
Precept and life.

Seize the supernal —  
Prometheus dies ;  
Take the external  
On trust — and be wise.

## RESURGITE! — JUNE, 1877.

NOW, for the faith that is in ye,  
Polander, Selav, and Kelt!  
Prove to the world what the lips have hurled  
The hearts have grandly felt.

Rouse, ye races in shackles!  
See in the East, the glare  
Is red in the sky, and the warning cry  
Is sounding — "Awake! Prepare!"

A voice from the spheres — a hand downreached  
To hands that would be free,  
To rend the gyves from the fettered lives  
That strain toward Liberty!

Circassia! the cup is flowing  
That holdeth perennial youth:

Who strikes succeeds, for when manhood bleeds  
Each drop is a Cadmus' tooth.

Slavonia ! first from the sheathing  
Thy knife to the cord that binds ;  
Thy one-tongued host shall renew the boast :  
"The Scythians are the Winds !"

Greece ! to the grasp of heroes,  
Flashed with thine ancient pride,  
Thy swords advance : in the passing chance  
The great of heart are tried.

Poland ! thy lance-heads brighten :  
The Tartar has swept thy name  
From the schoolman's chart, but the patriot's heart  
Preserves its lines in flame.

Ireland ! mother of dolours,  
The trial on thee descends :  
Who quaileth in fear when the test is near,  
His bondage never ends.

Oppression, that kills the craven,  
Defied, is the freeman's good :  
No cause can be lost forever whose cost  
Is coined from Freedom's blood !

Liberty's wine and altar  
Are blood and human right ;  
Her weak shall be strong while the struggle with  
wrong  
Is a sacrificial fight.

Earth for the people — their laws their own —  
An equal race for all :  
Though shattered and few who to this are true  
Shall flourish the more they fall.

## RULES OF THE ROAD.

WHAT man would be wise, let him drink of  
the river

That bears on its bosom the record of time ;  
A message to him every wave can deliver  
To teach him to creep till he knows how to  
climb.

Who heeds not experience, trust him not ; tell  
him

The scope of one mind can but trifles achieve :  
The weakest who draws from the mine will excel  
him —

The wealth of mankind is the wisdom they  
leave.

For peace do not hope — to be just you must  
break it ;

Still work for the minute and not for the year ;  
When honor comes to you, be ready to take it ;  
But reach not to seize it before it is near.

Be silent and safe — silence never betrays you ;  
 Be true to your word and your work and your  
 friend ;  
 Put least trust in him who is foremost to praise  
 you,  
 Nor judge of a road till it draw to the end.

Stand erect in the vale, nor exult on the moun-  
 tain ;

Take gifts with a sigh — most men give to be  
 paid ;

"I had" is a heartache, "I have" is a fountain,—  
 You're worth what you saved, not the million  
 you made.

Trust toil not intent, or your plans will miscarry ;  
 Your wife keep a sweetheart, instead of a  
 tease ;

Rule children by reason, not rod ; and, mind,  
 marry

Your girl when you can — and your boy when  
 you please.

Steer straight as the wind will allow ; but be  
ready

To veer just a point to let travellers pass :  
Each sees his own star—a stiff course is too  
steady

When this one to Meeting goes, that one to  
Mass.

Our stream's not so wide but two arches may  
span it—

Good neighbor and citizen ; these for a code,  
And this truth in sight,—every man on the planet  
Has just as much right as yourself to the road.

---

FOREVER.

THOSE we love truly never die,  
Though year by year the sad memorial  
wreath,  
A ring and flowers, types of life and death,  
Are laid upon their graves.



For death the pure life saves,  
And life all pure is love ; and love can reach  
From heaven to earth, and nobler lessons teach  
Than those by mortals read.

Well blest is he who has a dear one dead :  
A friend he has whose face will never change —  
A dear communion that will not grow strange ;  
The anchor of a love is death.

The blessed sweetness of a loving breath  
Will reach our cheek all fresh through weary  
years.  
For her who died long since, ah ! waste not  
tears,  
She's thine unto the end.

Thank God for one dead friend,  
With face still radiant with the light of truth,  
Whose love comes laden with the scent of youth,  
Through twenty years of death.

## THE LOVING CUP OF THE PAPYRUS. \*

WISE men use days as husbandmen use bees,  
And steal rich drops from every pregnant  
hour ;

Others, like wasps on blossomed apple-trees,  
Find gall, not honey, in the sweetest flower.

Congratulations for a scene like this !

The olden times are here — these shall be olden  
When, years to come, remembering present bliss,  
We sigh for past Papyrian dinners golden.

We thank the gods ! we call them back to light —  
Call back to hoary Egypt for Osiris,  
Who first made wine, to join our board to-night,  
And drain this loving cup with the Papyrus.

\* On February 3d, 1877, at the dinner of "The Papyrus," a club composed of literary men and artists of Boston, a beautiful crystal "Loving Cup" was presented to the club by Mr. Wm. A. Hovey.

He comes ! the Pharaoh's god ! fling wide the  
door —

Welcome, Osiris ! See — thine old prescription  
Is honored here ; and thou shalt drink once more  
With men whose treasured ensign is Egyptian.

A toast ! a toast ! our guest shall give a toast !

By Nilus' flood, we pray thee, god, inspire us !  
He smiles — he wills — let not a word be lost —  
His hand upon the cup, he speaks : —

“PAPYRUS !

“I greet ye ! and mine ancient nation shares  
In greeting fair from Ammon, Ptah, and Isis,  
Whose leaf ye love — dead Egypt's leaf, that bears  
Our tale of pride from Cheops to Cambyzes.

“We gods of Egypt, who are wise with age —  
Five thousand years have washed us clean of  
passion —

A golden era for this board presage,  
While ye do keep this cup in priestly fashion.

"We love to see the bonds of fellowship  
    Made still more sacred by a fine tradition ;  
We bless this bowl that moves from lip to lip  
    In love's festoons, renewed by every mission.

"Intern the vessel from profaning eyes ;  
    The lip that kisses should have special merit ;  
Thus every sanguine draught shall symbolize  
    And consecrate the true Papyrian spirit.

"For brotherhood, not wine, this cup should pass ;  
    Its depths should ne'er reflect the eye of malice ;  
Drink toasts to strangers with the social glass,  
    But drink to brothers with this loving chalice.

"And now, Papyrus, each one pledge to each :  
    And let this formal tie be warmly cherished.  
No words are needed for a kindly speech —  
    The loving thought will live when words have  
        perished."

## THE TREASURE OF ABRAM.

## I.

IN the old Rabbinical stories,  
So old they might well be true,—  
The sacred tales of the Talmud,  
That David and Solomon knew,—  
There is one of the Father Abram,  
The greatest of Heber's race,  
The mustard-seed of Judea  
That filled the holy place.  
'Tis said that the fiery heaven  
His eye was first to read,  
Till planets were gods no longer,  
But helps for the human need;  
He taught his simple people  
The scope of eternal law  
That swayed at once the fleecy cloud  
And the circling suns they saw.

But the rude Chaldean peasants  
Uprose against the seer,  
And drave him forth — else never came  
This Talmud legend here.

With Sarah his wife, and his servants,  
Whom he ruled with potent hand,  
The Patriarch planted his vineyards  
In the Canaanitish land ;  
With his wife — the sterile, but lovely,  
The fame of whose beauty grew  
Till there was no land in Asia  
But tales of the treasure knew.  
In his lore the sage lived — learning  
High thought from the starlit skies ;  
But heedful, too, of the light at home,  
And the danger of wistful eyes ;  
Till the famine fell on his corn-fields,  
And sent him forth again,  
To seek for a home in Egypt,—  
The land of the amorous men.

## II.

Long and rich is the caravan that halts at Egypt's  
gate,

While duty full the stranger pays on lowing herd  
and freight.

Full keen the scrutiny of those who note the  
heavy dues ;

From weanling foal to cumbrous wain, no chance  
of gain they lose.

But fair the search — no wealth concealed ; while  
rich the gifts they take

From Abram's hand, till care has ceased, and for-  
mal quest they make.

They pass the droves and laden teams, the  
weighted slaves are past,

And Abram doubles still the gifts ; one wain —  
his own — is last —

It goes unsearched ! Wise Abram smiles, though  
dearly stemmed the quest ;

But haps will come from causes slight,  
And hidden things upspring to light :  
A breeze flings wide the canvas fold, and deep  
    within the wain, behold  
A brass-bound, massive chest !

"Press on !" shouts Abram. "Hold !" they cry ;  
    "what treasure hide ye here ?"

The word is stern—the answer brief : "Treasure !  
    'tis household gear ;

Plain linen cloth and flaxen thread." The  
    scribes deceived are wroth ;

"Then weigh the chest—its price shall be the  
    dues on linen cloth !"

The face of Abram seemed to grieve, though joy  
    was in his breast,

As carefully his servants took and weighed the  
    mighty chest.

But one hath watched the secret smile ; he  
    cries — "This stranger old

Hath used deceit : no cloth is here — this chest is  
    filled with gold !"



"Nay, nay," wise Abram says, and smiles, though  
now he hides dismay ;  
"But time is gold : let pass the chest — on gold  
the dues I pay !"

But he who read the subtle smile detects the secret fear :

"Detain the chest ! nor cloth nor gold, but  
precious silk is here !"

Grave Father Abram stands like one who  
knoweth well the sword

When tyros baffle thrust and guard ; slow comes  
the heedful word :

"I seek no lawless gain — behold ! my trains  
are on their way,

Else would these bands my servants break, and  
show the simple goods I take,

That silk ye call ; but, for time's sake, on silk the  
dues I pay !"

"He pays too much !" the watcher cries ; "this  
man is full of guile ;

From cloth to gold and gold to silk, to save a  
paltry mile !

This graybeard pay full silken dues on cloth for  
slave-bred girls !

Some prize is here — he shall not pass until he  
pay for pearls !”

Stern Abram turned a lurid eye, as he the man  
would slay ;

An instant, rose the self-command ; but thin the  
lip and quick the hand,

As one who makes a last demand : “On pearls  
the dues I pay !”

“He cannot pass !” the watcher screamed, as to  
the chest he clung ;

“He shall not pass ! Some priceless thing he  
hideth here. Quick — workmen bring !

I seize this treasure for the King !”

Old Abram stood aghast ; it seemed the knell of  
doom had rung.

## III.

Red-eyed with greed and wonder,  
The crowd excited stand ;  
The blows are rained like thunder  
On brazen bolt and band ;  
They burst the massive hinges,  
They raise the ponderous lid,  
And lo ! the peerless treasure  
That Father Abram hid :

In pearls and silk and jewels rare,  
Fit for a Pharaoh's strife ;  
In flashing eyes and golden hair —  
Sat Abram's lovely wife !

## THE LAST OF THE NARWHALE.

THE STORY OF AN ARCTIC NIP.

AY, ay, I'll tell you, shipmates,  
If you care to hear the tale,  
How myself and the royal yard alone  
Were left of the old Narwhale.

"A stouter ship was never launched  
Of all the Clyde-built whalers ;  
And forty years of a life at sea  
Haven't matched her crowd of sailors.  
Picked men they were, all young and strong,  
And used to the wildest seas,  
From Donegal and the Scottish coast,  
And the rugged Hebrides.  
Such men as women cling to, mates,  
Like ivy round their lives :  
And the day we sailed, the quays were lined  
With weeping mothers and wives.

They cried and prayed, and we gave 'em a cheer,  
In the thoughtless way of men ;  
God help them, shipmates — thirty years  
They've waited and prayed since then.

"We sailed to the North, and I mind it well,  
The pity we felt, and pride  
When we sighted the cliffs of Labrador  
From the sea where Hudson died.  
We talked of ships that never came back,  
And when the great floes passed,  
Like ghosts in the night, each moonlit peak  
Like a great war frigate's mast,  
'Twas said that a ship was frozen up  
In the iceberg's awful breast,  
The clear ice holding the sailor's face  
As he lay in his mortal rest.  
And I've thought since then, when the ships came  
home  
That sailed for the Franklin band,  
A mistake was made in the reckoning  
That looked for the crews on land.

'They're floating still,' I've said to myself,  
    'And Sir John has found the goal ;  
The Erebus and the Terror, mates,  
    Are icebergs up at the Pole !'

"We sailed due North, to Baffin's Bay,  
    And cruised through weeks of light ;  
'Twas always day, and we slept by the bell,  
    And longed for the dear old night,  
And the blessed darkness left behind,  
    Like a curtain round the bed ;  
But a month dragged on like an afternoon  
    With the wheeling sun o'erhead.  
We found the whales were farther still,  
    The farther north we sailed ;  
Along the Greenland glacier coast,  
    The boldest might have quailed,  
Such shapes did keep us company ;  
    No sail in all that sea,  
But thick as ships in Mersey's tide  
    The bergs moved awfully

Within the current's northward stream ;  
But, ere the long day's close,  
We found the whales and filled the ship  
Amid the friendly flocks.

"Then came a rest : the day was blown  
Like a cloud before the night ;  
In the South the sun went redly down—  
In the North rose another light,  
Neither sun nor moon, but a shooting dawn,  
That silvered our lonely way ;  
It seemed we sailed in a belt of gloom,  
Upon either side, a day.  
The north wind smote the sea to death ;  
The pack-ice closed us round —  
The Narwhale stood in the level fields  
As fast as a ship aground.  
A weary time it was to wait,  
And to wish for spring to come,  
With the pleasant breeze and the blessed sun,  
To open the way toward home.

"Spring came at last, the ice-fields groaned  
Like living things in pain ;  
They moaned and swayed, then rent amain,  
And the Narwhale sailed again.  
With joy the dripping sails were loosed  
And round the vessel swung ;  
To cheer the crew, full south she drew,  
The shattered floes among.  
We had no books in those old days  
To carry the friendly faces ;  
But I think the wives and lasses then  
Were held in better places.  
The face of sweetheart and wife to-day  
Is locked in the sailor's chest :  
But aloft on the yard, with the thought of  
home,  
The face in the heart was best.  
Well, well — God knows, mates, when and  
where  
To take the things he gave ;  
We steered for home — but the chart was his,  
And the port ahead — the grave !



"We cleared the floes : through an open sea  
The Narwhale south'ard sailed,  
Till a day came round when the white fog rose,  
And the wind astern had failed.  
In front of the Greenland glacier line,  
And close to its base were we ;  
Through the misty pall we could see the wall  
That beetled above the sea.  
A fear like the fog crept over our hearts  
As we heard the hollow roar  
Of the deep sea thrashing the cliffs of ice  
For leagues along the shore.

"The years have come and the years have  
gone,  
But it never wears away —  
The sense I have of the sights and sounds  
That marked that-woful day.  
Flung here and there at the ocean's will,  
As it flung the broken floe —  
What strength had we 'gainst the tiger sea  
That sports with a sailor's woe ?

The lifeless berg and the lifeful ship  
    Were the same to the sullen wave,  
As it swept them far from ridge to ridge,  
    Till at last the Narwhale drave  
With a crashing rail on the glacier wall—  
    As sheer as the vessel's mast —  
A crashing rail and a shivered yard ;  
    But the worst, we thought, was past.  
The brave lads sprang to the fending work,  
    And the skipper's voice rang hard :  
' Aloft there, one with a ready knife —  
    Cut loose that royal yard !'  
I sprang to the rigging, young I was,  
    And proud to be first to dare :  
The yard swung free, and I turned to gaze  
Toward the open sea, o'er the field of haze,  
And my heart grew cold, as if frozen through  
At the moving shape that met my view —  
    O Christ ! what a sight was there !

" Above the fog, as I hugged the yard,  
    I saw that an iceberg lay —

A berg like a mountain, closing fast —  
Not a cable's length away !  
I could not see through the sheet of mist  
That covered all below,  
But I heard the cheery voices still,  
And I screamed to let them know.  
The cry went down, and the skipper hailed,  
But before the word could come  
It died in his throat — and I knew they saw  
The shape of the closing doom !

"No sound but that — but the hail that died  
Came up through the mist to me ;  
Thank God, it covered the ship like a veil,  
And I was not forced to see —  
But I heard it, mates : O, I heard the rush,  
And the timbers rend and rive,  
As the yard I clung to swayed and fell :  
—— I lay on the ice, alive !  
Alive ! O God of mercy ! ship and crew and sea  
were gone !  
The hummocked ice and the broken yard,  
And a kneeling man — alone !

" A kneeling man on a frozen hill,  
The sounds of life in the air —  
All death and ice — and a minute before  
The sea and the ship were there !  
I could not think they were dead and gone,  
And I listened for sound or word :  
But the deep sea roar on the desolate shore  
Was the only sound I heard.  
O mates, I had no heart to thank  
The Lord for the life He gave ;  
I spread my arms on the ice and cried  
Aloud on my shipmates' grave.  
The brave strong lads, with their strength all  
vain,  
I called them name by name ;  
And it seemed to me from the dying hearts  
A message upward came —  
Ay, mates, a message, up through the ice  
From every sailor's breast :  
' *Go tell our mothers and wives at home  
To pray for us here at rest.*

"Yes, that's what it means ; 'tis a little word ;  
But, mates, the strongest ship  
That ever was built is a baby's toy  
When it copes with an Arctic Nip."

---

## DYING IN HARNESS.

ONLY a fallen horse, stretched out there on  
the road,  
Stretched in the broken shafts, and crushed by  
the heavy load ;  
Only a fallen horse, and a circle of wondering  
eyes  
Watching the 'frighted teamster goading the beast  
to rise.

Hold ! for his toil is over — no more labor for  
him ;  
See the poor neck outstretched, and the patient  
eyes grow dim ;

See on the friendly stones how peacefully rests  
the head —

Thinking, if dumb beasts think, how good it is to  
be dead ;

After the weary journey, how restful it is to  
lie

With the broken shafts and the cruel load —  
waiting only to die.

Watchers, he died in harness — died in the shafts  
and straps —

Fell, and the burden killed him : one of the  
day's mishaps —

One of the passing wonders marking the city  
road —

A toiler dying in harness, heedless of call or  
goad.

Passers, crowding the pathway, staying your  
steps awhile,

What is the symbol? Only death — why should  
we cease to smile

At death for a beast of burden? On, through  
the busy street  
That is ever and ever echoing the tread of the  
hurrying feet.

What was the sign? A symbol to touch the tire-  
less will?

Does He who taught in parables speak in par-  
ables still?

The seed on the rock is wasted — on heedless  
hearts of men,

That gather and sow and grasp and lose — labor  
and sleep — and then —

Then for the prize! — A crowd in the street  
of ever-echoing tread —

The toiler, crushed by the heavy load, is there in  
his harness — dead !

## GOLU.

ONCE I had a little sweetheart  
In the land of the Malay, —  
Such a little yellow sweetheart !  
Warm and peerless as the day  
Of her own dear sunny island,  
Keimah, in the far, far East,  
Where the mango and banana  
Made us many a merry feast.

Such a little copper sweetheart  
Was my Golu, plump and round,  
With her hair all blue-black streaming  
O'er her to the very ground.  
Soft and clear as dew-drop clinging  
To a grass blade was her eye ;  
For the heart below was purer  
Than the hill-stream whispering by.



Costly robes were not for Golu :  
No more raiment did she need  
Than the milky budding breadfruit,  
Or the lily of the mead ;  
And she was my little sweetheart  
Many a sunny summer day,  
When we ate the fragrant guavas,  
In the land of the Malay.

Life was laughing then. Ah ! Golu,  
Do you think of that old time,  
And of all the tales I told you  
Of my colder Western clime ?  
Do you think how happy were we  
When we sailed to strip the palm,  
And we made a latteen arbor  
Of the boat-sail in the calm ?

They may call you semi-savage,  
Golu ! I cannot forget  
How I poised my little sweetheart  
Like a copper statuette.

Now my path lies through the cities ;  
But they cannot drive away  
My sweet dreams of little Golu  
And the land of the Malay.

---

### UNDER THE RIVER

CLEAR and bright, from the snowy height,  
The joyous stream to the plain descended :  
Rich sands of gold were washed and rolled  
To the turbid marsh where its pure life ended.

From stainless snow to the moor below  
The heart like the brook has a waning mis-  
sion :  
The buried dream in life's sluggish stream  
Is the golden sand of our young ambition.

## HIDDEN SINS.

FOR every sin that comes before the light,  
And leaves an outward blemish on the soul,  
How many, darker, cower out of sight,  
And burrow, blind and silent, like the mole.  
And like the mole, too, with its busy feet  
That dig and dig a never-ending cave,  
Our hidden sins gnaw through the soul, and meet  
And feast upon each other in its grave.

A buried sin is like a covered sore  
That spreads and festers 'neath a painted face ;  
And no man's art can heal it evermore,  
But only His — the Surgeon's — promised grace.  
Who hides a sin is like the hunter who  
Once warmed a frozen adder with his breath,  
And when he placed it near his heart it flew  
With poisoned fangs and stung that heart to death.

A sculptor once a granite statue made,  
One-sided only, just to fit its place :  
The unseen side was monstrous ; so men shade  
Their evil acts behind a smiling face.  
O blind ! O foolish ! thus our sins to hide,  
And force our pleading hearts the gall to sip ;  
O cowards ! who must eat the myrrh, that Pride  
May smile like Virtue with a lying lip.

A sin admitted is nigh half atoned ;  
And while the fault is red and freshly done,  
If we but drop our eyes and think, — 'tis owned, —  
'Tis half forgiven, half the crown is won.  
But if we heedless let it reek and rot,  
Then pile a mountain on its grave, and turn,  
With smiles to all the world, — that tainted spot  
Beneath the mound will never cease to burn.

## UNSPOKEN WORDS.

THE kindly words that rise within the heart,  
And thrill it with their sympathetic tone,  
But die ere spoken, fail to play their part,  
And claim a merit that is not their own.  
The kindly word unspoken is a sin, —  
A sin that wraps itself in purest guise,  
And tells the heart that, doubting, looks within,  
That not in speech, but thought, the virtue lies.

But 'tis not so : another heart may thirst  
For that kind word, as Hagar in the wild —  
Poor banished Hagar ! — prayed a well might burst  
From out the sand to save her parching child.  
And loving eyes that cannot see the mind  
Will watch the expected movement of the lip :  
Ah ! can ye let its cutting silence wind  
Around that heart, and scathe it like a whip ?

Unspoken words, like treasures in the mine,  
Are valueless until we give them birth :  
Like unfound gold their hidden beauties shine,  
Which God has made to bless and gild the earth.  
How sad 'twould be to see a master's hand  
Strike glorious notes upon a voiceless lute !  
But oh ! what pain when, at God's own command,  
A heart-string thrills with kindness, but is mute !

Then hide it not, the music of the soul,  
Dear sympathy, expressed with kindly voice,  
But let it like a shining river roll  
To deserts dry, — to hearts that would rejoice.  
Oh ! let the symphony of kindly words  
Sound for the poor, the friendless, and the weak ;  
And He will bless you, — He who struck these  
chords  
Will strike another when in turn you seek.

## THE POISON-FLOWER.

IN the evergreen shade of an Austral wood,  
Where the long branches laced above,  
Through which all day it seemed  
The sweet sunbeams down-gleamed  
Like the rays of a young mother's love,  
When she hides her glad face with her hands and  
    peeps  
At the youngling that crows on her knee :  
    'Neath such ray-shivered shade,  
In a banksia glade,  
Was this flower first shown to me.

A rich pansy it was, with a small white lip  
And a wonderful purple hood ;  
And your eye caught the sheen  
Of its leaves, parrot-green,  
Down the dim gothic aisles of the wood.  
And its foliage rich on the moistureless sand

Made you long for its odorous breath ;  
But ah ! 'twas to take  
To your bosom a snake,  
For its pestilent fragrance was death.

And I saw it again, in a far northern land, —  
Not a pansy, not purple and white ;  
Yet in beauteous guise  
Did this poison-plant rise,  
Fair and fatal again to my sight.  
And men longed for her kiss and her odorous breath  
When no friend was beside them to tell  
That to kiss was to die,  
That her truth was a lie,  
And her beauty a soul-killing spell.



## MY MOTHER'S MEMORY.

**T**HERE is one bright star in heaven  
Ever shining in my night ;  
God to me one guide has given,  
Like the sailor's beacon-light,  
Set on every shoal and danger,  
Sending out its warning ray  
To the home-bound weary stranger  
Looking for the land-locked bay.

In my farthest, wildest wanderings  
I have turned me to that love,  
As a diver, 'neath the water,  
Turns to watch the light above.

## THE OLD SCHOOL CLOCK.

OLD memories rush o'er my mind just now  
Of faces and friends of the past ;  
Of that happy time when life's dream was all bright  
Ere the clear sky of youth was o'er cast.  
Very dear are those mem'ries, — they've clung  
round my heart,  
And bravely withstood Time's rude shock ;  
But not one is more hallowed or dear to me now  
Than the face of the old school clock.

'Twas a quaint old clock with a quaint old face,  
And great iron weights and chain ;  
It stopped when it liked, and before it struck  
It creaked as if 'twere in pain.

It had seen many years, and it seemed to say,  
    "I'm one of the real old stock,"  
To the youthful fry, who with reverence looked  
    On the face of the old school clock.

How many a time have I labored to sketch  
    That yellow and time-honored face,  
With its basket of flowers, its figures and hands,  
    And the weights and the chains in their place!  
How oft have I gazed with admiring eye,  
    As I sat on the wooden block,  
And pondered and guessed at the wonderful things  
    That were inside that old school clock!

What a terrible frown did the old clock wear  
    To the truant, who timidly cast  
An anxious eye on those merciless hands,  
    That for him had been moving too fast!  
But its frown soon changed; for it loved to smile  
    On the thoughtless, noisy flock,  
And it creaked and whirred and struck with glee, —  
    Did that genial, good-humored old clock.

Well, years had passed, and my mind was filled  
    With the world, its cares and ways,  
When again I stood in that little school  
    Where I passed my boyhood's days.  
*My old friend was gone!* and there hung a thing  
    That my sorrow seemed to mock,  
As I gazed with a tear and a softened heart  
    At a new-fashioned Yankee clock.

'Twas a gaudy thing with bright painted sides,  
    And it looked with insolent stare  
On the desks and the seats and on every thing old;  
    And I thought of the friendly air  
Of the face that I missed, with its weights and  
    chains, —

    All gone to the auctioneer's block:  
'Tis a thing of the past, — never more shall I see  
    But in memory that old school clock.

'Tis the way of the world: old friends pass away,  
    And fresh faces arise in their stead;  
But still 'mid the din and the bustle of life  
    We cherish fond thoughts of the dead.

Yes, dearly those memories cling round my  
heart,

And bravely withstand Time's rude shock ;  
But not one is more dear or more hallowed to me  
Than the face of that old school clock.

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## MARY.

DEAR honored name, beloved for human ties,  
But loved and honored first that One was  
given

In living proof to erring mortal eyes  
That our poor earth is near akin to heaven.

Sweet word of dual meaning : one of grace,  
And born of our kind advocate above ;  
And one by memory linked to that dear face  
That blessed my childhood with its mother-  
love,

And taught me first the simple prayer, "To thee,  
Poor banished sons of Eve, we send our cries."  
Through mist of years, those words recall to me  
A childish face upturned to loving eyes.

And yet to some the name of Mary bears  
No special meaning and no gracious power ;  
In that dear word they seek for hidden snares,  
As wasps find poison in the sweetest flower.

But faithful hearts can see, o'er doubts and fears,  
The Virgin link that binds the Lord to earth ;  
Which to the upturned trusting face appears  
A more than angel, though of human birth.

The sweet-faced moon reflects on cheerless night  
The rays of hidden sun to rise to-morrow ;  
So unseen God still lets His promised light,  
Through holy Mary, shine upon our sorrow.

A LEGEND OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

THE day of Joseph's marriage unto Mary,  
In thoughtful mood he said unto his wife,  
"Behold, I go into a far-off country  
To labor for thee, and to make thy life  
And home all sweet and peaceful." And the Virgin  
Unquestioning beheld her spouse depart :  
Then lived she many days of musing gladness,  
Not knowing that God's hand was round her  
heart.

And dreaming thus one day within her chamber,  
She wept with speechless bliss, when lo ! the face  
Of white-winged angel Gabriel rose before her,  
And bowing spoke, "Hail ! Mary, full of grace,

The Lord is with thee, and among the nations  
Forever blessed is thy chosen name.”  
The angel vanished, and the Lord’s high Presence  
With untold glory to the Virgin came.

A season passed of joy unknown to mortals,  
When Joseph came with what his toil had won,  
And broke the brooding ecstasy of Mary,  
Whose soul was ever with her promised Son.  
But nature’s jealous fears encircled Joseph,  
And round his heart in darkening doubts held  
sway.  
He looked upon his spouse cold-eyed, and pondered  
How he could put her from his sight away.

And once, when moody thus within his garden,  
The gentle girl besought for some ripe fruit  
That hung beyond her reach, the old man answered,  
With face averted, harshly to her suit:  
“I will not serve thee, woman ! Thou hast wronged  
me :



I heed no more thy words and actions mild ;  
If fruit thou wantest, thou canst henceforth ask it  
From him, the father of thy unborn child !”

But ere the words had root within her hearing,  
The Virgin’s face was glorified anew ;  
And Joseph, turning, sank within her presence,  
And knew indeed his wondrous dreams were  
true.

For there before the sandalled feet of Mary  
The kingly tree had bowed its top, and she  
Had pulled and eaten from its prostrate branches,  
As if unconscious of the mystery.

## THE LOSS OF THE EMIGRANTS. \*

FOR months and years, with penury and want  
And heart-sore envy did they dare to cope ;  
And mite by mite was saved from earnings scant,  
To buy, some future day, the God-sent hope.

They trod the crowded streets of hoary towns,  
Or tilled from year to year the wearied fields,  
And in the shadow of the golden crowns  
They gasped for sunshine and the health it yields.

They turned from homes all cheerless, child and  
man,  
With kindly feelings only for the soil,  
And for the kindred faces, pinched and wan,  
That prayed, and stayed, unwilling, at their toil.

They lifted up their faces to the Lord,  
And read His answer in the westering sun  
That called them ever as a shining word,  
And beckoned seaward as the rivers run.

\* The steamer *Atlantic* was wrecked near Halifax, N.S., April 1st, 1873, and 560 lives lost.

They looked their last, wet-eyed, on Swedish  
hills,

On German villages and English dales ;  
Like brooks that grow from many mountain rills  
The peasant-stream flowed out from Irish vales.

Their grief at parting was not all a grief,  
But blended sweetly with the joy to come,  
When from full store they spared the rich relief  
To gladden all the dear ones left at home.

“ We thank thee, God ! ” they cried ; “ the cruel  
gate

That barred our lives has swung beneath Thy  
hand ;

Behind our ship now frowns the cruel fate,  
Before her smiles the teeming Promised Land ! ”

Alas ! when shown in mercy or in wrath,  
How weak we are to read God’s awful lore !  
His breath protected on the stormy path,  
And dashed them lifeless on the promised  
shore !

His hand sustained them in the parting woe,  
And gave bright vision to the heart of each ;  
His waters bore them where they wished to go,  
Then swept them seaward from the very beach !

Their home is reached, their fetters now are riven,  
Their humble toil is o'er, — their rest has come ;  
A land was promised and a land is given, —  
But, oh ! God help the waiting ones at home !

## WITHERED SNOWDROPS.

THEY came in the early spring-days,  
With the first refreshing showers ;  
And I watched the growing beauty  
Of the little drooping flowers.

They had no bright hues to charm me,  
No gay painting to allure ;  
But they made me think of angels,  
They were all so white and pure.

In the early morns I saw them,  
Dew-drops clinging to each bell,  
And the first glad sunbeam hasting  
Just to kiss them ere they fell.

Daily grew their spotless beauty ;  
But I feared when chill winds blew

They were all too frail and tender, —  
And alas! my fears were true.

One glad morn I went to see them  
While the bright drops gemmed their snow,  
And one angel flower was withered,  
Its fair petals drooping low.

Its white sister's tears fell on it,  
And the sunbeam sadly shone ;  
For its innocence was withered,  
And its purity was gone.

Still I left it there : I could not  
Tear it rudely from its place ;  
It might rise again, and summer  
Might restore its vanished grace.

But my hopes grew weaker, weaker,  
And my heart with grief was pained  
When I knew it must be severed  
From the innocence it stained.

I must take it from the pure ones :

Henceforth they must live apart.

But I could not cut my flow'ret —

My lost angel — from my heart.

Oft I think of that dead snowdrop,

Think with sorrow, when I meet,

Day by day, the poor lost flowers, —

Sullied snowdrops of the street.

They were pure once, loved and loving,

And there still lives good within.

Ah! speak gently to them: harsh words

Will not lead them from their sin.

They are not like withered flowers

That can never bloom again :

They can rise, bright angel snowdrops,

Purified from every stain.

## THE WAIL OF TWO CITIES.



CHICAGO, OCTOBER 9, 1871.

**G**AUNT in the midst of the prairie,  
She who was once so fair ;  
Charred and rent are her garments,  
Heavy and dark like cerements ;  
Silent, but round her the air  
Plaintively wails, " Miserere ! "

Proud like a beautiful maiden,  
Art-like from forehead to feet,  
Was she till pressed like a leman  
Close to the breast of the demon,  
Lusting for one so sweet,  
So were her shoulders laden.



Friends she had, rich in her treasures :

Shall the old taunt be true, —  
Fallen, they turn their cold faces,  
Seeking new wealth-gilded places,  
Saying we never knew  
Aught of her smiles or her pleasures ?

Silent she stands on the prairie,

Wrapped in her fire-scathed sheet :  
Around her, thank God ! is the Nation,  
Weeping for her desolation,  
Pouring its gold at her feet,  
Answering her “Miserere !”



BOSTON, NOVEMBER 9, 1872.

O broad-breasted Queen among Nations !

O Mother, so strong in thy youth !  
Has the Lord looked upon thee in ire,  
And willed thou be chastened by fire,  
Without any ruth ?

Has the Merciful tired of His mercy,  
And turned from thy sinning in wrath,  
That the world with raised hands sees and pities  
Thy desolate daughters, thy cities,  
Despoiled on their path?

One year since thy youngest was stricken :  
Thy eldest lies stricken to-day.  
Ah! God, was thy wrath without pity,  
To tear the strong heart from our city,  
And cast it away?

O Father! forgive us our doubting ;  
The stain from our weak souls efface ;  
Thou rebukest, we know, but to chasten ;  
Thy hand has but fallen to hasten  
Return to thy grace.

Let us rise purified from our ashes  
As sinners have risen who grieved ;  
Let us show that twice-sent desolation  
On every true heart in the nation  
Has conquest achieved.

## THE FISHERMEN OF WEXFORD.

THERE is an old tradition sacred held in Wexford town,

That says: "Upon St. Martin's eve no net shall be  
let down ;

No fishermen of Wexford shall, upon that holy day,  
Set sail or cast a line within the scope of Wexford  
Bay."

The tongue that framed the order, or the time, no  
one could tell ;

And no one ever questioned, but the people kept it  
well.

And never in man's memory was fisher known to  
leave

The little town of Wexford on the good St. Martin's  
Eve.

Alas ! alas for Wexford ! once upon that holy  
day

Came a wondrous shoal of herring to the waters of  
the Bay :

The fishers and their families stood out upon the  
beach,

And all day watched with wistful eyes the wealth  
they might not reach.

Such shoal was never seen before, and keen regrets  
went round —

Alas ! alas for Wexford ! Hark ! what is that  
grating sound ?

The boats' keels on the shingle ! Mothers ! wives !  
ye well may grieve, —

The fishermen of Wexford mean to sail on Martin's  
Eve !

“ Oh, stay ye ! ” cried the women wild. “ Stay ! ”  
cried the men white-haired ;

“ And dare ye not to do this thing your fathers  
never dared.

No man can thrive who tempts the Lord!"

"Away!" they cried: "the Lord  
Ne'er sent a shoal of fish but as a fisherman's re-  
ward."

And scoffingly they said, "To-night our nets shall  
sweep the Bay,

And take the Saint who guards it, should he come  
across our way!"

The keels have touched the water, and the crews  
are in each boat;

And on St. Martin's Eve the Wexford fishers are  
afloat!

The moon is shining coldly on the sea and on the  
land,

On dark faces in the fishing-fleet and pale ones on  
the strand,

As seaward go the daring boats, and heavenward  
the cries

Of kneeling wives and mothers with uplifted hands  
and eyes.

"O Holy Virgin! be their guard!" the weeping  
women cried;

The old men, sad and silent, watched the boats  
cleave through the tide,

As past the farthest headland, past the lighthouse,  
in a line

The fishing-fleet went seaward through the phos-  
phor-lighted brine.

Oh, pray, ye wives and mothers! All your prayers  
they sorely need

To save them from the wrath they've roused by  
their rebellious greed.

Oh! white-haired men and little babes, and weep-  
ing sweethearts, pray

To God to spare the fishermen to-night in Wexford  
Bay!

The boats have reached good offing, and, as out the  
nets are thrown,

The hearts ashore are chilled to hear the sougning  
sea wind's moan:

Like to a human heart that loved, and hoped for  
some return,  
To find at last but hatred, so the sea-wind seemed  
to mourn.  
But ah! the Wexford fishermen! their nets did  
scarcely sink  
One inch below the foam, when, lo! the daring  
boatmen shrink  
With sudden awe and whitened lips and glaring  
eyes agape,  
For breast-high, threatening, from the sea uprose a  
Human Shape!

Beyond them, — in the moonlight, — hand upraised  
and awful mien,  
Waving back and pointing landwards, breast-high  
in the sea 'twas seen.  
Thrice it waved and thrice it pointed, — then, with  
clenchéd hand upraised,  
The awful shape went down before the fishers as  
they gazed!

Gleaming whitely through the water, fathoms deep  
they saw its frown, —  
They saw its white hand clenched above it, — sink-  
ing\* slowly down !  
And then there was a rushing 'neath the boats, and  
every soul  
Was thrilled with greed: they knew it was the  
seaward-going shoal !

Defying the dread warning, every face was sternly  
set,  
And wildly did they ply the oar, and wildly haul  
the net.  
But two boats' crews obeyed the sign, — God-fearing  
men were they, —  
They cut their lines and left their nets, and home-  
ward sped away ;  
But darkly rising sternwards did God's wrath in  
tempest sweep,  
And they, of all the fishermen, that night escaped  
the deep.



Oh, wives and mothers, sweethearts, sires! well  
might ye mourn next day;  
For seventy fishers' corpses strewed the shores of  
Wexford Bay!

## THE FEAST OF THE GAEL.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

## I.

**W**HAT a union of hearts is the love of a mother  
When races of men in her name unite !  
For love of Old Erin, and love of each other,  
The boards of the Gael are full to-night !  
Their millions of men have one toast and one  
topic —  
Their feuds laid aside and their envies removed ;  
From the pines of the Pole to the palms of the  
Tropic,  
They drink : "The dear Land we have prayed  
for and loved !"  
They are One by the bond of a time-honored  
fashion ;  
Though strangers may see but the lights of  
their feast,

Beneath lies the symbol of faith and of passion  
Alike of the Pagan and Christian priest !

## II.

When native laws by native kings  
At Tara were decreed,  
The grand old Gheber worship  
Was the form of Erin's creed.  
The Sun, Life-Giver, was God on high ;  
Men worshipped the Power they saw ;  
And they kept the faith as the ages rolled  
By the solemn Beltane law.  
Each year, on the Holy Day, was quenched  
The household fires of the land ;  
And the Druid priest, at the midnight hour,  
Brought forth the flaming brand,—  
The living spark for the Nation's hearths,—  
From the Monarch's hand it came,  
Whose fire at Tara spread the sign —  
And the people were One by the flame !

And Baal was God! till Patrick came,  
By the Holy Name inspired ;  
On the Beltane night, in great Tara's sight,  
His pile at Slane was fired.  
And the deed that was death was the Nation's life,  
And the doom of the Pagan bane ;  
For Erin still keeps Beltane night,  
But lights her lamp at Slane !

Though fourteen centuries pile their dust  
On the mound of the Druid's grave,  
TO-NIGHT IS THE BELTANE ! Bright the fire  
That Holy Patrick gave !  
TO-NIGHT IS THE BELTANE ! Let him heed  
Who studieth creed and race :  
Old times and gods are dead, and we  
Are far from the ancient place ;  
The waves of centuries, war, and waste,  
Of famine, gallows, and gaol,  
Have swept our land ; but the world to-night  
Sees the Beltane Fire of the Gael !

## III.

O land of sad fate ! like a desolate queen;  
Who remembers in sorrow the crown of her  
glory,  
The love of thy children not strangely is seen —  
For humanity weeps at thy heart-touching  
story.  
Strong heart in affliction ! that draweth thy foes  
'Till they love thee more dear than thine own  
generation :  
Thy strength is increased as thy life-current  
flows,—  
What were death to another is Ireland's salva-  
tion !  
God scatters her sons like the seed on the lea,  
And they root where they fall, be it mountain  
or furrow ;  
They come to remain and remember ; and she  
In their growth will rejoice in a blissful to-  
morrow !

They sing in strange lands the sweet songs of  
their home,

Their emerald Zion enthroned in the billows ;  
To work, not to weep by the rivers they come :

Their harps are not hanged in despair on the  
willows.

The hope of the mother beats youthful and  
strong,

Responsive and true to her children's pulsa-  
tions,

No petrified heart has she saved from the  
wrong—

Our Niobe lives for her place 'mong the  
nations !

Then drink, all her sons—be they Keltic or  
Danish,

Or Norman or Saxon—one mantle was o'er us ;  
Let race lines, and creed lines, and every line,  
vanish—

We drink as the Gael : "To the Mother that  
bore us !"

AT FREDERICKSBURG.—DEC. 13, 1862.

**G**OD send us peace, and keep red strife away ;  
But should it come, God send us men and  
steel !

The land is dead that dare not face the day  
When foreign danger threatens the common weal.

Defenders strong are they that homes defend ;  
From ready arms the spoiler keeps afar.  
Well blest the country that has sons to lend  
From trades of peace to learn the trade of war.

Thrice blest the nation that has every son  
A soldier, ready for the warning sound ;  
Who marches homeward when the fight is done,  
To swing the hammer and to till the ground.

Call back that morning, with its lurid light,  
When through our land the awful war-bell tolled ;

When lips were mute, and women's faces white  
As the pale cloud that out from Sumter rolled.

Call back that morn : an instant all were dumb,  
As if the shot had struck the Nation's life ;  
Then cleared the smoke, and rolled the calling  
drum,  
And men streamed in to meet the coming  
strife.

They closed the ledger and they stilled the loom,  
The plough left rusting in the prairie farm ;  
They saw but "Union" in the gathering gloom ;  
The tearless women helped the men to arm ;

Brigades from towns — each village sent its band :  
German and Irish — every race and faith ;  
There was no question then of native land,  
But — love the Flag and follow it to death.

No need to tell their tale : through every age  
The splendid story shall be sung and said ;



But let me draw one picture from the page —  
For words of song embalm the hero dead.

---

The smooth hill is bare, and the cannons are  
planted,

Like Gorgon fates shading its terrible brow ;  
The word has been passed that the stormers are  
wanted,

And Burnside's battalions are mustering now.  
The armies stand by to behold the dread meet-  
ing ;

The work must be done by a desperate few ;  
The black-mouthed guns on the height give them  
greeting —

From gun-mouth to plain every grass blade in  
view.

Strong earthworks are there, and the rifles be-  
hind them

Are Georgia militia — an Irish brigade —  
Their caps have green badges, as if to remind  
them

Of all the brave record their country has made.

The stormers go forward — the Federals cheer  
them ;

They breast the smooth hillside — the black  
mouths are dumb ;

The riflemen lie in the works till they near them,  
And cover the stormers as upward they come.

Was ever a death-march so grand and so solemn ?

At last, the dark summit with flame is enlined ;  
The great guns belch doom on the sacrificed  
column,

That reels from the height, leaving hundreds  
behind.

The armies are hushed — there is no cause for  
cheering :

The fall of brave men to brave men is a pain.

Again come the stormers ! and as they are nearing

The flame-sheeted rifle-lines, reel back again.

And so till full noon come the Federal masses —

Flung back from the height, as the cliff flings a  
wave ;

Brigade on brigade to the death-struggle passes,

No wavering rank till it steps on the grave.

Then comes a brief lull, and the smoke-pall is  
lifted,

The green of the hillside no longer is seen ;  
The dead soldiers lie as the sea-weed is drifted,  
The earthworks still held by the badges of  
green.

Have they quailed? is the word. No: again  
they are forming —

Again comes a column to death and defeat !  
What is it in these who shall now do the storming  
That makes every Georgian spring to his feet ?

“ O God ! what a pity ! ” they cry in their cover,  
As rifles are readied and bayonets made tight ;  
“ ’Tis Meagher and his fellows ! their caps have  
green clover ;

’Tis Greek to Greek now for the rest of the  
fight ! ”

Twelve hundred the column, their rent flag before  
them,

With Meagher at their head, they have dashed  
at the hill !

Their foemen are proud of the country that bore  
them ;

But, Irish in love, they are enemies still.  
Out rings the fierce word, "Let them have it!"  
the rifles

Are emptied point-blank in the hearts of the  
foe :

It is green against green, but a principle stifles  
The Irishman's love in the Georgian's blow.

The column has reeled, but it is not defeated ;

In front of the guns they re-form and attack ;  
Six times they have done it, and six times re-  
treated ;

Twelve hundred they came, and two hundred  
go back.

Two hundred go back with the chivalrous story ;

The wild day is closed in the night's solemn  
shroud ;

A thousand lie dead, but their death was a  
glory

That calls not for tears — the Green Badges  
are proud !

Bright honor be theirs who for honor were fearless,

Who charged for their flag to the grim cannon's mouth ;

And honor to them who were true, though not tearless,—

Who bravely that day kept the cause of the South.

The quarrel is done — God avert such another ;

The lesson it brought we should evermore heed :

Who loveth the Flag is a man and a brother,

No matter what birth or what race or what creed.

## THE PRIESTS OF IRELAND.

["The time has arrived when the interests of our country require from us, as priests and as Irishmen, a public pronouncement on the vital question of Home Rule. . . . We suggest the holding of an aggregate meeting in Dublin, of the representatives of all interested in this great question—and they are the entire people, without distinction of creed or class—for the purpose of placing, by constitutional means, on a broad and definite basis, the nation's demand for the restoration of its plundered rights."—*Extract from the Declaration of the Bishop and Priests of the Diocese of Cloyne, made on Sept. 15, 1873.*]

YOU have waited, Priests of Ireland, until the  
hour was late :

You have stood with folded arms until 'twas  
asked — Why do they wait?

By the fever and the famine you have seen your  
flocks grow thin,

Till the whisper hissed through Ireland that your  
silence was a sin.

You have looked with tearless eyes on fleets of  
exile-laden ships,

And the hands that stretched toward Ireland  
brought no tremor to your lips ;

In the sacred cause of freedom you have seen  
your people band,  
And they looked to you for sympathy : you never  
stirred a hand ;  
But you stood upon the altar, with their blood  
within your veins,  
And you bade the pale-faced people to be patient  
in their chains !  
Ah, you told them — it was cruel — but you said  
they were not true  
To the holy faith of Patrick, if they were not  
ruled by you ;  
Yes, you told them from the altar — they, the  
vanguard of the Faith —  
With your eyes like flint against them — that  
their banding was a death —  
Was a death to something holy : till the heart-  
wrung people cried  
That their priests had turned against them — that  
they had no more a guide —  
That the English gold had bought you — yes,  
they said it — but they lied !

Yea, they lied, they sinned, not knowing you —  
they had not gauged your love :

Heaven bless you, Priests of Ireland, for the wisdom from above,

For the strength that made you, loving them,  
crush back the tears that rose

When your country's heart was quiv'ring 'neath  
the statesman's muffled blows :

You saw clearer far than they did, and you  
grieved for Ireland's pain ;

But you did not rouse the people — and your  
silence was their gain ;

For too often has the peasant dared to dash his  
naked arm

'Gainst the sabre of the soldier : but you shielded  
him from harm,

And your face was set against him — though your  
heart was with his hand

When it flung aside the plough to snatch a pike  
for fatherland !



O, God bless you, Priests of Ireland! You  
were waiting with a will,  
You were waiting with a purpose when you bade  
your flocks be still;  
And you preached from off your altars not alone  
the Word Sublime,  
But your silence preached to Irishmen—"Be  
patient: bide your time!"  
And they heard you, and obeyed, as well as out-  
raged men could do:—  
Only some, who loved poor Ireland, but who  
erred in doubting you,  
Doubting you, who could not tell them why you  
spake the strange behest—  
You, who saw the day was coming when the  
moral strength was best—  
You, whose hearts were sore with looking on your  
country's quick decay—  
You, whose chapel seats were empty and your  
people fled away—  
You, who marked amid the fields where once the  
peasant's cabin stood—

You, who saw your kith and kindred swell the  
emigration flood—

You, the *soggarth* in the famine, and the helper  
in the frost —

You, whose shadow was a sunshine when all  
other hope was lost —

Yes, they doubted — and you knew it — but you  
never said a word ;

Only preached, "Be still : be patient !" and,  
thank God, your voice was heard.

Now, the day foreseen is breaking — it has  
dawned upon the land,

And the priests still preach in Ireland : do they  
bid their flocks disband ?

Do they tell them still to suffer and be silent ?  
No ! their words

Flash from Dublin Bay to Connaught, brighter  
than the gleam of swords !

Flash from Donegal to Kerry, and from Water-  
ford to Clare,

And the nationhood awaking thrills the sorrow-  
laden air.

Well they judged their time—they waited till the  
bar was glowing white,  
Then they swung it on the anvil, striking down  
with earnest might,  
And the burning sparks that scatter lose no  
lustre on their way,  
Till five million hearts in Ireland and ten millions  
far away  
Feel the first good blow, and answer; and they  
will not rest with one :  
Now the first is struck, the anvil shows the labor  
well begun ;  
Swing them in with lusty sinew and the work will  
soon be done !  
Let them sound from hoary Cashel ; Kerry,  
Meath, and Ross stand forth ;  
Let them ring from Cloyne and Tuam and the  
Primate of the North ;  
Ask not class or creed : let "Ireland !" be the  
talismanic word ;  
Let the blessed sound of unity from North to  
South be heard ;

Carve the words : "No creed distinctions !" on  
O'Connell's granite tomb,  
And his dust will feel their meaning and rekindle  
in the gloom.  
Priest to priest, to sound the summons — and the  
answer, man to man ;  
With the people round the standard, and the  
prelates in the van.  
Let the heart of Ireland's hoping keep this golden  
rule of Cloyne  
Till the Orange fades from Derry and the shadow  
from the Boyne.  
Let the words be carried outward till the farthest  
lands they reach :  
"After Christ, their country's freedom do the  
Irish prelates preach !"

## RELEASED — JANUARY, 1878.\*

THEY are free at last! They can face the  
sun ;

Their hearts now throb with the world's  
pulsation ;

Their prisons are open — their night is done ;

'Tis England's mercy and reparation !

The years of their doom have slowly sped —

Their limbs are withered — their ties are riven ;

Their children are scattered, their friends are  
dead —

But the prisons are open — the "crime" for-  
given.

\* ON the 5th of January, 1878, three of the Irish political prisoners, who had been confined since 1866, were set at liberty. The released men were received by their fellow-countrymen in London. "They are well," said the report, "but they look prematurely old."

God ! what a threshold they stand upon :

The world has passed on while they were  
buried ;

In the glare of the sun they walk alone

On the grass-grown track where the crowd has  
hurried.

Haggard and broken and seared with pain,

They seek the remembered friends and places :

Men shuddering turn, and gaze again

At the deep-drawn lines on their altered faces.

What do they read on the pallid page?

What is the tale of these woful letters?

A lesson as old as their country's age,

Of a love that is stronger than stripes and  
fettters.

In the blood of the slain some dip their blade,

And swear by the stain the foe to follow :

But a deadlier oath might here be made,

On the wasted bodies and faces hollow.

Irishmen ! You who have kept the peace —  
Look on these forms diseased and broken :  
Believe, if you can, that their late release,  
When their lives are sapped, is a good-will  
token.

Their hearts are the bait on England's hook ;  
For this are they dragged from her hopeless  
prison ;

She reads her doom in the Nations' book —  
She fears the day that has darkly risen ;

She reaches her hand for Ireland's aid —  
Ireland, scourged, contemned, derided ;  
She begs from the beggar her hate has made ;  
She seeks for the strength her guile divided.

She offers a bribe — ah, God above !  
Behold the price of the desecration :  
The hearts she has tortured for Irish love  
She brings as a bribe to the Irish nation !

O, blind and cruel ! She fills her cup  
With conquest and pride, till its red wine  
splashes :  
But shrieks at the draught as she drinks it up —  
Her wine has been turned to blood and ashes.

We know her—our Sister ! Come on the storm !  
God send it soon and sudden upon her :  
The race she has shattered and sought to deform  
Shall laugh as she drinks the black dishonor.



## THE PATRIOT'S GRAVE.

READ AT THE EMMET CENTENNIAL IN BOSTON, MARCH 4,  
1878.

["I am going to my cold and silent grave—my lamp of life is nearly extinguished. I have parted with everything that was dear to me in this life for my country's cause—with the idol of my soul, the object of my affections: my race is run, the grave opens to receive me, and I sink into its bosom! I have but one request to make at my departure from this world—it is the charity of its silence! Let no man write my epitaph; for, as no man who knows my motives dare now vindicate them, let not ignorance nor prejudice asperse them. Let them rest in obscurity and peace! Let my memory be left in oblivion, and my tomb uninscribed, until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written."—*Speech of Robert Emmet in the Dock.*]

## I.

TEAR down the crape from the column! Let  
the shaft stand white and fair!

Be silent the wailing music—there is no death  
in the air!

We come not in plaint or sorrow—no tears may  
dim our sight:

We dare not weep o'er the epitaph we have not  
dared to write.

Come hither with glowing faces, the sire, the  
youth, and the child ;

This grave is a shrine for reverent hearts and  
hands that are undefiled :

Its ashes are inspiration ; it giveth us strength to  
bear,

And sweepeth away dissension, and nerveth the  
will to dare.

In the midst of the tombs, a Gravestone — and  
written thereon no word !

And behold, at the head of the grave, a gibbet, a  
torch, and a sword !

And the people kneel by the gibbet, and pray by  
the nameless stone

For the torch to be lit, and the name to be writ,  
and the sword's red work to be done !

## II.

With pride and not with grief

We lay this century leaf

Upon the tomb, with hearts that do not falter :

A few brief, toiling years  
Since fell the nation's tears,  
And lo, the patriot's gibbet is an altar !

The people that are blest  
Have him they love the best  
To mount the martyr's scaffold when they need  
him ;  
And vain the cords that bind  
While the nation's steadfast mind,  
Like the needle to the pole, is true to freedom !

## III.

Three powers there are that dominate the  
world —  
Fraud, Force, and Right—and two oppress the  
one :  
The bolts of Fraud and Force like twins are  
hurled —  
Against them ever standeth Right alone.

Cyclopiā strokes the brutal allies give :

    Their fetters massive and their dungeon walls ;  
Beneath their yoke, weak nations cease to live,  
    And valiant Right itself defenceless falls !

Defaced is law, and justice slain at birth ;

    Good men are broken — malefactors thrive ;  
But, when the tyrants tower o'er the earth,  
    Behind their wheels strong right is still alive !

Alive, like seed that God's own hand has sown —

    Like seed that lieth in the lowly furrow,  
But springs to life when wintry winds are blown :  
    To-day the earth is gray — 'tis green to-  
        morrow.

The roots strike deep despite the rulers' power,

    The plant grows strong with summer sun and  
        rain,  
Till Autumn bursts the deep red-hearted flower,  
    And freedom marches to the front again !

While slept the right, and reigned the dual  
wrong,

Unchanged, unchecked, for half a thousand  
years,

In tears of blood we cried, "O Lord, how long?"

And even God seemed deaf to Erin's tears.

But when she lay all weak and bruised and  
broken,

Her white limbs seared with cruel chain and  
thorn —

As bursts the cloud, the lightning word was  
spoken,

God's seed took root — His crop of men was  
born !

With one deep breath began the land's progres-  
sion :

On every field the seeds of freedom fell :

Burke, Grattan, Flood, and Curran in the ses-  
sion —

Fitzgerald, Sheares, and Emmet in the cell !

Such teachers soon aroused the dormant nation—

Such sacrifice insured the endless fight :

The voice of Grattan smote wrong's domination —

The death of Emmet sealed the cause of  
right !

IV.

Richest of gifts to a nation ! Death with the  
living crown !

Type of ideal manhood to the people's heart  
brought down !

Fount of the hopes we cherish—Test of the  
things we do ;

Gorgon's face for the traitor — Talisman for the  
true !

Sweet is the love of a woman, and sweet is the  
kiss of a child ;

Sweet is the tender strength, and the bravery of  
the mild ;

But sweeter than all, for embracing all, is the  
young life's peerless price —  
The young heart laid on the altar, as a nation's  
sacrifice.

How can the debt be cancelled? Prayers and  
tears we may give —  
But how recall the anguish of hearts that have  
ceased to live?

Flushed with the pride of genius — filled with the  
strength of life —  
Thrilled with delicious passion for her who would  
be his wife —

This was the heart he offered — the upright life  
he gave —  
This is the silent sermon of the patriot's nameless  
grave.

Shrine of a nation's honor — stone left blank for  
a name —

Light on the dark horizon to guide us clear from  
shame —

Chord struck deep with the keynote, telling us  
what can save —

“A nation among the nations,” or forever a  
nameless grave.

Such is the will of the martyr — the burden we  
still must bear ;

But even from death he reaches the legacy to  
share :

He teaches the secret of manhood — the watch-  
word of those who aspire —

That men must follow freedom though it lead  
through blood and fire ;

That sacrifice is the bitter draught which freemen  
still must quaff —

That every patriotic life is the patriot's epitaph.



JOHN MITCHEL.

DIED MARCH 20, 1875.

I.

DEAD, with his harness on him :  
Rigid and cold and white,  
Marking the place of the vanguard  
Still in the ancient fight.

The climber dead on the hill-side,  
Before the height is won :  
The workman dead on the building,  
Before the work is done ! -

O, for a tongue to utter  
The words that should be said —  
Of his worth that was silver, living,  
That is gold and jasper, dead !

Dead — but the death was fitting :  
His life, to the latest breath,  
Was poured like wax on the chart of right,  
And is sealed by the stamp of Death !

Dead — but the end was fitting :  
First in the ranks he led ;  
And he marks the height of his nation's gain,  
As he lies in his harness — dead !

## II.

Weep for him, Ireland — mother lonely ;  
Weep for the son who died for thee.  
Wayward he was, but he loved thee only,  
Loyal and fearless as son could be.  
Weep for him, Ireland — sorrowing nation —  
Faithful to all who are true to thee :  
Never a son in thy desolation  
Had holier love for thy cause than he.

Sons of the Old Land, mark the story —  
Mother and son in the final test :  
Weeping she sits in her darkened glory,  
Holding her dead to her stricken breast.  
Only the dead on her knees are lying —  
Ah, poor mother beneath the Cross !  
Strength is won by the constant trying,  
Crowns are gemmed by the tears of loss !

Sons of the Old Land, mark the story —  
Mother and son to each other true :  
She called, and he answered, old and hoary,  
And gave her his life as a man should do.  
She may weep — but for us no weeping :  
Tears are vain till the work is done ;  
Tears for her — but for us the keeping  
Our hearts as true as her faithful son.

## A NATION'S TEST.

READ AT THE O'CONNELL CENTENNIAL IN BOSTON, ON  
AUGUST 6, 1875.

## I.

A NATION'S greatness lies in men, not  
acres ;

One master-mind is worth a million hands.

No royal robes have marked the planet-shakers,

But Samson-strength to burst the ages' bands.

The might of empire gives no crown supernal —

Athens is here — but where is Macedon ?

A dozen lives make Greece and Rome eternal,

And England's fame might safely rest on one.

Here test and text are drawn from Nature's  
preaching :

Afric and Asia — half the rounded earth —

In teeming lives the solemn truth are teaching,

That insect-millions may have human birth.

Sun-kissed and fruitful, every clod is breeding  
A petty life, too small to reach the eye :  
So must it be, with no Man thinking, leading,  
The generations creep their course and die.

Hapless the lands, and doomed amid the races,  
That give no answer to this royal test ;  
Their toiling tribes will droop ignoble faces,  
Till earth in pity takes them back to rest.  
A vast monotony may not be evil,  
But God's light tells us it cannot be good ;  
Valley and hill have beauty — but the level  
Must bear a shadeless and a stagnant brood.

## II.

I bring the touchstone, Motherland, to thee,  
And test thee trembling, fearing thou shouldst  
fail ;  
If fruitless, sonless, thou wert proved to be,  
Ah, what would love and memory avail?

Brave land ! God has blest thee !  
Thy strong heart I feel,  
As I touch thee and test thee —  
Dear land ! As the steel  
To the magnet flies upward, so rises thy breast,  
With a motherly pride to the touch of the test.

## III.

See ! she smiles beneath the touchstone, looking  
on her distant youth,  
Looking down her line of leaders and of workers  
for the truth.  
Ere the Teuton, Norseman, Briton, left the  
primal woodland spring,  
When their rule was might and rapine, and their  
law a painted king ;  
When the sun of art and learning still was in the  
Orient ;  
When the pride of Babylonia under Cyrus' hand  
was shent ;

When the sphinx's introverted eye turned fresh  
from Egypt's guilt ;  
When the Persian bowed to Athens ; when the  
Parthenon was built ;  
When the Macedonian climax closed the Com-  
monwealths of Greece ;  
When the wrath of Roman manhood burst on  
Tarquin for Lucrece —  
Then was Erin rich in knowledge — thence from  
out her Ollamh's store —  
Kenned to-day by students only — grew her  
ancient *Senchus More* ; \*  
Then were reared her mighty builders, who made  
temples to the sun —  
There they stand — the old Round Towers —  
showing how their work was done :

\* "Senchus More," or *Great Law*, the title of the Brehon Laws, translated by O'Donovan and O'Curry. Ollamh Fola, who reigned 900 years B.C., organized a triennial parliament at Tara, of the chiefs, priests, and bards, who digested the laws into a record called the Psalter of Tara. Ollamh Fola founded schools of history, medicine, philosophy, poetry, and astronomy, which were protected by his successors. Kimbath (450 B.C.) and Hugony (300 B.C.) also promoted the civil interests of the kingdom in a remarkable manner.

Thrice a thousand years upon them — shaming all  
our later art —

Warning fingers raised to tell us we must build  
with rev'rent heart.

Ah, we call thee Mother Erin ! Mother thou in  
right of years ;

Mother in the large fruition — mother in the joys  
and tears.

All thy life has been a symbol — we can only  
read a part :

God will flood thee yet with sunshine for the  
woes that drench thy heart.

All thy life has been symbolic of a human  
mother's life :

Youth's sweet hopes and dreams have vanished,  
and the travail and the strife

Are upon thee in the present ; but thy work until  
to-day

Still has been for truth and manhood — and it  
shall not pass away :



Justice lives, though judgment lingers — angels'  
feet are heavy shod —  
But a planet's years are moments in th' eternal  
day of God !

## IV.

Out from the valley of death and tears,  
From the war and want of a thousand years,  
From the mark of sword and the rust of chain,  
From the smoke and blood of the penal laws,  
The Irish men and the Irish cause  
Come out in the front of the field again !

What says the stranger to such a vitality ?  
What says the statesman to this nationality ?  
Flung on the shore of a sea of defeat,  
Hardly the swimmers have sprung to their feet,  
When the nations are thrilled by a clarion-word,  
And Burke, the philosopher-statesman, is heard.

When shall his equal be? Down from the stellar  
height

Sees he the planet and all on its girth —  
India, Columbia, and Europe — his eagle-sight  
Sweeps at a glance all the wrong upon earth.  
Races or sects were to him a profanity :

Hindoo and Negro and Kelt were as one ;  
Large as mankind was his splendid humanity,  
Large in its record the work he has done.

## V.

What need to mention men of minor note,  
When there be minds that all the heights  
attain?

What school-boy knoweth not the hand that wrote  
"Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain" ?  
What man that speaketh English e'er can lift  
His voice 'mid scholars, who hath missed the lore  
Of Berkeley, Curran, Sheridan, and Swift,  
The art of Foley and the songs of Moore?

Grattan and Flood and Emmet — where is he  
That hath not learned respect for such as these?  
Who loveth humor, and hath yet to see  
Lover and Prout and Lever and Maclise?

## VI.

Great men grow greater by the lapse of time :  
We know those least whom we have seen the  
latest ;  
And they, 'mongst those whose names have  
grown sublime,  
Who worked for Human Liberty, are greatest.

And now for one who allied will to work,  
And thought to act, and burning speech to  
thought ;  
Who gained the prizes that were seen by  
Burke —  
Burke felt the wrong — O'Connell felt, and  
fought.

Ever the same — from boyhood up to death :

His race was crushed — his people were  
defamed ;

He found the spark, and fanned it with his  
breath,

And fed the fire, till all the nation flamed !

He roused the farms — he made the serf a  
yeoman ;

He drilled his millions and he faced the foe ;

But not with lead or steel he struck the foeman :

Reason the sword — and human right the blow.

He fought for home — but no land-limit bounded

O'Connell's faith, nor curbed his sympathies ;

All wrong to liberty must be confounded,

Till men were chainless as the winds and seas.

He fought for faith — but with no narrow spirit ;

With ceaseless hand the bigot laws he smote ;

One chart, he said, all mankind should inherit,—

The right to worship and the right to vote.

Always the same — but yet a glinting prism :  
In wit, law, statecraft, still a master-hand ;  
An “uncrowned king,” whose people’s love was  
    chrism ;  
His title — Liberator of his Land !

“His heart’s in Rome, his spirit is in heaven” —  
So runs the old song that his people sing ;  
A tall Round Tower they builded in Glasnevin —  
Fit Irish headstone for an Irish king !

## VII.

O Motherland ! there is no cause to doubt thee :  
Thy mark is left on every shore to-day.  
Though grief and wrong may cling like robes  
    about thee,  
Thy motherhood will keep thee queen alway.  
In faith and patience working, and believing  
Not power alone can make a noble state :

Whate'er the land, though all things else con-  
ceiving,

Unless it breed great men, it is not great.

Go on; dear land, and midst the generations

Send out strong men to cry the word aloud ;

Thy niche is empty still amidst the nations —

Go on in faith, and God must raise the cloud.

## THE FLYING DUTCHMAN.

LONG time ago, from Amsterdam a vessel sailed  
away, —

As fair a ship as ever flung aside the laughing  
spray.

Upon the shore were tearful eyes, and scarfs were  
in the air,

As to her, o'er the Zuyder Zee, went fond adieu  
and prayer ;

And brave hearts, yearning shoreward from the  
outward-going ship,

Felt lingering kisses clinging still to tear-wet cheek  
and lip.

She steered for some far eastern clime, and, as she  
skimmed the seas,

Each taper mast was bending like a rod before the  
breeze.

Her captain was a stalwart man, — an iron heart  
had he, —

From childhood's days he sailed upon the rolling  
Zuyder Zee:

He nothing feared upon the earth, and scarcely  
heaven feared,

He would have dared and done whatever mortal  
man had dared!

He looked aloft, where high in air the pennant cut  
the blue,

And every rope and spar and sail was firm and  
strong and true.

He turned him from the swelling sail to gaze upon  
the shore, —

Ah! little thought the skipper then 'twould meet  
his eye no more:

He dreamt not that an awful doom was hanging  
o'er his ship,

That Vanderdecken's name would yet make pale  
the speaker's lip.

The vessel bounded on her way, and spire and  
dome went down, —



Ere darkness fell, beneath the wave had sunk the  
distant town.

No more, no more, ye hapless crew, shall Holland  
meet your eye.

In lingering hope and keen suspense, maid, wife,  
and child shall die !

Away, away the vessel speeds, till sea and sky  
alone

Are round her, as her course she steers across the  
torrid zone.

Away, until the North Star fades, the Southern  
Cross is high,

And myriad gems of brightest beam are sparkling  
in the sky.

The tropic winds are left behind ; she nears the  
Cape of Storms,

Where awful Tempest ever sits enthroned in wild  
alarms ;

Where Ocean in his anger shakes aloft his foamy  
crest,

Disdainful of the weakly toys that ride upon his  
breast.

Fierce swell the winds and waters round the Dutch-  
man's gallant ship,  
But, to their rage, defiance rings from Vander-  
decken's lip :  
Impotent they to make him swerve, their might he  
dares despise,  
As straight he holds his onward course, and wind  
and wave defies.  
For days and nights he struggles in the wierd,  
unearthly fight.  
His brow is bent, his eye is fierce, but looks of deep  
affright  
Amongst the mariners go round, as hopelessly they  
steer :  
They do not dare to murmur, but they whisper  
what they fear.  
Their black-browed captain awes them : 'neath his  
darkened eye they quail,  
And in a grim and sullen mood their bitter fate  
bewail.  
As some fierce rider ruthless spurs a timid, wav-  
ering horse,

He drives his shapely vessel, and they watch the  
reckless course,  
Till once again their skipper's laugh is flung upon  
the blast :  
The placid ocean smiles beyond, the dreaded Cape  
is passed !

Away across the Indian main the vessel northward  
glides ;  
A thousand murmuring ripples break along her  
graceful sides :  
The perfumed breezes fill her sails, — her destined  
port she nears, —  
The captain's brow has lost its frown, the mariners  
their fears.  
“ Land ho ! ” at length the welcome sound the  
watchful sailor sings,  
And soon within an Indian bay the ship at anchor  
swings.  
Not idle then the busy crew : ere long the spacious  
hold  
Is emptied of its western freight, and stored with  
silk and gold.

Again the ponderous anchor's weighed; the shore  
is left behind,

The snowy sails are bosomed out before the favor-  
ing wind.

Across the warm blue Indian sea the vessel south-  
ward flies,

And once again the North Star fades and Austral  
beacons rise.

For home she steers! she seems to know and  
answer to the word,

And swifter skims the burnished deep, like some  
fair ocean-bird.

"For home! for home!" the merry crew with  
gladsome voices cry,

And dark-browed Vanderdecken has a mild light  
in his eye.

But once again the Cape draws near, and furious  
billows rise;

And still the daring Dutchman's laugh the hurri-  
cane defies.

But wildly shrieked the tempest ere the scornful  
sound had died,

A warning to the daring man to curb his impious  
pride.

A crested mountain struck the ship, and like a  
frighted bird

She trembled 'neath the awful shock. Then Van-  
derdecken heard

A pleading voice within the gale, — his better an-  
gel spoke,

But fled before his scowling look, as mast-high  
mountains broke

Around the trembling vessel, till the crew with  
terror paled ;

But Vanderdecken never flinched, nor 'neath the  
thunders quailed.

With folded arms and stern-pressed lips, dark anger  
in his eye,

He answered back the threatening frown that  
lowered o'er the sky.

With fierce defiance in his heart, and scornful look  
of flame,

He spoke, and thus with impious voice blasphemed  
God's holy name : —

"Howl on, ye winds ! ye tempests, howl ! your  
rage is spent in vain :

Despite your strength, your frowns, your hate, I'll  
ride upon the main.

Defiance to your idle shrieks ! I'll sail upon my  
path :

I cringe not for thy Maker's smile, — I care not for  
His wrath ! "

He ceased. An awful silence fell : the tempest  
and the sea

Were hushed in sudden stillness by the Ruler's  
dread decree.

The ship was riding motionless within the gather-  
ing gloom ;

The Dutchman stood upon the poop and heard his  
dreadful doom.

The hapless crew were on the deck in swooning  
terror prone, —

They, too, were bound in fearful fate. In angered  
thunder-tone

The judgment words swept o'er the sea: "Go,  
wretch, accurst, condemned!

Go sail for ever on the deep, by shrieking tempests  
hemmed.

No home, no port, no calm, no rest, no gentle  
fav'ring breeze,

Shall ever greet thee. Go, accurst! and battle  
with the seas!

Go, braggart! struggle with the storm, nor ever  
cease to live,

But bear a million times the pangs that death and  
fear can give.

Away! and hide thy guilty head, a curse to all thy  
kind

Who ever see thee struggling, wretch, with ocean  
and with wind.

Away, presumptuous worm of earth! Go teach  
thy fellow-worms

The awful fate that waits on him who braves the  
King of Storms!"

'Twas o'er. A lurid lightning flash lit up the sea  
and sky  
Around and o'er the fated ship; then rose a wail-  
ing cry  
From every heart within her, of keen anguish and  
despair;  
But mercy was for them no more, — it died away  
in air.

Once more the lurid light gleamed out, — the ship  
was still at rest,  
The crew were standing at their posts; with arms  
across his breast  
Still stood the captain on the poop, but bent and  
crouching now  
He bowed beneath that fiat dread, and o'er his  
swarthy brow  
Swept lines of anguish, as if he a thousand years  
of pain  
Had lived and suffered. Then across the heaving,  
angry main



The tempest shrieked triumphant, and the angry  
waters hissed

Their vengeful hate against the toy they oftentimes  
had kissed.

And ever through the midnight storm that hapless  
crew must speed :

They try to round the stormy Cape, but never can  
succeed.

And oft when gales are wildest, and the lightning's  
vivid sheen

Flashes back the ocean's anger, still the Phantom  
Ship is seen

Ever sailing to the southward in the fierce tor-  
nado's swoop,

With her ghostly crew and canvas, and her captain  
on the poop,

Unrelenting, unforgiven ; and 'tis said that every  
word

Of his blasphemous defiance still upon the gale is  
heard !

But Heaven help the ship near which the dismal  
sailor steers, —

The doom of those is sealed to whom that Phantom Ship appears:

They'll never reach their destined port, — they'll  
see their homes no more, —

They who see the Flying Dutchman — never,  
never reach the shore!

## UNCLE NED'S TALE.

## AN OLD DRAGOON'S STORY.

I OFTEN, musing, wander back to days long  
since gone by,

And far-off scenes and long-lost forms arise to  
fancy's eye.

A group familiar now I see, who all but one are  
fled,—

My mother, sister Jane, myself, and dear old Uncle  
Ned.

I'll tell you how I see them now. First, mother  
in her chair

Sits knitting by the parlor fire, with anxious matron  
air ;

My sister Jane, just nine years old, is seated at her  
feet,

With look demure, as if she, too, were thinking  
how to meet

The butcher's or the baker's bill, — though not a  
thought has she  
Of aught beside her girlish toys ; and next to her  
I see  
Myself, a sturdy lad of twelve, — neglectful of the  
book  
That open lies upon my knee, — my fixed admir-  
ing look  
At Uncle Ned, upon the left, whose upright, mar-  
tial mien,  
Whose empty sleeve and gray moustache, proclaim  
what he has been.  
My mother I had always loved ; my father then  
was dead ;  
But 'twas more than love — 'twas worship — I felt  
for Uncle Ned.  
Such tales he had of battle-fields, — the victory  
and the rout,  
The ringing cheer, the dying shriek, the loud  
exulting shout !  
And how, forgetting age and wounds, his eye  
would kindle bright,

When telling of some desperate ride or close and  
deadly fight !

But oft I noticed, in the midst of some wild martial  
tale,

To which I lent attentive ear, my mother's cheek  
grow pale :

She sighed to see my kindled look, and feared I  
might be led

To follow in the wayward steps of poor old Uncle  
Ned.

But with all the wondrous tales he told, 'twas  
strange I never heard

Of his last fight, for of that day he never spoke a  
word.

And yet 'twas there he lost his arm, and once he  
e'en confessed

'Twas there he won the glittering cross he wore  
upon his breast.

It hung the centre of a group of Glory's emblems  
fair,

And royal hands, he told me once, had placed the  
bauble there.

Each day that passed I hungered more to hear  
about that fight,  
And oftentimes I prayed in vain. At length, one  
winter's night, —  
The very night I speak of now, — with more than  
usual care  
I filled his pipe, then took my stand beside my  
uncle's chair:  
I fixed my eyes upon the Cross, — he saw my youth-  
ful plan;  
And, smiling, laid the pipe aside and thus the tale  
began: —

“ Well, boy, it was in summer time, and just at  
morning's light  
We heard the ‘ Boot and Saddle!’ sound: the foe  
was then in sight,  
Just winding round a distant hill and opening on  
the plain.  
Each trooper looked with careful eye to girth and  
curb and rein.

We snatched a hasty breakfast,—we were old  
campaigners then :

That morn, of all our splendid corps, we 'd scarce  
one hundred men ;

But they were soldiers, tried and true, who 'd  
rather die than yield :

The rest were scattered far and wide o'er many a  
hard-fought field.

Our trumpet now rang sharply out, and at a  
swinging pace

We left the bivouac behind ; and soon the eye  
could trace

The columns moving o'er the plain. Oh ! 'twas a  
stirring sight

To see two mighty armies there preparing for the  
fight :

To watch the heavy masses, as, with practised,  
steady wheel,

They opened out in slender lines of brightly flash-  
ing steel.

Our place was on the farther flank, behind some  
rising ground,

That hid the stirring scene from view ; but soon a  
booming sound

Proclaimed the opening of the fight. Then war's  
loud thunder rolled,

And hurtling shells and whistling balls their deadly  
message told.

We hoped to have a gallant day ; our hearts were  
all aglow ;

We longed for one wild, sweeping charge, to chase  
the flying foe.

Our troopers marked the hours glide by, but still  
no orders came :

They clutched their swords, and muttered words  
'twere better not to name.

For hours the loud artillery roared, — the sun was  
at its height, —

Still there we lay behind that hill, shut out from  
all the fight !

We heard the maddened charging yells, the ringing  
British cheers,

And all the din of glorious war kept sounding in  
our ears.



Our hearts with fierce impatience throbbed, we  
cursed the very hill

That hid the sight: the evening fell, and we were  
idle still.

The horses, too, were almost wild, and told with  
angry snort

And blazing eye their fierce desire to join the  
savage sport.

When lower still the sun had sunk, and with it  
all our hope,

A horseman, soiled with smoke and sweat, came  
dashing down the slope.

He bore the wished-for orders. 'At last!' our  
Colonel cried;

And as he read the brief despatch his glance was  
filled with pride.

Then he who bore the orders, in a low, emphatic  
tone,

The stern, expressive sentence spoke, — '*He said it  
must be done!*'

'It *shall* be done!' our Colonel cried. 'Men, look  
to strap and girth,

We 've work to do this day will prove what every  
man is worth ;  
Ay, work, my lads, will make amends for all our  
long delay, —  
The General says on us depends the fortune of the  
day !'

“No order needed we to mount, — each man was  
in his place,  
And stern and dangerous was the look on every  
veteran face.  
We trotted sharply up the hill, and halted on the  
brow,  
And then that glorious field appeared. Oh ! lad,  
I see it now !  
But little time had we to spare for idle gazing then :  
Beneath us, in the valley, stood a dark-clad mass of  
men :  
It cut the British line in two. Our Colonel shouted,  
'There !  
Behold your work ! Our orders are *to charge and  
break that square !*'

Each trooper drew a heavy breath, then gathered  
up his reins,  
And pressed the helmet o'er his brow ; the horses  
tossed their manes  
In protest fierce against the curb, and spurned the  
springy heath,  
Impatient for the trumpet's sound to bid them rush  
to death.

“ Well, boy, that moment seemed an hour : at last  
we heard the words, —  
‘ Dragoons ! I know you ’ll follow me. Ride steady,  
men ! Draw swords ! ’  
The trumpet sounded : off we dashed, at first with  
steady pace,  
But growing swifter as we went. Oh ! ’twas a  
gallant race !  
Three-fourths the ground was left behind : the loud  
and thrilling ‘ Charge ! ’  
Rang out ; but, fairly frantic now, we needed **not**  
to urge

With voice or rein our gallant steeds, or touch  
their foaming flanks.

They seemed to fly. Now straight in front appeared  
the kneeling ranks.

Above them waved a standard broad : we saw their  
rifles raised, —

A moment more, with awful crash, the deadly  
volley blazed.

The bullets whistled through our ranks, and many  
a trooper fell ;

But we were left. What cared we then ? but on-  
ward rushing still !

Again the crash roared fiercely out ; but on ! still  
madly on !

We heard the shrieks of dying men, but recked not  
who was gone.

We gored the horses' foaming flanks, and on through  
smoke and glare

We wildly dashed, with clenched teeth. We had  
no thought, no care !

Then came a sudden, sweeping rush. Again with  
savage heel

I struck my horse : with awful bound he rose right  
o'er their steel !

“ Well, boy, I cannot tell you how that dreadful  
leap was made,

But there I rode, inside the square, and grasped a  
reeking blade.

I cared not that I was alone, my eyes seem filled  
with blood :

I never thought a man could feel in such a mur-  
derous mood.

I parried not, nor guarded thrusts ; I felt not pain  
or wound,

But madly spurred the frantic horse, and swept my  
sword around.

I tried to reach the standard sheet ; but there at  
last was foiled.

The gallant horse was jaded now, and from the  
steel recoiled.

They saw his fright, and pressed him then : his  
terror made him rear,

And falling back he crushed their ranks, and broke  
their guarded square !

My comrades saw the gap he made, and soon came  
dashing in ;

They raised me up, — I felt no hurt, but mingled  
in the din.

I'd seen some fearful work before, but never was  
engaged

In such a wild and savage fight as now around me  
raged.

The foe had ceased their firing, and now plied the  
deadly steel :

Though all our men were wounded then, no pain  
they seemed to feel.

No groans escaped from those who fell, but horrid  
oaths instead,

And scowling looks of hate were on the features  
of the dead.

The fight was round the standard : though outnumbered  
ten to one,

We held our ground, — ay, more than that, — we  
still kept pushing on.

Our men now made a desperate rush to take the  
flag by storm.

I seized the pole, a blow came down and crushed  
my outstretched arm.

I felt a sudden thrill of pain, but that soon passed  
away ;

And, with a devilish thirst for blood, again I joined  
the fray.

At last we rallied all our strength, and charged o'er  
heaps of slain :

Some fought to death ; some wavered, — then fled  
across the plain.

“ Well, boy, the rest is all confused : there was a  
fearful rout ;

I saw our troopers chase the foe, and heard their  
maddened shout.

Then came a blank : my senses reeled, I know not  
how I fell ;

I seemed to grapple with a foe, but that I cannot  
tell.

My mind was gone : when it came back I saw the  
moon on high ;

Around me all was still as death. I gazed up at  
the sky,

And watched the glimmering stars above, — so  
quiet did they seem, —

And all that dreadful field appeared like some wild,  
fearful dream.

But memory soon came back again, and cleared my  
wandering brain,

And then from every joint and limb shot fiery darts  
of pain.

My throat was parched, the burning thirst increased  
with every breath ;

I made no effort to arise, but wished and prayed for  
death.

My bridle arm was broken, and lay throbbing on  
the sward,

But something still my right hand grasped : I  
thought it was my sword.

I raised my hand to cast it off, — no reeking blade  
was there ;

Then life and strength returned, — I held the  
Standard of the Square !

With bounding heart I gained my feet. Oh ! then  
I wished to live,



'Twas strange the strength and love of life that  
standard seemed to give!

I gazed around: far down the vale I saw a camp-  
fire's glow.

With wandering step I ran that way,—I recked  
not friend or foe.

Though stumbling now o'er heaps of dead, now  
o'er a stiffened horse,

I heeded not, but watched the light, and held my  
onward course.

But soon that flash of strength had failed, and  
checked my feverish speed;

Again my throat was all ablaze, my wounds began  
to bleed.

I knew that if I fell again, my chance of life was  
gone,

So, leaning on the standard-pole, I still kept strug-  
gling on.

At length I neared the camp-fire: there were scar-  
let jackets round,

And swords and brazen helmets lay strewn upon  
the ground.

Some distance off, in order ranged, stood men,—  
about a score :

O God! 'twas all that now remained of my old  
gallant corps!

The muster-roll was being called: to every well-  
known name

I heard the solemn answer,—‘Dead!’ At length  
my own turn came.

I paused to hear,—a comrade answered, ‘Dead!  
I saw him fall!’

I could not move another step, I tried in vain to call.  
My life was flowing fast, and all around was gather-  
ing haze,

And o’er the heather tops I watched my comrades’  
cheerful blaze.

I thought such anguish as I felt was more than man  
could bear.

O God! it was an awful thing to die with help so  
near!

And death was stealing o’er me: with the strength  
of wild despair

I raised the standard o’er my head, and waved it  
through the air.

Then all grew dim : the fire, the men, all vanished  
from my sight,

My senses reeled ; I know no more of that eventful  
night.

'Twas weeks before my mind came back : I knew  
not where I lay,

But kindly hands were round me, and old comrades  
came each day.

They told me how the waving flag that night had  
caught their eye,

And how they found me bleeding there, and thought  
that I must die ;

They brought me all the cheering news, — the war  
was at an end.

No wonder 'twas, with all their care, I soon began  
to mend.

The General came to see me, too, with all his bril-  
liant train,

But what he said, or how I felt, to tell you now  
'twere vain.

Enough, I soon grew strong again : the wished-for  
route had come,

And all the gallant veteran troops set out with  
cheers for home.

We soon arrived ; and then, my lad, 'twould thrill  
your heart to hear

How England welcomed home her sons with many  
a ringing cheer.

But tush ! what boots it now to speak of what was  
said or done ?

The victory was dearly bought, our bravest hearts  
were gone.

Ere long the King reviewed us. Ah ! that memory  
is sweet !

They made me bear the foreign flag, and lay it at  
his feet.

I parted from my brave old corps : 'twere matter,  
lad, for tears,

To leave the kind old comrades I had ridden with  
for years.

I was no longer fit for war, my wanderings had to  
cease.

There, boy, I've told you all my tales. Now let  
me smoke in peace."

How vivid grows the picture now ! how bright  
each scene appears !

I trace each loved and long-lost face with eyes be-  
dimmed in tears.

How plain I hear thee, Uncle Ned, and see thy  
musing look,

Comparing all thy glory to the curling wreaths of  
smoke !

A truer, braver soldier ne'er for king and country  
bled.

His wanderings are for ever o'er. God rest thee,  
Uncle Ned !

## UNCLE NED'S TALES.

## HOW THE FLAG WAS SAVED.\*

'T WAS a dismal winter's evening, fast without  
came down the snow,  
But within, the cheerful fire cast a ruddy, genial  
glow  
O'er our pleasant little parlor, that was then my  
mother's pride.  
There she sat beside the glowing grate, my sister  
by her side ;  
And beyond, within the shadow, in a cosy little  
nook  
Uncle Ned and I were sitting, and in whispering  
tones we spoke.  
I was asking for a story he had promised me to  
tell,—

\* An incident from the record of the Enniskillen Dragoons in Spain, under General Picton.

Of his comrade, old Dick Hilton, how he fought  
and how he fell ;

And with eager voice I pressed him, till a mighty  
final cloud

Blew he slowly, then upon his breast his grisly  
head he bowed,

And, musing, stroked his gray mustache ere he  
began to speak,

Then brushed a tear that stole along his bronzed  
and furrowed cheek.

“ Ah, no ! I will not speak to-night of that sad  
tale,” he cried :

“ Some other time I'll tell you, boy, about that  
splendid ride.

Your words have set me thinking of the many care-  
less years

That comrade rode beside me, and have caused  
these bitter tears ;

For I loved him, boy, — for twenty years we gal-  
loped rein to rein, —

In peace and war, through all that time, stanch  
comrades had we been.

As boys we rode together when our soldiering first  
began,

And in all those years I knew him for a true and  
trusty man.

One who never swerved from danger, — for he knew  
not how to fear, —

If grim Death arrayed his legions, Dick would  
charge him with a cheer.

He was happiest in a struggle or a wild and dan-  
gerous ride :

Every inch a trooper was he, and he cared for  
naught beside.

He was known for many a gallant deed : to-night  
I'll tell you one,

And no braver feat of arms was by a soldier ever  
done.

'Twas when we were young and fearless, for 'twas  
in our first campaign,

When we galloped through the orange groves and  
fields of sunny Spain.

Our wary old commander was retiring from the  
foe,



Who came pressing close upon us, with a proud,  
exulting show.

We could hear their taunting laughter, and within  
our very sight

Did they ride defiant round us,—ay, and dared us  
to the fight.

But brave old Picton heeded not, but held his  
backward track,

And smiling said the day would come to pay the  
Frenchmen back.

And come it did: one morning, long before the  
break of day,

We were standing to our arms, all ready for the  
coming fray.

Soon the sun poured down his glory on the hostile  
lines arrayed,

And his beams went flashing brightly back from  
many a burnished blade,

Soon to change its spotless lustre for a reeking  
crimson stain,

In some heart, then throbbing proudly, that will  
never throb again

When that sun has reached his zenith, life and  
pride will then have fled,  
And his beams will mock in splendor o'er the  
ghastly heaps of dead.  
Oh, 'tis sad to think how many — but I wander,  
lad, I fear ;  
And, though the moral's good, I guess the tale  
you'd rather hear.  
Well, I said that we were ready, and the foe was  
ready, too ;  
Soon the fight was raging fiercely, — thick and fast  
the bullets flew,  
With a bitter hiss of malice, as if hungry for the  
life  
To be torn from manly bosoms in the maddening  
heat of strife.  
Distant batteries were thundering, pouring grape  
and shell like rain,  
And the cruel missiles hurtled with their load of  
death and pain,  
Which they carried, like fell demons, to the heart  
of some brigade,

Where the sudden, awful stillness told the havoc  
they had made.

Thus the struggle raged till noon, and neither side  
could vantage show ;

Then the tide of battle turned, and swept in favor  
of the foe !

Fiercer still the cannon thundered, — wilder  
screamed the grape and shell, —

Onward pressed the French battalions, — back the  
British masses fell !

Then, as on its prey devoted, fierce the hungered  
vulture swoops,

Swung the foeman's charging squadrons down upon  
our broken troops.

Victory hovered o'er their standard, — on they  
swept with maddened shout,

Spreading death and havoc round them, till retreat  
was changed to rout !

'Twas a saddening sight to witness ; and, when  
Picton saw them fly,

Grief and shame were mixed and burning in the  
old commander's eye.

We were riding in his escort, close behind him, on  
a height  
Which the fatal field commanded; thence we  
viewed the growing flight.

“ But, my lad, I now must tell you something more  
about that hill,  
And I'll try to make you see the spot as I can see  
it still.

Right before us, o'er the battle-field, the fall was  
sheer and steep;

On our left the ground fell sloping, in a pleasant,  
grassy sweep,

Where the aides went dashing swiftly, bearing  
orders to and fro,

For by that sloping side alone they reached the  
plain below.

On our right — now pay attention, boy — a yawn-  
ing fissure lay,

As if an earthquake's shock had split the moun-  
tain's side away.

And in the dismal gulf, far down, we heard the  
angry roar

Of a foaming mountain torrent, that, mayhap, the  
cleft had wore,  
As it rushed for countless ages through its black  
and secret lair ;  
But no matter how 'twas formed, my lad, the  
yawning gulf was there.  
And from the farther side a stone projected o'er the  
gorge, —  
'Twas strange to see the massive rock just balanced  
on the verge ;  
It seemed as if an eagle's weight the ponderous  
mass of stone  
Would topple from its giddy height, and send it  
crashing down.  
It stretched far o'er the dark abyss ; but, though  
'twere footing good,  
'Twas twenty feet or more from off the side on  
which we stood.  
Beyond the cleft a gentle slope went down and  
joined the plain, —  
Now, lad, back to where we halted, and again  
resume the rein.

I said our troops were routed. Far and near they  
broke and fled,  
The grape-shot tearing through them, leaving lanes  
of mangled dead.  
All order lost, they left the fight, — they threw  
their arms away,  
And joined in one wild panic rout, — ah ! 'twas a  
bitter day !

“ But did I say that *all* was lost ? Nay, one brave  
corps stood fast,  
Determined they would never fly, but fight it to  
the last.  
They barred the Frenchman from his prey, and  
his whole fury braved, —  
One brief hour could they hold their ground, the  
army might be saved.  
Fresh troops were hurrying to our aid, — we saw  
their glittering head, —  
Ah, God ! how those brave hearts were raked by  
the death-shower of lead !  
But stand they did : they never flinched nor took  
one backward stride,

They sent their bayonets home, and then with  
stubborn courage died.

But few were left of that brave band when the  
dread hour had passed,

Still, faint and few, they held their flag above them  
to the last.

But now a cloud of horsemen, like a shadowy  
avalanche,

Sweeps down: as Picton sees them, e'en his cheek  
is seen to blanch.

They were not awed, that little band, but rallied  
once again,

And sent us back a farewell cheer. Then burst  
from reckless men

The anguished cry, 'God help them!' as we saw  
the feeble flash

Of their last defiant volley, when upon them with  
a crash

Burst the gleaming lines of riders, — one by one  
they disappear,

And the chargers' hoofs are trampling on the last  
of that brave square!

On swept the squadrons ! Then we looked where  
last the band was seen :

A scarlet heap was all that marked the place where  
they had been !

Still forward spurred the horsemen, eager to complete the rout ;

But our lines had been re-formed now, and five  
thousand guns belched out

A reception to the squadrons, — rank on rank was  
piled that day,

Every bullet hissed out ‘ Vengeance ! ’ as it whistled on its way.

“ And now it was, with maddened hearts, we saw  
a galling sight :

A French hussar was riding close beneath us on  
the right, —

He held a British standard ! With insulting shout  
he stood,

And waved the flag, — its heavy folds drooped  
down with shame and blood, —

The blood of hearts unconquered : ’twas the flag  
of the stanch corps



That had fought to death beneath it, — it was heavy  
with their gore.

The foreign dog ! I see him as he holds the  
standard down,

And makes his charger trample on its colors and  
its crown !

But his life soon paid the forfeit : with a cry of  
rage and pain,

Hilton dashes from the escort, like a tiger from his  
chain.

Nought he sees but that insulter ; and he strikes  
his frightened horse

With his clenched hand, and spurs him, with a  
bitter-spoken curse,

Straight as bullet from a rifle — but, great Lord !  
he has not seen,

In his angry thirst for vengeance, the black gulf  
that lies between !

All our warning shouts unheeded, starkly on he  
headlong rides,

And lifts his horse, with bloody spurs deep buried  
in his sides.

God's mercy ! does he see the gulf? Ha ! now his  
purpose dawns

Upon our minds, as nearer still the rocky fissure  
yawns :

Where from the farther side the stone leans o'er  
the stream beneath,

He means to take the awful leap ! Cold horror  
checks our breath,

And still and mute we watch him now : he nears  
the fearful place ;

We hear him shout to cheer the horse, and keep  
the headlong pace.

Then comes a rush, — short strides, — a blow ! —  
the horse bounds wildly on,

Springs high in air o'er the abyss, and lands  
upon the stone !

It trembles, topples 'neath their weight ! it sinks !  
ha ! bravely done !

Another spring, — they gain the side, — the pon-  
derous rock is gone

With crashing roar, a thousand feet, down to the  
flood below,

And Hilton, heedless of its noise, is riding at the  
foe!

“The Frenchman stared in wonder: he was brave,  
and would not run,

’Twould merit but a coward’s brand to turn and  
fly from one.

But still he shuddered at the glance from ’neath  
that knitted brow:

He knew ’twould be a death fight, but there was  
no shrinking now.

He pressed his horse to meet the shock: straight at  
him Hilton made,

And as they closed the Frenchman’s cut fell harm-  
less on his blade;

But scarce a moment’s time had passed ere, spur-  
ring from the field,

A troop of cuirassiers closed round and called on  
him to yield.

One glance of scorn he threw them, — all his answer  
in a frown, —

And riding at their leader with one sweep he cut  
him down;

Then aimed at him who held the flag a cut of  
crushing might,  
And split him to the very chin! — a horrid, ghastly  
sight!  
He seized the standard from his hand; but now  
the Frenchmen close,  
And that stout soldier, all alone, fights with a  
hundred foes!  
They cut and cursed, — a dozen swords were whis-  
tling round his head;  
He could not guard on every side, — from fifty  
wounds he bled.  
His sabre crashed through helm and blade, as  
though it were a mace;  
He cut their steel cuirasses and he slashed them  
o'er the face.  
One tall dragoon closed on him, but he wheeled  
his horse around,  
And cloven through the helmet went the trooper  
to the ground.  
But his sabre blade was broken by the fury of the  
blow,

And he hurled the useless, bloody hilt against the  
nearest foe ;  
Then furl'd the colors round the pole, and, like a  
levelled lance,  
He charged with that red standard through the  
bravest troops of France!  
His horse, as lion-hearted, scarcely needed to be  
urged,  
And steed and rider bit the dust before him as he  
charged.  
Straight on he rode, and down they went, till he  
had cleared the ranks,  
Then once again he loosed the rein and struck his  
horse's flanks.  
A cheer broke from the French dragoons, — a loud,  
admiring shout! —  
As off he rode, and o'er him shook the tattered  
colors out.  
Still might they ride him down : they scorned to fire  
or to pursue, —  
Brave hearts ! they cheered him to our lines, —  
their army cheering, too !

And we — what did we do? you ask. Well, boy,  
we did not cheer,

Nor not one sound of welcome reached our hero  
comrade's ear ;

But, as he rode along the ranks, each soldier's head  
was bare, —

Our hearts were far too full for cheers, — we wel-  
comed him with prayer.

Ah! boy, we loved that dear old flag, — ay, loved  
it so, we cried

Like children, as we saw it wave in all its tattered  
pride!

No, boy, no cheers to greet him, though he played  
a noble part, —

We only prayed 'God bless him!' but that prayer  
came from the heart.

He knew we loved him for it, — he could see it in  
our tears, —

And such silent earnest love as that is better, boy,  
than cheers.

Next day we fought the Frenchman, and we drove  
him back, of course,

Though we lost some goodly soldiers, and old Pic-  
ton lost a horse.

But there I've said enough: your mother's warn-  
ing finger shook, —

Mind, never be a soldier, boy! — now let me have  
a smoke."

## HAUNTED BY TIGERS.

NATHAN BEANS and William Lambert were  
two wild New England boys,  
Known from infancy to revel only in forbidden  
joys.

Many a mother of Nantucket bristled when she  
heard them come,

With a horrid skulking whistle, tempting her good  
lad from home.

But for all maternal bristling little did they seem to  
care,

And they loved each other dearly, did this good-for-  
nothing pair.

So they lived till eighteen summers found them in  
the same repute, —

They had well-developed muscles, and loose char-  
acters to boot.



Then they did what wild Nantucket boys have  
never failed to do, —  
Went and filled two oily bunks among a whaler's  
oily crew.  
And the mothers, — ah! they raised their hands  
and blessed the lucky day,  
While Nantucket waved its handkerchief to see  
them sail away.

On a four years' cruise they started in the brave old  
"Patience Parr,"  
And were soon initiated in the mysteries of tar.  
There they found the truth that whalers' tales are  
unsubstantial wiles, —  
They were sick and sore and sorry ere they passed  
the Western Isles;  
And their captain, old-man Sculpin, gave their  
fancies little scope,  
For he argued with a marlinspike and reasoned  
with a rope.

But they stuck together bravely, they were Ish-  
maels with the crew :

Nathan's voice was never raised but Bill's support  
was uttered too ;  
And whenever Beans was floored by Sculpin's cruel  
marlinspike,  
Down beside him went poor Lambert, for his hand  
was clenched to strike.  
So they passed two years in cruising, till one breath-  
less burning day  
The old " Patience Parr " in Sunda Straits \* with  
flapping canvas lay.  
On her starboard side Sumatra's woods were dark  
beneath the glare,  
And on her port stretched Java, slumbering in the  
yellow air, —  
Slumbering as the jaguar slumbers, as the tropic  
ocean sleeps,  
Smooth and smiling on its surface with a devil in  
its deeps.  
So swooned Java's moveless forest, but the jungle  
round its root.

---

\* The Straits of Sunda, seven miles wide at the southern extremity, lie between Sumatra and Java.

Knew the rustling anaconda and the tiger's padded  
foot.

There in Nature's rankest garden, Nature's worst  
alone is rife,

And a glorious land is wild-beast ruled for want of  
human life.

Scarce a harmless thing moved on it, not a living  
soul was near

From the frowning rocks of Java Head right north-  
ward to Anjier.

Crestless swells, like wind-raised canvas, made the  
whaler rise and dip,

Else she 'ay upon the water like a paralytic  
ship;

And beneath a topsail awning lay the lazy, languid  
crew,

Drinking in the precious coolness of the shadow, —  
all save two:

Two poor Ishmaels, — they were absent, Heaven  
help them! — roughly tied.

'Neath the blistering cruel sun-glare in the fore-  
chains, side by side.

Side by side as it was always, each one with a  
word of cheer

For the other, and for his sake bravely choking  
back the tear.

Side by side, their pain or pastime never yet seemed  
good for one ;

But whenever pain came, each in secret wished the  
other gone.

You who stop at home and saunter o'er your flower-  
scattered path,

With life's corners velvet-cushioned, have you seen  
a tyrant's wrath? —

Wrath, the rude and reckless demon, not the  
drawing-room display

Of an anger led by social lightning-rods upon its  
way.

Ah ! my friends, wrath's raw materials on the land  
may sometimes be,

But the manufactured article is only found at sea.

And the wrath of old-man Sculpin was of texture  
Number One :

Never absent, — when the man smiled it was hidden, but not gone.

Old church-members of Nantucket knew him for a shining lamp,

But his chronic Christian spirit was of pharisaic stamp.

When ashore, he prayed aloud of how he 'd sinned and been forgiven, —

How his evil ways had brought him 'thin an ace of losing heaven ;

Thank the Lord ! his eyes were opened, and so on ; but when the ship

Was just ready for a voyage, you could see old Sculpin's lip

Have a sort of nervous tremble, like a carter's long-leashed whip

Ere it cracks ; and so the skipper's lip was trembling for an oath

At the watch on deck for idleness, the watch below for sloth,

For the leash of his anathemas was long enough for both.

Well, 'twas burning noon off Java: Beans and  
Lambert in the chains  
Sank their heads, and all was silent but the voices  
of their pains.

Night came ere their bonds were loosened; then  
the boys sank down and slept,  
And the dew in place of loved ones on their  
wounded bodies wept.

All was still within the whaler, — on the sea no  
fanning breeze,  
And the moon alone was moving over Java's gloomy  
trees.

Midnight came, — one sleeper's waking glance went  
out the moon to meet:

Nathan rose, and turned from Lambert, who still  
slumbered at his feet.

Out toward Java went his vision, as if something  
in the air

Came with promises of kindness and of peace to  
be found there.

Then towards the davits moved he, where the  
lightest whale-boat hung ;  
And he worked with silent caution till upon the  
sea she swung,  
When he paused, and looked at Lambert, and the  
spirit in him cried  
Not to leave him, but to venture, as since child-  
hood, side by side ;  
And the spirit's cry was answered, for he touched  
the sleeper's lip,  
Who awoke and heard of Nathan's plan to leave  
th' accursed ship.

When 'twas told, they rose in silence, and looked  
outward to the land,  
But they only saw Nantucket, with its homely,  
boat-lined strand ;  
But they saw it — oh ! so plainly — through the  
glass of coming doom.  
Then they crept into the whale-boat, and pulled  
toward the forest's gloom, —  
All their suffering clear that moment, like the  
moonlight on their wake,

Now contracting, now expanding, like a phosphorescent snake.

Hours speed on : the dark horizon yet shows scarce  
a streak of gray

When old Sculpin comes on deck to walk his restlessness away.

All the scene is still and solemn, and mayhap the  
man's cold heart

Feels its teaching, for the wild-beast cries from  
shoreward make him start

As if they had warning in them, and he o'er its  
meaning pored,

Till at length one shriek from Java splits the darkness like a sword ;

And he almost screams in answer, such the nearness  
of the cry,

As he clutches at the rigging with a horror in his  
eye,

And with faltering accents mutters, as against the  
mast he leans,

*"Darn the tigers ! that one shouted with the voice of  
Nathan Beans !"*



When the boys were missed soon after, Sculpin  
never breathed a word  
Of his terror in the morning at the fearful sound  
he 'd heard ;  
But he entered in the log-book, and 'twas witnessed  
by the mates,  
Just their names, and following after, " Ran away  
in Sunda Straits."

Two years after, Captain Sculpin saw again the  
Yankee shore,  
With the comfortable feeling that he 'd go to sea no  
more.  
And 'twas strange the way he altered when he saw  
Nantucket light :  
Holy lines spread o'er his face, and chased the old  
ones out of sight.  
And for many a year thereafter did his zeal spread  
far and wide,  
And with all his pious doings was the township  
edified ;

For he led the sacred singing in an unctuous, nasal  
tone,  
And he looked as if the sermon and the Scriptures  
were his own.

But one day the white-haired preacher spoke of  
how God's justice fell  
Soon or late with awful sureness on the man whose  
heart could tell  
Of a wrong done to the widow or the orphan, and  
he said  
That such wrongs were ever living, though the  
injured ones were dead.  
And old Sculpin's heart was writhing, though his  
heavy eyes were closed, —  
For, despite his solemn sanctity, at sermon times he  
dozed ;  
But his half-awakened senses heard the preacher  
speak of death  
And of wrongs done unto orphans, and he dreamed  
with wheezing breath

That cold hands were tearing from his heart its  
pharisaic screens,  
That the preacher was a tiger with the voice of  
Nathan Beans!  
And he shrieked and jumped up wildly, and upon  
the seat stood he,  
As if standing on the whaler looking outward on  
the sea;  
And he clutched as at the rigging with a horror in  
his eye,  
For he saw the woods of Java and he heard that  
human cry,  
As he crouched and cowered earthward. And the  
simple folk around  
Stood with looks of kindly sympathy: they raised  
him from the ground,  
And they brought him half unconscious to the hum-  
ble chapel door,  
Whence he fled as from a scourging, and he entered  
it no more;  
For the sight of that old preacher brought the  
horror to his face,

And he dare not meet his neighbors' honest eyes  
within the place,  
For his conscience like a mirror rose and, showed  
the dismal scenes,  
Where the tiger yelled for ever with the voice of  
Nathan Beans.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

*Nation of sin and sin,  
Thy flowers and crimes are red,  
And thy heart is sore within  
While the glory crowns thy head.  
Land of the songless birds,  
What was thine ancient crime,  
Burning through lapse of time  
Like a prophet's cursing words ?*

*Aloes and myrrh and tears  
Mix in thy bitter wine :  
Drink, while the cup is thine,  
Drink, for the draught is sign  
Of thy reign in the coming years.*

## PROLOGUE.

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*Nor gold nor silver are the words set here,  
Nor rich-wrought chasing on design of art;  
But rugged relics of an unknown sphere  
Where fortune chanced I played one time a part.  
Unthought of here the critic blame or praise,  
These recollections all their faults atone;  
To hold the scenes, I've writ of men and ways  
Uncouth and rough as Austral ironstone.*

*It may be, I have left the higher gleams  
Of skies and flowers unheeded or forgot;  
It may be so, — but, looking back, it seems  
When I was with them I beheld them not.  
I was no rambling poet, but a man  
Hard-pressed to dig and delve, with naught of ease  
The hot day through, save when the evening's fan  
Of sea-winds rustled through the kindly trees.*

*It may be so; but when I think I smile  
At my poor hand and brain to paint the charms  
Of God's first-blazoned canvas! here the aisle  
Moonlit and deep of reaching gothic arms*

*From towering gum, mahogany, and palm,  
And odorous jam and sandal ; there the growth  
Of arm-long velvet leaves grown hoar in calm, —  
In calm unbroken since their luscious youth.*

*How can I show you all the silent birds  
With strange metallic glintings on the wing ?  
Or how tell half their sadness in cold words, —  
The poor dumb lutes, the birds that never sing ?  
Of wondrous parrot-greens and iris hue  
Of sensuous flower and of gleaming snake, —  
Ah ! what I see I long that so might you,  
But of these things what picture can I make ?*

*Sometime, maybe, a man will wander there, —  
A mind God-gifted, and not dull and weak ;  
And he will come and paint that land so fair,  
And show the beauties of which I but speak.  
But in the hard, sad days that there I spent,  
My mind absorbed rude pictures : these I show  
As best I may, and just with this intent, —  
To tell some things that all folk may not know.*



## WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

O BEAUTEOUS Southland! land of yellow  
air,

That hangeth o'er thee slumbering, and doth hold  
The moveless foliage of thy valleys fair  
And wooded hills, like aureole of gold.

O thou, discovered ere the fitting time,  
Ere Nature in completion turned thee forth!  
Ere aught was finished but thy peerless clime,  
Thy virgin breath allured the amorous North.

O land, God made thee wondrous to the eye!  
But His sweet singers thou hast never heard;  
He left thee, meaning to come by-and-bye,  
And give rich voice to every bright-winged bird.

He painted with fresh hues thy myriad flowers,  
But left them scentless : ah ! their woful dole,  
Like sad reproach of their Creator's powers, —  
To make so sweet fair bodies, void of soul.

He gave thee trees of odorous precious wood ;  
But, midst them all, bloomed not one tree of fruit.  
He looked, but said not that His work was good,  
When leaving thee all perfumeless and mute.

He blessed thy flowers with honey : every bell  
Looks earthward, sunward, with a yearning wist ;  
But no bee-lover ever notes the swell  
Of hearts, like lips, a-hungering to be kist.

O strange land, thou art virgin ! thou art more  
Than fig-tree barren ! Would that I could paint  
For others' eyes the glory of the shore  
Where last I saw thee ; but the senses faint

In soft delicious dreaming when they drain  
Thy wine of color. Virgin fair thou art,  
All sweetly fruitful, waiting with soft pain  
The spouse who comes to wake thy sleeping  
heart.

## THE DUKITE SNAKE:

A WEST AUSTRALIAN BUSHMAN'S STORY.

WELL, mate, you 've asked me about a fellow  
You met to-day, in a black-and-yellow  
Chain-gang suit, with a pedler's pack,  
Or with some such burden, strapped to his back.  
Did you meet him square? No, passed you by?  
Well, if you had, and had looked in his eye,  
You 'd have felt for your irons then and there;  
For the light in his eye is a madman's glare.  
Ay, mad, poor fellow! I know him well,  
And if you 're not sleepy just yet, I 'll tell  
His story,—a strange one as ever you heard  
Or read; but I 'll vouch for it, every word.

You just wait a minute, mate: I must see  
How that damper's doing, and make some tea.

You smoke? That's good; for there's plenty of  
weed

In that wallaby skin. Does your horse feed  
In the hobbles? Well, he's got good feed here,  
And my own old bushmare won't interfere.  
Done with that meat? Throw it there to the  
dogs,  
And fling on a couple of banksia logs.

And now for the story. That man who goes  
Through the bush with the pack and the convict's  
clothes

Has been mad for years; but he does no harm,  
And our lonely settlers feel no alarm  
When they see or meet him. Poor Dave Sloane  
Was a settler once, and a friend of my own.  
Some eight years back, in the spring of the year,  
Dave came from Scotland, and settled here.  
A splendid young fellow he was just then,  
And one of the bravest and truest men  
That I ever met: he was kind as a woman  
To all who needed a friend, and no man —

Not even a convict—met with his scorn,  
For David Sloane was a gentleman born.  
Ay, friend, a gentleman, though it sounds queer :  
There's plenty of blue blood flowing out here,  
And some younger sons of your "upper ten"  
Can be met with here, first-rate bushmen.  
Why, friend, *I*—

Bah! curse that dog! you see

This talking so much has affected me.

Well, Sloane came here with an axe and a gun;  
He bought four miles of a sandal-wood run.  
This bush at that time was a lonesome place,  
So lonesome the sight of a white man's face  
Was a blessing, unless it came at night,  
And peered in your hut, with the cunning fright  
Of a runaway convict; and even they  
Were welcome, for talk's sake, while they could  
stay.

Dave lived with me here for a while, and learned  
The tricks of the bush,—how the snare was laid  
In the wallaby track, how traps were made,

How 'possums and kangaroo rats were killed ;  
And when that was learned, I helped him to build  
From mahogany slabs a good bush hut,  
And showed him how sandal-wood logs were cut.  
I lived up there with him days and days,  
For I loved the lad for his honest ways.  
I had only one fault to find : at first  
Dave worked too hard ; for a lad who was nursed,  
As he was, in idleness, it was strange  
How he cleared that sandal-wood off his range.  
From the morning light till the light expired  
He was always working, he never tired ;  
Till at length I began to think his will  
Was too much settled on wealth, and still  
When I looked at the lad's brown face, and eye  
Clear open, my heart gave such thought the lie.  
But one day — for he read my mind — he laid  
His hand on my shoulder : “ Don't be afraid,”  
Said he, “ that I 'm seeking alone for pelf.  
I work hard, friend ; but 'tis not for myself.”

And he told me then, in his quiet tone,  
Of a girl in Scotland, who was his own, —

His wife,—’twas for her: ’twas all he could say,  
And his clear eye brimmed as he turned away.

After that he told me the simple tale:

They had married for love, and she was to sail  
For Australia when he wrote home and told  
The oft-watched-for story of finding gold.

In a year he wrote, and his news was good:  
He had bought some cattle and sold his wood.  
He said, “Darling, I’ve only a hut,—but come.”  
Friend, a husband’s heart is a true-wife’s home;  
And he knew she’d come. Then he turned his hand  
To make neat the house, and prepare the land  
For his crops and vines; and he made that place  
Put on such a smiling and homelike face,  
That when she came, and he showed her round  
His sandal-wood and his crops in the ground,  
And spoke of the future, they cried for joy,  
The husband’s arm clasping his wife and boy.

Well, friend, if a little of heaven’s best bliss  
Ever comes from the upper world to this,



It came into that manly bushman's life,  
And circled him round with the arms of his wife.  
God bless that bright memory ! Even to me,  
A rough, lonely man, did she seem to be,  
While living, an angel of God's pure love,  
And now I could pray to her face above.  
And David he loved her as only a man  
With a heart as large as was his heart can.  
I wondered how they could have lived apart,  
For he was her idol, and she his heart.

Friend, there isn't much more of the tale to tell :  
I was talking of angels awhile since. Well,  
Now I'll change to a devil, — ay, to a devil !  
You need n't start : if a spirit of evil  
Ever came to this world its hate to slake  
On mankind, it came as a Dukite Snake.

*Like ?* Like the pictures you've seen of Sin,  
A long red snake, — as if what was within  
Was fire that gleamed through his glistening  
skin.

And his eyes! — if you could go down to hell  
And come back to your fellows here and tell  
What the fire was like, you could find no thing,  
Here below on the earth, or up in the sky,  
To compare it to but a Dukite's eye!

Now, mark you, these Dukites don't go alone:  
There's another near when you see but one;  
And beware you of killing that one you see  
Without finding the other; for you may be  
More than twenty miles from the spot that night,  
When camped, but you're tracked by the lone  
Dukite,  
That will follow your trail like Death or Fate,  
And kill you as sure as you killed its mate!

Well, poor Dave Sloane had his young wife here  
Three months, — 'twas just this time of the year.  
He had teamed some sandal-wood to the Vasse,  
And was homeward bound, when he saw in the  
grass  
A long red snake: he had never been told

Of the Dukite's ways, — he jumped to the road,  
And smashed its flat head with the bullock-goad !

He was proud of the red skin, so he tied  
Its tail to the cart, and the snake's blood dyed  
The bush on the path he followed that night.

He was early home, and the dead Dukite  
Was flung at the door to be skinned next day.  
At sunrise next morning he started away  
To hunt up his cattle. A three hours' ride  
Brought him back: he gazed on his home with pride  
And joy in his heart; he jumped from his horse  
And entered — to look on his young wife's corse,  
And his dead child clutching its mother's clothes  
As in fright; and there, as he gazed, arose  
From her breast, where 'twas resting, the gleaming  
head

Of the terrible Dukite, as if it said,  
*"I've had vengeance, my foe: you took all I had."*

And so had the snake — David Sloane was mad !

I rode to his hut just by chance that night,  
And there on the threshold the clear moonlight  
Showed the two snakes dead. I pushed in the  
door

With an awful feeling of coming woe :  
The dead were stretched on the moonlit floor,  
The man held the hand of his wife, — his pride,  
His poor life's treasure, — and crouched by her  
side.

O God ! I sank with the weight of the blow.  
I touched and called him : he heeded me not,  
So I dug her grave in a quiet spot,  
And lifted them both, — her boy on her breast, —  
And laid them down in the shade to rest.  
Then I tried to take my poor friend away,  
But he cried so wofully, " Let me stay  
Till she comes again ! " that I had no heart  
To try to persuade him then to part  
From all that was left to him here, — her grave ;  
So I stayed by his side that night, and, save  
One heart-cutting cry, he uttered no sound, —  
O God ! that wail — like the wail of a hound !

'Tis six long years since I heard that cry,  
But 'twill ring in my ears till the day I die.  
Since that fearful night no one has heard  
Poor David Sloane utter sound or word.  
You have seen to-day how he always goes :  
He's been given that suit of convict's clothes  
By some prison officer. On his back  
You noticed a load like a pedler's pack ?  
Well, that's what he lives for : when reason went,  
Still memory lived, for his days are spent  
In searching for Dukites ; and year by year  
That bundle of skins is growing. 'Tis clear  
That the Lord out of evil some good still takes ;  
For he's clearing this bush of the Dukite snakes.

## THE MONSTER DIAMOND:

A TALE OF THE PENAL COLONY OF WEST AUSTRALIA.

“ I ’LL have it, I tell you ! Curse you !—there ! ”  
The long knife glittered, was sheathed, and  
was bare.

The sawyer staggered and tripped and fell,  
And falling he uttered a frightened yell :  
His face to the sky, he shuddered and gasped,  
And tried to put from him the man he had grasped  
A moment before in the terrible strife.

“ I ’ll have it, I tell you, or have your life !  
Where is it ? ” The sawyer grew weak, but still  
His brown face gleamed with a desperate will.  
“ Where is it ? ” he heard, and the red knife’s drip  
In his slayer’s hand fell down on his lip.  
“ Will you give it ? ” “ Never ! ” A curse, the knife  
Was raised and buried.

Thus closed the life  
Of Samuel Jones, known as "Number Ten"  
On his Ticket-of-Leave; and of all the men  
In the Western Colony, bond or free,  
None had manlier heart or hand than he.

In digging a sawpit, while all alone, —  
For his mate was sleeping, — Sam struck a stone  
With the edge of the spade, and it gleamed like  
fire,  
And looked at Sam from its bed in the mire,  
Till he dropped the spade and stooped and raised  
The wonderful stone that glittered and blazed  
As if it were mad at the spade's rude blow;  
But its blaze set the sawyer's heart aglow  
As he looked and trembled, then turned him round,  
And crept from the pit, and lay on the ground,  
Looking over the mould-heap at the camp  
Where his mate still slept. Then down to the  
swamp  
He ran with the stone, and washed it bright,  
And felt like a drunken man at the sight

Of a diamond pure as spring-water and sun,  
And larger than ever man's eyes looked on !

Then down sat Sam with the stone on his knees,  
And fancies came to him, like swarms of bees  
To a sugar-creamed hive ; and he dreamed awake  
Of the carriage and four in which he 'd take  
His pals from the Dials to Drury Lane,  
The silks and the satins for Susan Jane,  
The countless bottles of brandy and beer  
He 'd call for and pay for, and every year  
The dinner he 'd give to the Brummagem lads, —  
He 'd be king among cracksmen and chief among  
    pads,  
And he 'd sport a —

Over him stooped his mate,  
A pick in his hand, and his face all hate.  
Sam saw the shadow, and guessed the pick,  
And closed his dream with a spring so quick  
The purpose was baffled of Aaron Mace,  
And the sawyer mates stood face to face.



Sam folded his arms across his chest,  
Having thrust the stone in his loose shirt-breast,  
While he tried to think where he dropped the spade.  
But Aaron Mace wore a long, keen blade  
In his belt, — he drew it, — sprang on his man :  
What happened, you read when the tale began.

Then he looked — the murderer, Aaron Mace —  
At the gray-blue lines in the dead man's face ;  
And he turned away, for he feared its frown  
More in death than life. Then he knelt him down, —  
Not to pray, — but he shrank from the staring eyes,  
And felt in the breast for the fatal prize.  
And this was the man, and this was the way  
That he took the stone on its natal day ;  
And for this he was cursed for evermore  
By the West Australian Koh-i-nor.

In the half-dug pit the corpse was thrown,  
And the murderer stood in the camp alone.  
Alone ? No, no ! never more was he  
To part from the terrible company

Of that gray-blue face and the bleeding breast  
And the staring eyes in their awful rest.  
The evening closed on the homicide,  
And the blood of the buried sawyer cried  
Through the night to God, and the shadows dark  
That crossed the camp had the stiff and stark  
And horrible look of a murdered man !  
Then he piled the fire, and crept within  
The ring of its light, that closed him in  
Like tender mercy, and drove away  
For a time the spectres that stood at bay,  
And waited to clutch him as demons wait,  
Shut out from the sinner by Faith's bright gate.  
But the fire burnt low, and the slayer slept,  
And the key of his sleep was always kept  
By the leaden hand of him he had slain,  
That oped the door but to drench the brain  
With agony cruel. The night wind crept  
Like a snake on the shuddering form that slept  
And dreamt, and woke and shrieked ; for there,  
With its gray-blue lines and its ghastly stare,

Cutting into the vitals of Aaron Mace,  
In the flickering light was the sawyer's face !

Evermore 'twas with him, that dismal sight, —  
The white face set in the frame of night.  
He wandered away from the spot, but found  
No inch of the West Australian ground  
Where he could hide from the bleeding breast,  
Or sink his head in a dreamless rest.

And always with him he bore the prize  
In a pouch of leather : the staring eyes  
Might burn his soul, but the diamond's gleam  
Was solace and joy for the haunted dream.

So the years rolled on, while the murderer's mind  
Was bent on a futile quest, — to find  
A way of escape from the blood-stained soil  
And the terrible wear of the penal toil.

But this was a part of the diamond's curse, —  
The toil that was heavy before grew worse,

Till the panting wretch in his fierce unrest  
Would clutch the pouch as it lay on his breast,  
And waking cower, with sob and moan,  
Or shriek wild curses against the stone  
That was only a stone ; for he could not sell,  
And he dare not break, and he feared to tell  
Of his wealth : so he bore it through hopes and  
fears —  
His God and his devil — for years and years.

And thus did he draw near the end of his race,  
With a form bent double and horror-lined face,  
And a piteous look, as if asking for grace  
Or for kindness from some one ; but no kind word  
Was flung to his misery : shunned, abhorred,  
E'en by wretches themselves, till his life was a  
curse,  
And he thought that e'en death could bring nothing  
worse  
Than the phantoms that stirred at the diamond's  
weight, —  
His own life's ghost and the ghost of his mate.

So he turned one day from the haunts of men,  
And their friendless faces : an old man then,  
In a convict's garb, with white flowing hair,  
And a brow deep seared with the word, "Despair."  
He gazed not back as his way he took  
To the untrod forest ; and oh ! the look,  
The piteous look in his sunken eyes,  
Told that life was the bitterest sacrifice.

But little was heard of his later days :  
'Twas deemed in the West that in change of ways  
He tried with his tears to wash out the sin.  
'Twas told by some natives who once came in  
From the Kojunup Hills, that lonely there  
They had seen a figure with long white hair ;  
They encamped close by where his hut was made,  
And were scared at night when they saw he prayed  
To the white man's God ; and on one wild night  
They had heard his voice till the morning light.

Years passed, and a sandalwood-cutter stood  
At a ruined hut in a Kojunup wood :

The rank weeds covered the desolate floor,  
And an ant-hill stood on the fallen door;  
The cupboard within to the snakes was loot,  
And the hearth was the home of the bandicoot.  
But neither at hut nor snake nor rat  
Was the woodcutter staring intent, but at  
A human skeleton clad in gray,  
The hands clasped over the breast, as they  
Had fallen in peace when he ceased to pray.

As the bushman looked on the form, he saw  
In the breast a paper: he stooped to draw  
What might tell him the story, but at his touch  
From under the hands rolled a leathern pouch,  
And he raised it too, — on the paper's face  
He read "Ticket-of-Leave of Aaron Mace."  
Then he opened the pouch, and in dazed surprise  
At its contents strange he unblessed his eyes:  
'*Twas a lump of quartz*, — a pound weight in full,  
And it fell from his hand on the skeleton's skull!

THE DOG GUARD: AN AUSTRALIAN  
STORY.

THERE are lonesome places upon the earth  
That have never re-echoed a sound of mirth,  
Where the spirits abide that feast and quaff  
On the shuddering soul of a murdered laugh,  
And take grim delight in the fearful start,  
As their unseen fingers clutch the heart,  
And the blood flies out from the griping pain,  
To carry the chill through every vein;  
And the staring eyes and the whitened faces  
Are a joy to these ghosts of the lonesome places.

But of all the spots on this earthly sphere  
Where these dismal spirits are strong and near,  
There is one more dreary than all the rest, —  
'Tis the barren island of Rottenest.  
On Australia's western coast, you may —  
On a seaman's chart of Fremantle Bay —

Find a tiny speck, some ten miles from shore :  
If the chart be good, there is something more, —  
For a shoal runs in on the landward side,  
With five fathoms marked for the highest tide.  
You have nought but my word for all the rest,  
But that speck is the island of Rottenest.

'Tis a white sand-heap, about two miles long,  
And say half as wide ; but the deeds of wrong  
Between man and his brother that there took place  
Are sufficient to sully a continent's face.  
Ah, cruel tales ! were they told as a whole,  
They would scare your polished humanity's soul ;  
They would blanch the cheeks in your carpeted  
    room,  
With a terrible thought of the merited doom  
For the crimes committed, still unredrest,  
On that white sand-heap called Rottenest.

Of late years the island is not so bare  
As it was when I saw it first ; for there  
On the outer headland some buildings stand,



And a flag, red-crossed, says the patch of sand  
Is a recognized part of the wide domain  
That is blessed with the peace of Victoria's reign.  
But behind the lighthouse the land's the same,  
And it bears grim proof of the white man's shame ;  
For the miniature vales that the island owns  
Have a horrible harvest of human bones !

And how did they come there ? that's the word ;  
And I'll answer it now with the tale I heard  
From the lips of a man who was there, and saw  
The bad end of man's greed and of colony law.

Many years ago, when the white man first  
Set his foot on the coast, and was hated and cursed  
By the native, who had not yet learned to fear  
The dark wrath of the stranger, but drove his spear  
With a freeman's force and a bushman's yell  
At the white invader, it then befell  
That so many were killed and cooked and eaten,  
There was risk of the whites in the end being  
    beaten ;

So a plan was proposed, — 'twas deemed safest and  
best  
To imprison the natives in Rottenest.

And so every time there was white blood spilled,  
There were black men captured; and those not  
killed

In the rage of vengeance were sent away  
To this bleak sand isle in Fremantle Bay;  
And it soon came round that a thousand men  
Were together there, like wild beasts in a pen.  
There was not a shrub or grass-blade in the sand,  
Nor a piece of timber as large as your hand;  
But a government boat went out each day  
To fling meat ashore — and then sailed away.

For a year or so was this course pursued,  
Till 'twas noticed that fewer came down for food  
When the boat appeared; then a guard lay round  
The island one night, and the white men found  
That the savages swam at the lowest tide  
To the shoal that lay on the landward side, —

'Twas a mile from the beach,—and then waded  
ashore ;

So the settlers met in grave council once more.

That a guard was needed was plain to all ;  
But nobody answered the Governor's call  
For a volunteer watch. They were only a few,  
And their wild young farms gave plenty to do ;  
And the council of settlers was breaking up,  
With a dread of the sorrow they'd have to sup  
When the savage, unawed, and for vengeance wild,  
Lay await in the wood for the mother and child.  
And with doleful countenance each to his neighbor  
Told a dreary tale of the world of labor  
He had, and said, " Let him watch who can,  
I can't ; " when there stepped to the front a  
man

With a hard brown face and a burglar's brow,  
Who had learned the secret he uttered now  
When he served in the chain-gang in New South  
Wales.

And he said to them : " Friends, as all else fails,

These 'ere natives are safe as if locked and barred,  
If you 'll line that shoal with a mastiff guard ! ”

And the settlers looked at each other awhile,  
Till the wonder toned to a well-pleased smile  
When the brown ex-burglar said he knew,  
And would show the whole of 'em what to do.

Some three weeks after, the guard was set ;  
And a native who swam to the shoal was met  
By two half-starved dogs, when a mile from  
shore, —

And, somehow, that native was never seen more.  
All the settlers were pleased with the capital plan,  
And they voted their thanks to the hard-faced  
man.

For a year, each day did the government boat  
Take the meat to the isle and its guard afloat.  
In a line, on the face of the shoal, the dogs  
Had a dry house each, on some anchored logs ;  
And the neck-chain from each stretched just half  
way

To the next dog's house ; right across the Bay  
Ran a line that was hideous with horrid sounds  
From the hungry throats of two hundred hounds.

So one more year passed, and the brutes on the logs  
Had grown more like devils than common dogs.  
There was such a hell-chorus by day and night  
That the settlers ashore were chilled with fright  
When they thought—if that legion should break  
    away,  
And come in with the tide some fatal day !

But they 'scaped that chance ; for a man came in  
From the Bush, one day, with a 'possum's skin  
To the throat filled up with large pearls he 'd found  
To the north, on the shore of the Shark's Bay  
    Sound.

And the settlement blazed with a wild commotion  
At sight of the gems from the wealthy ocean.

Then the settlers all began to pack  
'Their tools and tents, and to ask the track

That the bushman followed to strike the spot, —  
While the dogs and natives were all forgot.  
In two days, from that camp on the River Swan,  
To the Shark's Bay Sound had the settlers gone ;  
And no merciful feeling did one retard  
For the helpless men and their terrible guard.

It were vain to try, in my quiet room,  
To write down the truth of the awful doom  
That befell those savages prisoned there,  
When the pangs of hunger and wild despair  
Had nigh made them mad as the fiends outside :  
'Tis enough that one night, through the low ebb  
tide,  
Swam nine hundred savages, armed with stones  
And with weapons made from their dead friends'  
bones.  
Without ripple or sound, when the moon was gone,  
Through the inky water they glided on ;  
Swimming deep, and scarce daring to draw a breath,  
While the guards, if they saw, were as dumb as  
death.

'Twas a terrible picture ! O God ! that the night  
Were so black as to cover the horrid sight  
From the eyes of the Angel that notes man's ways  
In the book that will ope on the Day of Days !

There were screams when they met, — shrill screams  
of pain !

For each animal swam at the length of his chain,  
And with parching throat and in furious mood  
Lay awaiting, not men, but his coming food.  
There were short, sharp cries, and a line of fleck  
As the long fangs sank in the swimmer's neck ;  
There were gurgling growls mixed with human  
groans,

For the savages drave the sharpened bones  
Through their enemies' ribs, and the bodies sank,  
Each dog holding fast with a bone through his flank.

Then those of the natives who 'scaped swam back ;  
But too late ! for scores of the savage pack,  
Driven mad by the yells and the sounds of fight,  
Had broke loose and followed. On that dread night

Let the curtain fall : when the red sun rose  
From the placid ocean, the joys and woes  
Of a thousand men he had last eve seen  
Were as things or thoughts that had never been.

When the settlers returned, — in a month or two, —  
They bethought of the dogs and the prisoned crew.  
And a boat went out on a tardy quest  
Of whatever was living on Rottenest.  
They searched all the isle, and sailed back agen  
With some specimen bones of the dogs and men.



THE AMBER WHALE: A HARPOONEER'S  
STORY.

[Whalemen have a strange belief as to the formation of amber. They say that it is a petrification of some internal part of a whale; and they tell weird stories of enormous whales seen in the warm latitudes, that were almost entirely transformed into the precious substance.]

WE were down in the Indian Ocean, after  
sperm, and three years out;  
The last six months in the tropics, and looking  
in vain for a spout, —  
Five men up on the royal yards, weary of strain-  
ing their sight;  
And every day like its brother, — just morning and  
noon and night —  
Nothing to break the sameness: water and wind  
and sun  
Motionless, gentle, and blazing, — never a change  
in one.

Every day like its brother : when the noonday  
eight-bells came,  
'Twas like yesterday ; and we seemed to know  
that to-morrow would be the same.  
The foremast hands had a lazy time : there was  
never a thing to do ;  
The ship was painted, tarred down, and scraped ;  
and the mates had nothing new.  
We 'd worked at sinnet and ratline till there wasn't  
a yarn to use,  
And all we could do was watch and pray for a  
sperm whale's spout — or news.  
It was whaler's luck of the vilest sort ; and, though  
many a volunteer  
Spent his watch below on the look-out, never a  
whale came near, —  
At least of the kind we wanted : there were lots  
of whales of a sort, —  
Killers and finbacks, and such like, as if they  
enjoyed the sport  
Of seeing a whale-ship idle ; but we never lowered  
a boat

For less than a blackfish, — there's no oil in a  
killer's or finback's coat.

There was rich reward for the look-out men, —  
tobacco for even a sail,

And a barrel of oil for the lucky dog who'd be  
first to "raise" a whale.

The crew was a mixture from every land, and many  
a tongue they spoke ;

And when they sat in the fo'castle, enjoying an  
evening smoke,

There were tales told, youngster, would make you  
stare, — stories of countless shoals

Of devil-fish in the Pacific and right-whales away  
at the Poles.

There was one of these fo'castle yarns that we  
always loved to hear, —

Kanaka and Maori and Yankee ; all lent an eager  
ear

To that strange old tale that was always new, —  
the wonderful treasure-tale

Of an old Down-Eastern harpooneer who had  
struck an Amber Whale !

Ay, that was a tale worth hearing, lad : if 'twas  
true we couldn't say,  
Or if 'twas a yarn old Mat had spun to while the  
time away.

“It's just fifteen years ago,” said Mat, “since I  
shipped as harpooneer  
On board a bark in New Bedford, and came cruis-  
ing somewhere near  
To this whaling-ground we're cruising now ; but  
whales were plenty then,  
And not like now, when we scarce get oil to pay  
for the ship and men.  
There were none of these oil wells running then, —  
at least, what shore folk term  
An oil well in Pennsylvania, — but sulphur-bottom  
and sperm  
Were plenty as frogs in a mud-hole, and all of 'em  
big whales, too ;  
One hundred barrels for sperm-whales ; and for  
sulphur-bottom, two.  
You couldn't pick out a small one : the littlest  
calf or cow

Had a sight more oil than the big bull whales we  
think so much of now.

We were more to the east, off Java Straits, a little  
below the mouth, —

A hundred and five to the east'ard and nine de-  
grees to the south ;

And that was as good a whaling-ground for mid-  
dling-sized, handy whales

As any in all the ocean ; and 'twas always white  
with sails

From Scotland and Hull and New England, — for  
the whales were thick as frogs,

And 'twas little trouble to kill 'em then, for they  
lay as quiet as logs.

And every night we 'd go visiting the other whale-  
ships 'round,

Or p'r'aps we 'd strike on a Dutchman, calmed off  
the Straits, and bound

To Singapore or Batavia, with plenty of schnapps  
to sell

For a few whale's teeth or a gallon of oil, and the  
latest news to tell.

And in every ship of that whaling fleet was one  
wonderful story told, —  
How an Amber Whale had been seen that year  
that was worth a mint of gold.  
And one man — mate of a Scotchman — said he 'd  
seen, away to the west,  
A big school of sperm, and one whale's spout was  
twice as high as the rest ;  
And we knew that that was the Amber Whale, for  
we 'd often heard before  
That his spout was twice as thick as the rest, and  
a hundred feet high or more.  
And often, when the look-out cried, ' He blows ! '   
the very hail  
Thrilled every heart with the greed of gold, — for  
we thought of the Amber Whale.

“ But never a sight of his spout we saw till the sea-  
son there went round,  
And the ships ran down to the south'ard to an-  
other whaling-ground.

We stayed to the last off Java, and then we ran  
to the west,

To get our recruits at Mauritius, and give the crew  
a rest.

Five days we ran in the trade winds, and the boys  
were beginning to talk

Of their time ashore, and whether they'd have a  
donkey-ride or a walk,

And whether they'd spend their money in wine,  
bananas, or pearls,

Or drive to the sugar plantations to dance with the  
Creole girls.

But they soon got something to talk about. Five  
days we ran west-sou'-west,

But the sixth day's log-book entry was a change  
from all the rest ;

For that was the day the mast-head men made  
every face turn pale,

With the cry that we all had dreamt about, — ' HE  
BLOWS ! THE AMBER WHALE ! '

“ And every man was motionless, and every speaker’s lip

Just stopped as it was, with the word half-said :  
there wasn’t a sound in the ship

Till the Captain hailed the masthead, ‘ Whereaway  
is the whale you see ? ’

And the cry came down again, ‘ He blows ! about  
four points on our lee,

And three miles off, sir, — there he blows ! he ’s  
going to leeward fast ! ’

And then we sprang to the rigging, and saw the  
great whale at last !

“ Ah ! shipmates, that was a sight to see : the water  
was smooth as a lake,

And there was the monster rolling, with a school of  
whales in his wake.

They looked like pilot-fish round a shark, as if they  
were keeping guard ;

And, shipmates, the spout of that Amber Whale  
was high as a sky-sail yard.

There was never a ship’s crew worked so quick as  
our whalers worked that day, —



When the captain shouted, 'Swing the boats, and  
be ready to lower away!'

Then, 'A pull on the weather-braces, men! let her  
head fall off three points!'

And off she swung, with a quarter-breeze straining  
the old ship's joints.

The men came down from the mastheads; and the  
boats' crews stood on the rail,

Stowing the lines and irons, and fixing paddles and  
sail.

And when all was ready we leant on the boats and  
looked at the Amber's spout,

That went up like a monster fountain, with a sort  
of a rumbling shout,

Like a thousand railroad engines puffing away their  
smoke.

He was just like a frigate's hull capsized, and the  
swaying water broke

Against the sides of the great stiff whale: he was  
steering south-by-west, —

For the Cape, no doubt, for a whale can shape a  
course as well as the best.

We soon got close as was right to go ; for the school  
might hear a hail,

Or see the bark, and that was the last of our Bank-  
of-England Whale.

‘ Let her luff,’ said the Old Man, gently. ‘ Now,  
lower away, my boys,  
And pull for a mile, then paddle, — and mind that  
you make no noise.’

“ A minute more, and the boats were down ; and  
out from the hull of the bark

They shot with a nervous sweep of the oars, like  
dolphins away from a shark.

Each officer stood in the stern, and watched, as he  
held the steering oar,

And the crews bent down to their pulling as they  
never pulled before.

“ Our Mate was as thorough a whaleman as I ever  
met afloat ;

And I was his harpooneer that day, and sat in the  
bow of the boat.

His eyes were set on the whales ahead, and he spoke  
in a low, deep tone,  
And told the men to be steady and cool, and the  
whale was all our own.  
And steady and cool they proved to be: you could  
read it in every face,  
And in every straining muscle, that they meant to  
win that race.  
'Bend to it, boys, for a few strokes more, — bend to  
it steady and long!  
Now, in with your oars, and paddles out, — all  
together, and strong!'  
Then we turned and sat on the gunwale, with our  
faces to the bow;  
And the whales were right ahead, — no more than  
four ships' lengths off now.  
There were five of 'em, hundred-barrellers, like  
guards round the Amber Whale.  
And to strike him we'd have to risk being stove by  
crossing a sweeping tail;  
But the prize and the risk were equal. 'Mat,' now  
whispers the Mate,

‘Are your irons ready?’ ‘Ay, ay, sir.’ ‘Stand up,  
then, steady, and wait  
Till I give the word, then let ’em fly, and hit him  
below the fin  
As he rolls to wind’ard. Start her, boys! now’s  
the time to slide her in!  
Hurrah! that fluke just missed us. Mind, as soon  
as the iron’s fast,  
Be ready to back your paddles, — now in for it, boys,  
at last.  
Heave! Again!’

“And two irons flew: the first one sank  
in the joint,  
’Tween the head and hump, — in the muscle; but  
the second had its point  
Turned off by striking the amber case, coming out  
again like a bow,  
And the monster carcass quivered, and rolled with  
pain from the first deep blow.  
Then he lashed the sea with his terrible flukes, and  
showed us many a sign

That his rage was roused. 'Lay off,' roared the  
Mate, 'and all keep clear of the line!'

And that was a timely warning, for the whale made  
an awful breach

Right out of the sea; and 'twas well for us that the  
boat was beyond the reach

Of his sweeping flukes, as he milled around, and  
made for the Captain's boat,

That was right astern. And, shipmates, then my  
heart swelled up in my throat

At the sight I saw: the Amber Whale was lash-  
ing the sea with rage,

And two of his hundred-barrel guards were ready  
now to engage

In a bloody fight, and with open jaws they came  
to their master's aid.

Then we knew the Captain's boat was doomed; but  
the crew were no whit afraid, —

They were brave New England whalers, — and  
we saw the harpooneer

Stand up to send in his irons, as soon as the whales  
came near.

Then we heard the Captain's order, 'Heave!' and  
saw the harpoon fly,  
As the whales closed in with their open jaws: a  
shock, and a stifled cry  
Was all that we heard; then we looked to see if  
the crew were still afloat,—  
But nothing was there save a dull red patch, and  
the boards of the shattered boat!

"But that was no time for mourning words: the  
other two boats came in,  
And one got fast on the quarter, and one aft the  
starboard fin  
Of the Amber Whale. For a minute he paused, as  
if he were in doubt  
As to whether 'twas best to run or fight. 'Lay  
on!' the Mate roared out,  
'And I'll give him a lance!' The boat shot in;  
and the Mate, when he saw his chance  
Of sending it home to the vitals, four times he  
buried his lance.  
A minute more, and a cheer went up, when we saw  
that his aim was good;

For the lance had struck in a life-spot, and the whale  
was spouting blood !  
But now came the time of danger, for the school of  
whales around  
Had aired their flukes, and the cry was raised,  
‘Look out ! they ’re going to sound !’  
And down they went with a sudden plunge, the  
Amber Whale the last,  
While the lines ran smoking out of the tubs, he  
went to the deep so fast.  
Before you could count your fingers, a hundred  
fathoms were out ;  
And then he stopped, for a wounded whale must  
come to the top and spout.  
We hauled slack line as we felt him rise ; and  
when he came up alone,  
And spouted thick blood, we cheered again, for we  
knew he was all our own.  
He was frightened now, and his fight was gone, —  
right round and round he spun,  
As if he was trying to sight the boats, or find the  
best side to run.

But that was the minute for us to work : the boats  
    hailed in their slack,  
And bent on the drag-tubs over the stern to tire  
    and hold him back.  
The bark was five miles to wind'ard, and the mate  
    gave a troubled glance  
At the sinking sun, and muttered, ' Boys, we must  
    give him another lance,  
Or he 'll run till night ; and, if he should head to  
    wind'ard in the dark,  
We 'll be forced to cut loose and leave him, or else  
    lose run of the bark.'  
So we hauled in close, two boats at once, but only  
    frightened the whale ;  
And, like a hound that was badly whipped, he  
    turned and showed his tail,  
With his head right dead to wind'ard ; then as  
    straight and as swift he sped  
As a hungry shark for a swimming prey ; and,  
    bending over his head,  
Like a mighty plume, went his bloody spout. Ah !  
    shipmates, that was a sight



Worth a life at sea to witness. In his wake the sea  
was white  
As you've seen it after a steamer's screw, churning  
up like foaming yeast ;  
And the boats went hissing along at the rate of  
twenty knots at least,  
With the water flush with the gunwale, and the  
oars were all apeak,  
While the crews sat silent and quiet, watching the  
long, white streak  
That was traced by the line of our passage. We  
hailed the bark as we passed,  
And told them to keep a sharp look-out from the  
head of every mast ;  
'And if we're not back by sundown,' cried the  
Mate, 'you keep a light  
At the royal cross-trees. If he dies, we may stick  
to the whale all night.'

"And past we swept with our oars apeak, and  
waved our hands to the hail  
Of the wondering men on the taffrail, who were  
watching our Amber Whale

As he surged ahead, just as if he thought he could  
tire his enemies out;  
I was almost sorrowful, shipmates, to see after each  
red spout  
That the great whale's strength was failing: the  
sweep of his flukes grew slow,  
Till at sundown he made about four knots, and his  
spout was weak and low.  
Then said the Mate to his boat's crew: 'Boys, the  
vessel is out of sight  
To the leeward: now, shall we cut the line, or stick  
to the whale all night?'  
'We'll stick to the whale!' cried every man. 'Let  
the other boats go back  
To the vessel and beat to wind'ard, as well as they  
can, in our track.'  
It was done as they said: the lines were cut, and  
the crews cried out, 'Good speed!'  
As we swept along in the darkness, in the wake  
of our monster steed,  
That went plunging on, with the dogged hope that  
he'd tire his enemies still, —

But even the strength of an Amber Whale must  
break before human will.  
By little and little his power had failed as he  
spouted his blood away,  
Till at midnight the rising moon shone down on  
the great fish as he lay  
Just moving his flukes ; but at length he stopped,  
and raising his square, black head  
As high as the topmast cross-trees, swung round  
and fell over — dead !

“ And then rose a shout of triumph, — a shout that  
was more like a curse  
Than an honest cheer ; but, shipmates, the thought  
in our hearts was worse,  
And 'twas punished with bitter suffering. We  
claimed the whale as our own,  
And said that the crew should have no share of the  
wealth that was ours alone.  
We said to each other : We want their help till we  
get the whale aboard,  
So we 'll let 'em think that they 'll have a share till  
we get the Amber stored,

And then we'll pay them their wages, and send  
them ashore — *or afloat*,  
*If they show their temper.* Ah! shipmates, no  
wonder 'twas that boat  
And its selfish crew were cursed that night. Next  
day we saw no sail,  
But the wind and sea were rising. Still, we held  
to the drifting whale, —  
And a dead whale drifts to windward, — going  
farther away from the ship,  
Without water, or bread, or courage to pray with  
heart or lip  
That had planned and spoken the treachery. The  
wind blew into a gale,  
And it screamed like mocking laughter round our  
boat and the Amber Whale.

“That night fell dark on the starving crew, and a  
hurricane blew next day;  
Then we cut the line, and we cursed the prize as it  
drifted fast away,  
As if some power under the waves were towing it  
out of sight;

And there we were, without help or hope, dreading  
the coming night.  
Three days that hurricane lasted. When it passed,  
two men were dead ;  
And the strongest one of the living had not strength  
to raise his head,  
When his dreaming swoon was broken by the sound  
of a cheery hail,  
And he saw a shadow fall on the boat, — it fell  
from the old bark's sail !  
And when he heard their kindly words, you 'd think  
he should have smiled  
With joy at his deliverance ; but he cried like a  
little child,  
And hid his face in his poor weak hands, — for he  
thought of the selfish plan, —  
And he prayed to God to forgive them all. And,  
shipmates, I am the man ! —  
The only one of the sinful crew that ever beheld  
his home ;  
For before the cruise was over, all the rest were  
under the foam.

It's just fifteen years gone, shipmates," said old  
Mat, ending his tale ;  
"And I often pray that I'll never see another  
Amber Whale."

# **THE KING OF THE VASSE.**

**A LEGEND OF THE BUSH.**

*From that fair land and drear land in the South,  
Of which through years I do not cease to think,  
I brought a tale, learned not by word of mouth,  
But formed by finding here one golden link  
And there another ; and with hands unskilled  
For such fine work, but patient of all pain  
For love of it, I sought therefrom to build  
What might have been at first the goodly chain.*

*It is not golden now : my craft knows more  
Of working baser metal than of fine ;  
But to those fate-wrought rings of precious ore  
I add these rugged iron links of mine.*



## THE KING OF THE VASSE.

### A LEGEND OF THE BUSH.

**M**Y tale which I have brought is of a time  
Ere that fair Southern land was stained with  
crime,

Brought thitherward in reeking ships and cast  
Like blight upon the coast, or like a blast  
From angry levin on a fair young tree,  
That stands thenceforth a piteous sight to see.  
So lives this land to-day beneath the sun,—  
A weltering plague-spot, where the hot tears run,  
And hearts to ashes turn, and souls are dried  
Like empty kilns where hopes have parched and  
died.

Woe's cloak is round her,— she the fairest shore  
In all the Southern Ocean o'er and o'er.  
Poor Cinderella ! she must bide her woe,  
Because an elder sister wills it so.

Ah ! could that sister see the future day  
When her own wealth and strength are shorn  
away,

And she, lone mother then, puts forth her hand  
To rest on kindred blood in that far land ;  
Could she but see that kin deny her claim  
Because of nothing owing her but shame, —  
Then might she learn 'tis building but to fall,  
If carted rubble be the basement-wall.

But this my tale, if tale it be, begins  
Before the young land saw the old land's sins  
Sail up the orient ocean, like a cloud  
Far-blown, and widening as it neared, — a shroud  
Fate-sent to wrap the bier of all things pure,  
And mark the leper-land while stains endure.

In the far days, the few who sought the West  
Were men all guileless, in adventurous quest  
Of lands to feed their flocks and raise their grain,  
And help them live their lives with less of pain  
Than crowded Europe lets her children know.

From their old homesteads did they seaward go,  
As if in Nature's order men must flee  
As flow the streams, — from inlands to the sea,

In that far time, from out a Northern land,  
With home-ties severed, went a numerous band  
Of men and wives and children, white-haired  
folk :

Whose humble hope of rest at home had broke,  
As year was piled on year, and still their toil  
Had wrung poor fee from Sweden's rugged soil.  
One day there gathered from the neighboring steads,  
In Jacob Eibsen's, five strong household heads, —  
Five men large-limbed and sinewed, Jacob's sons,  
Though he was hale, as one whose current runs  
In stony channels, that the streamlet rend,  
But keep it clear and full unto the end.  
Eight sons had Jacob Eibsen, — three still boys,  
And these five men, who owned of griefs and  
joys

The common lot ; and three tall girls beside,  
Of whom the eldest was a blushing bride

One year before. Old-fashioned times and men,  
And wives and maidens, were in Sweden then.  
These five came there for counsel: they were  
tired

Of hoping on for all the heart desired;  
And Jacob, old but mighty-thewed as youth,  
In all their words did sadly own the truth,  
And said unto them, "Wealth cannot be found  
In Sweden now by men who till the ground.  
I've thought at times of leaving this bare place,  
And holding seaward with a seeking face  
For those new lands they speak of, where men  
thrive.

Alone I've thought of this; but now you five —  
Five brother men of Eibsen blood — shall say  
If our old stock from here must wend thir  
way,

And seek a home where anxious sires can give  
To every child enough whereon to live."

Then each took thought in silence. Jacob gazed  
Across them at the pastures worn and grazed

By ill-fed herds ; his glance to corn-fields passed,  
Where stunted oats, worse each year than the last,  
And blighted barley, grew amongst the stones,  
That showed ungainly, like earth's fleshless bones.  
He sighed, and turned away. " Sons, let me know  
What think you."

Each one answered firm, " We go."  
And then they said, " We want no northern wind  
To chill us more, or driving hail to blind.  
But let us sail where south winds fan the sea,  
And happier we and all our race shall be."  
And so in time there started for the coast,  
With farm and household gear, this Eibsen host ;  
And there, with others, to a good ship passed,  
Which soon of Sweden's hills beheld the last.

I know not of their voyage, nor how they  
Did wonder-stricken sit, as day by day,  
'Neath tropic rays, they saw the smooth sea swell  
And heave ; while night by night the north-star  
fell,

Till last they watched him burning on the sea ;  
Nor how they saw, and wondered it could be,  
Strange beacons rise before them as they gazed ;  
Nor how their hearts grew light when southward  
    blazed

Five stars in blessed shape, — the Cross ! whose  
    flame

Seemed shining welcome as the wanderers came.

My story presses from this star-born hope  
To where on young New Holland's western slope  
These Northern farming folk found homes at  
    last,  
And all their thankless toil seemed now long  
    past.

Nine fruitful years chased over, and nigh all  
Of life was sweet. But one dark drop of gall  
Had come when first they landed, like a sign  
Of some black woe ; and deep in Eibsen's wine  
Of life it hid, till in the sweetest cup  
The old man saw its shape come shuddering up.

And first it came in this wise : when their ship  
Had made the promised land, and every lip  
Was pouring praise for what the eye did meet, —  
For all the air was yellow as with heat  
Above the peaceful sea and dazzling sand  
That wooed each other round the beauteous land,  
Where inward stretched the slumbering forest's  
green, —

When first these sights from off the deck were  
seen,

There rose a wailing sternwards, and the men  
Who dreamt of heaven turned to earth agen,  
And heard the direful cause with bated breath, —  
The land's first gleam had brought the blight of  
death !

The wife of Eibsen held her six-years son,  
Her youngest, and in secret best-loved one,  
Close to her lifeless : his had been the cry  
That first horizonwards bent every eye ;  
And from that opening sight of sand and tree  
Like one deep spell-bound did he seem to be,

And moved by some strange phantasy ; his eyes  
Were wide distended as in glad surprise  
At something there he saw ; his arms reached  
o'er

The vessel's side as if to greet the shore,  
And sounds came from his lips like sobs of joy.

A brief time so ; and then the blue-eyed boy  
Sank down convulsed, as if to him appeared  
Strange sights that they saw not ; and all afeard  
Grew the late joyous people with vague dread ;  
And loud the mother wailed above her dead.

The ship steered in and found a bay, and then  
The anchor plunged aweary-like : the men  
Breathed breaths of rest at treading land agen.

Upon the beach by Christian men untrod  
The wanderers kneeling offered up to God  
The land's first-fruits ; and nigh the kneeling band  
The burdened mother sat upon the sand,  
And still she wailed, not praying.



'Neath the wood

That lined the beach a crowd of watchers stood :  
Tall men spear-armed, with skins like dusky night,  
And aspect blended of deep awe and fright.  
The ship that morn they saw, like some vast bird,  
Come sailing toward their country ; and they heard  
The voices now of those strange men whose eyes  
Were turned aloft, who spake unto the skies !

They heard and feared, not knowing, that first  
prayer,

But feared not when the wail arose, for there  
Was some familiar thing did not appall, —  
Grief, common heritage and lot of all.

They moved and breathed more freely at the cry,  
And slowly from the wood, and timorously,  
They one by one emerged upon the beach.

The white men saw, and like to friends did reach  
Their hands unarmed ; and soon the dusky crowd  
Drew nigh and stood where wailed the mother  
loud.

They claimed her kindred, they could understand

That woe was hers and theirs ; whereas the band  
Of white-skinned men did not as brethren seem.

But now, behold ! a man, whom one would deem  
From eye and mien, wherever met, a King,  
Did stand beside the woman. No youth's spring  
Was in the foot that naked pressed the sand ;  
No warrior's might was in the long dark hand  
That waved his people backward ; no bright gold  
Of lace or armor glittered ; gaunt and old, —  
A belt, half apron, made of emu-down,  
Upon his loins ; upon his head no crown  
Save only that which eighty years did trace  
In whitened hair above his furrowed face.  
Nigh nude he was : a short fur boka hung  
In toga-folds upon his back, but flung  
From his right arm and shoulder, — ever there  
The spear-arm of the warrior is bare.

So stood he nigh the woman, gaunt and wild  
But king-like, spearless, looking on the child  
That lay with livid face upon her knees.

Thus long and fixed he gazed, as one who sees  
A symbol hidden in a simple thing,  
And trembles at its meaning: so the King  
Fell trembling there, and from his breast there  
broke

A cry, part joy, part fear; then to his folk  
With upraised hands he spoke one guttural word,  
And said it over thrice; and when they heard,  
They, too, were stricken with strange fear and joy.

The white-haired King then to the breathless boy  
Drew closer still, while all the dusky crowd  
In weird abasement to the earth were bowed.  
Across his breast the aged ruler wore  
A leathern thong or belt; whate'er it bore  
Was hidden 'neath the boka. As he drew  
Anigh the mother, from his side he threw  
Far back the skin that made his rich-furred robe,  
And showed upon the belt a small red globe  
Of carven wood, bright-polished, as with years:  
When this they saw, deep grew his people's fears,  
And to the white sand were their foreheads  
pressed.

The King then raised his arms, as if he blest  
The youth who lay there seeming dead and cold;  
Then took the globe and oped it, and behold!  
Within it, bedded in the carven case,  
There lay a precious thing for that rude race  
To hold, though it as God they seemed to prize, —  
A Pearl of purest hue and wondrous size!

And as the sunbeams kissed it, from the dead  
The dusk King looked, and o'er his snowy head  
With both long hands he raised the enthroned  
gem,  
And turned him toward the strangers: e'en on  
them  
Before the lovely Thing, an awe did fall  
To see that worship deep and mystical,  
That King with upraised god, like rev'rent priest  
With elevated Host at Christian feast.

Then to the mother turning slow, the King  
Took out the Pearl; and laid the beauteous Thing  
Upon the dead boy's mouth and brow and breast,

And as it touched him, lo! the awful rest  
Of death was broken, and the youth uprose!

. . . . .

Nine years passed over since on that fair shore  
The wanderers knelt, — but wanderers they no  
more.

With hopeful hearts they bore the promise-pain  
Of early labor, and soon bending grain  
And herds and homesteads and a teeming soil  
A thousand-fold repaid their patient toil.

Nine times the sun's high glory glared above,  
As if his might set naught on human love,  
But yearned to scorn and scorch the things that  
grew

On man's poor home, till all the forest's hue  
Of blessed green was burned to dusty brown;  
And still the ruthless rays rained fiercely down,  
Till insects, reptiles, shrivelled as they lay,  
And piteous cracks, like lips, in parching clay  
Sent silent pleadings skyward, — as if she,

The fruitful, generous mother, plaintively  
Did wail for water. Lo ! her cry is heard,  
And swift, obedient to the Ruler's word,  
From Southern iceland sweeps the cool sea breeze,  
To fan the earth and bless the suffering trees,  
And bear dense clouds with bursting weight of  
rain

To soothe with moisture all the parching pain.

Oh, Mercy's sweetest symbol ! only they  
Who see the earth agape in burning day,  
Who watch its living things thirst-stricken lie,  
And turn from brazen heaven as they die, —  
Their hearts alone, the shadowy cloud can prize  
That veils the sun, — as to poor earth-dimmed eyes  
The sorrow comes to veil our joy's dear face,  
All rich in mercy and in God's sweet grace !

Thrice welcome, clouds from seaward, settling down  
O'er thirsting nature ! Now the trees' dull brown  
Is washed away, and leaflet buds appear,  
And youngling undergrowth, and far and near

The bush is whispering in her pent-up glee,  
As myriad roots bestir them to be free,  
And drink the soaking moisture; while bright  
    heaven

Shows clear, as inland are the spent clouds driven;  
And oh! that arch, that sky's intensate hue!  
That deep, God-painted, unimagined blue  
Through which the golden sun now smiling sails,  
And sends his love to fructify the vales  
That late he seemed to curse! Earth throbs and  
    heaves

With pregnant prescience of life and leaves;  
The shadows darken 'neath the tall trees' screen,  
While round their stems the rank and velvet green  
Of undergrowth is deeper still; and there,  
Within the double shade and steaming air,  
The scarlet palm has fixed its noxious root,  
And hangs the glorious poison of its fruit;  
And there, 'mid shaded green and shaded light,  
The steel-blue silent birds take rapid flight  
From earth to tree and tree to earth; and there  
The crimson-plumaged parrot cleaves the air

Like flying fire, and huge brown owls awake  
To watch, far down, the stealing carpet snake,  
Fresh-skinned and glowing in his changing dyes,  
With evil wisdom in the cruel eyes  
That glint like gems as o'er his head flits by  
The blue-black armor of the emperor-fly;  
And all the humid earth displays its powers  
Of prayer, with incense from the hearts of flowers  
That load the air with beauty and with wine  
Of mingled color, as with one design  
Of making there a carpet to be trod,  
In woven splendor, by the feet of God!

And high o'erhead is color: round and round  
The towering gums and tuads, closely wound  
Like cables, creep the climbers to the sun,  
And over all the reaching branches run  
And hang, and still send shoots that climb and  
wind  
Till every arm and spray and leaf is twined,  
And miles of trees, like brethren joined in love,  
Are drawn and laced; while round them and  
above,



When all is knit, the creeper rests for days  
As gathering might, and then one blinding blaze  
Of very glory sends, in wealth and strength,  
Of scarlet flowers o'er the forest's length !

Such scenes as these have subtile power to trace  
Their clear-lined impress on the mind and face ;  
And these strange simple folk, not knowing why,  
Grew more and more to silence ; and the eye,  
The quiet eye of Swedish gray, grew deep  
With listening to the solemn rustling sweep  
From wings of Silence, and the earth's great psalm  
Intoned forever by the forest's calm.

But most of all was younger Jacob changed :  
From morn till night, alone, the woods he ranged,  
To kindred, pastime, sympathy estranged.  
Since that first day of landing from the ship  
When with the Pearl on brow and breast and lip  
The aged King had touched him and he rose,  
His former life had left him, and he chose  
The woods as home, the wild, uncultured men  
As friends and comrades. It were better then,

His brethren said, the boy had truly died  
Than they should live to be by him denied,  
As now they were. He lived in sombre mood,  
He spoke no word to them, he broke no food  
That they did eat: his former life was dead, —  
The soul brought back was not the soul that  
fled!

'Twas Jacob's form and feature, but the light  
Within his eyes was strange unto their sight.

His mother's grief was piteous to see:  
Unloving was he to the rest, but she  
Held undespairing hope that deep within  
Her son's changed heart was love that she might  
win

By patient tenderness; and so she strove  
For nine long years, but won no look of love!

At last his brethren gazed on him with awe,  
And knew untold that from the form they saw  
Their brother's gentle mind was sure dispelled,  
And now a gloomy savage soul it held.

From that first day, close intercourse he had  
With those who raised him up, — fierce men,  
    unclad,  
Spear-armed and wild, in all their ways uncouth,  
And strange to every habit of his youth.  
His food they brought, his will they seemed to  
    crave,  
The wildest bushman tended like a slave ;  
He worked their charms, their hideous chants he  
    sung ;  
Though dumb to all his own, their guttural tongue  
He often spoke in tones of curt command,  
And kinged it proudly o'er the dusky band.

And once each year there gathered from afar  
A swarming host, as if a sudden war  
Had called them forth, and with them did they  
    bring  
In solemn, savage pomp the white-haired King,  
Who year by year more withered was and weak ;  
And he would lead the youth apart and speak

Some occult words, and from the carven case  
Would take the Pearl and touch the young man's  
face,

And hold it o'er him blessing ; while the crowd,  
As on the shore, in dumb abasement bowed.  
And when the King had closed the formal rite,  
The rest held savage revelry by night,  
Round blazing fires, with dance and orgies base,  
That roused the sleeping echoes of the place, -  
Which down the forest vistas moaned the din,  
Like spirits pure beholding impious sin.

Nine times they gathered thus ; but on the last  
The old king's waning life seemed well-nigh past.  
His feeble strength had failed : he walked no  
more,

But on a woven spear-wood couch they bore  
With careful tread the form that barely gasped,  
As if the door of death now hung unhasped,  
Awaiting but a breath to swing, and show  
The dim eternal plain that stretched below.

The tenth year waned: the cloistered bush was  
stilled,

The earth lay sleeping, while the clouds distilled  
In ghostly veil their blessing. Thin and white,  
Through opening trees the moonbeams cleft the  
night,

And showed the sombre arches, taller far  
Than grandest aisles of built cathedrals are.  
And up those dim-lit aisles in silence streamed  
Tall men with trailing spears, until it seemed,  
So many lines converged of endless length,  
A nation there was gathered in its strength.

Around one spot was kept a spacious ring,  
Where lay the body of the white-haired King,  
Which all the spearmen gathered to behold  
Upon its spear-wood litter, stiff and cold.  
All naked, there the dusky corse was laid  
Beneath a royal tuad's mourning shade;  
Upon the breast was placed the carven case  
That held the symbol of their ancient race,

And eyes awe-stricken saw the mystic Thing  
That soon would clothe another as their King !  
The midnight moon was high and white o'erhead,  
And threw a ghastly pallor round the dead  
That heightened still the savage pomp and state  
In which they stood expectant, as for Fate  
To move and mark with undisputed hand  
The one amongst them to the high command.  
And long they stood unanswered ; each on each  
Had looked in vain for motion or for speech :  
Unmoved as ebon statues, grand and tall,  
They ringed the shadowy circle, silent all.

Then came a creeping tremor, as a breeze  
With cooling rustle moves the summer trees  
Before the thunder crashes on the ear ;  
The dense ranks turn expectant, as they hear  
A sound, at first afar, but nearing fast ;  
The outer crowd divides, as waves are cast  
On either side a tall ship's cleaving bow,  
Or mould is parted by the fearless plough  
That leaves behind a passage clear and broad :

So through the murmuring multitude a road  
Was cleft with power, up which in haughty swing  
A figure stalking broke the sacred ring,  
And stood beside the body of the King!

'Twas Jacob Eibsen, sad and gloomy-browed,  
Who bared his neck and breast, one moment  
bowed

Above the corse, and then stood proud and tall,  
And held the carven case before them all!  
A breath went upward like a smothered fright  
From every heart, to see that face, so white,  
So foreign to their own, but marked with might  
From source unquestioned, and to them divine;  
Whilst he, the master of the mystic sign,  
Then oped the case and took the Pearl and raised,  
As erst the King had done, and upward gazed,  
As swearing fealty to God on high!

But ere the oath took form, there thrilled a cry  
Of shivering horror through the hush of night;  
And there before him, blinded by the sight

Of all his impious purpose, brave with love,  
His mother stood, and stretched her arms above  
To tear the idol from her darling's hand ;  
But one fierce look, and rang a harsh command  
In Jacob's voice, that smote her like a sword.  
A thousand men sprang forward at the word,  
To tear the mother from the form of stone,  
And cast her forth ; but, as he stood alone,  
The keen, heart-broken wail that cut the air  
Went two-edged through him, half reproach, half  
prayer.

But all unheeding, he nor marked her cry  
By sign or look within the gloomy eye ;  
But round his body bound the carven case,  
And swore the fealty with marble face.

As fades a dream before slow-waking sense,  
The shadowy host, that late stood fixed and dense,  
Began to melt ; and as they came erewhile,  
The streams flowed backward through each moon-  
lit aisle ;



And soon he stood alone within the place,  
Their new-made king, — their king with pallid face,  
Their king with strange foreboding and unrest,  
And half-formed thoughts, like dreams, within his  
    breast.

Like Moses' rod, that mother's cry of woe  
Had struck for water ; but the fitful flow  
That weakly welled and streamed did seem to  
    mock  
Before it died forever on the rock.

The sun rose o'er the forest, and his light  
Made still more dreamlike all the evil night.  
Day streamed his glory down the aisles' dim arch,  
All hushed and shadowy like a pillared church ;  
And through the lonely bush no living thing  
Was seen, save now and then a garish wing  
Of bird low-flying on its silent way.

But woful searchers spent the weary day  
In anxious dread, and found not what they  
    sought, —

Their mother and their brother : evening brought  
A son and father to the lonesome place  
That saw the last night's scene ; and there, her face  
Laid earthward, speaking dumbly to her heart,  
They found her, as the hands that tore apart :  
The son and mother flung her from their chief,  
And with one cry her heart had spent its grief.

They bore the cold earth that so late did move  
In household happiness and works of love,  
Unto their rude home, lonely now ; and he  
Who laid her there, from present misery  
Did turn away, half-blinded by his tears,  
To see with inward eye the far-off years  
When Swedish toil was light and hedgerows  
sweet ;

Where, when the toil was o'er, he used to meet  
A simple gray-eyed girl, with sun-browned face,  
Whose love had won his heart, and whose sweet  
grace  
Had blessed for threescore years his humble life.

So Jacob Eibsen mourned his faithful wife,  
And found the world no home when she was gone.  
The days that seemed of old to hurry on  
Now dragged their course, and marred the wish  
    that grew,  
When first he saw her grave, to sleep there too.  
But though to him, whose yearning hope outran  
The steady motion of the seasons' plan,  
The years were slow in coming, still their pace  
With awful sureness left a solemn trace,  
Like dust that settles on an open page,  
On Jacob Eibsen's head, bent down with age ;  
And ere twice more the soothing rains had come,  
The old man had his wish, and to his home,  
Beneath the strange trees' shadow where she lay,  
They bore the rude-made bier ; and from that day,  
When round the parent graves the brethren stood,  
Their new-made homesteads were no longer good,  
But marked they seemed by some o'erhanging  
    dread  
That linked the living with the dreamless dead.

Grown silent with the woods the men were all,  
But words were needed not to note the pall  
That each one knew hung o'er them. Duties  
now,

With straying herds or swinging scythe, or plough,  
Were cheerless tasks : like men they were who  
wrought

A weary toil that no repayment brought.  
And when the seasons came and went, and still  
The pall was hanging o'er them, with one will  
They yoked their oxen teams and piled the loads  
Of gear selected for the aimless roads  
That nature opens through the bush ; and when  
The train was ready, women-folk and men  
Went over to the graves and wept and prayed,  
Then rose and turned away, but still delayed  
Ere leaving there forever those poor mounds.

The next bright sunrise heard the teamsters'  
sounds

Of voice and whip a long day's march away ;  
And wider still the space grew day by day

From their old resting-place: the trackless wood  
Still led them on with promises of good,  
As when the mirage leads a thirsty band  
With palm-tree visions o'er the arid sand.

I know not where they settled down at last :  
Their lives and homes from out my tale have  
    passed,  
And left me naught, or seeming naught, to trace  
But cheerless record of the empty place,  
Where long unseen the palm-thatched cabins stood,  
And made more lonely still the lonesome wood.

Long lives of men passed over ; but the years,  
That line men's faces with hard cares and tears,  
Pass lightly o'er a forest, leaving there  
No wreck of young disease or old despair ;  
For trees are mightier than men, and Time,  
When left by cunning Sin and dark-browed  
    Crime  
To work alone, hath ever gentle mood.  
Unchanged the pillars and the arches stood,

But shadowed taller vistas ; and the earth,  
That takes and gives the ceaseless death and birth,  
Was blooming still, as once it bloomed before  
When sea-tired eyes beheld the beauteous shore.

But man's best work is weak, nor stands nor  
grows

Like Nature's simplest. Every breeze that blows,  
Health-bearing to the forest, plays its part  
In hasting graveward all his humble art.

Beneath the trees the cabins still remained,  
By all the changing seasons seared and stained ;  
Grown old and weirdlike, as the folk might grow  
In such a place, who left them long ago.

Men came, and wondering found the work of  
men

Where they had deemed them first. The savage  
then

Heard through the wood the axe's deathwatch  
stroke

For him and all his people : odorous smoke

Of burning sandal rose where white men dwelt,  
Around the huts ; but they had shuddering felt  
The weird, forbidden aspect of the spot,  
And left the place untouched to mould and rot.  
The woods grew blithe with labor : all around,  
From point to point, was heard the hollow sound,  
The solemn, far-off clicking on the ear  
That marks the presence of the pioneer.  
And children came like flowers to bless the toil  
That reaped rich fruitage from the virgin soil ;  
And through the woods they wandered fresh and  
fair,  
To feast on all the beauties blooming there.  
But always did they shun the spot where grew,  
From earth once tilled, the flowers of rarest hue.  
There wheat grown wild in rank luxuriance  
spread,  
And fruits grown native ; but a sudden tread  
Or bramble's fall would foul goanos wake,  
Or start the chilling rustle of the snake ;  
And diamond eyes of these and thousand more,  
Gleamed out from ruined roof and wall and floor.

The new-come people, they whose axes rung  
Throughout the forest, spoke the English tongue,  
And never knew that men of other race  
From Europe's fields had settled in the place ;  
But deemed these huts were built some long-past  
day

By lonely seamen who were cast away  
And thrown upon the coast, who there had built  
Their homes, and lived until some woe or guilt  
Was bred among them, and they fled the sight  
Of scenes that held a horror to the light.

But while they thought such things, the spell that  
hung,

And cast its shadow o'er the place, was strung  
To utmost tension that a breath would break,  
And show between the rifts the deep blue lake  
Of blessed peace, — as next to sorrow lies  
A stretch of rest, rewarding hopeful eyes.  
And while such things bethought this new-come  
folk,  
That breath was breathed, the olden spell was  
broke :



From far away within the unknown land,  
O'er belts of forest and o'er wastes of sand,  
A cry came thrilling, like a cry of pain  
From suffering heart and half-awakened brain ;  
As one thought dead who wakes within the tomb,  
And, reaching, cries for sunshine in the gloom.

In that strange country's heart, whence comes the  
breath

Of hot disease and pestilential death,  
Lie leagues of wooded swamp, that from the hills  
Seem stretching meadows ; but the flood that fills  
Those valley-basins has the hue of ink,  
And dismal doorways open on the brink,  
Beneath the gnarlèd arms of trees that grow  
All leafless to the top, from roots below  
The Lethe flood ; and he who enters there  
Beneath their screen sees rising, ghastly-bare,  
Like mammoth bones within a charnel dark,  
The white and ragged stems of paper-bark,  
That drip down moisture with a ceaseless drip,  
From lines that run like cordage of a ship ;

For myriad creepers struggle to the light,  
And twine and mat o'erhead in murderous  
fight

For life and sunshine, like another race  
That wars on brethren for the highest place.  
Between the water and the matted screen,  
The baldhead vultures, two and two, are seen  
In dismal grandeur, with revolting face  
Of foul grotesque, like spirits of the place ;  
And now and then a spear-shaped wave goes by,  
Its apex glittering with an evil eye  
That sets above its enemy and prey,  
As from the wave in treacherous, slimy way  
The black snake winds, and strikes the bestial bird,  
Whose shriek-like wailing on the hills is heard.

Beyond this circling swamp, a circling waste  
Of baked and barren desert land is placed, —  
A land of awful grayness, wild and stark,  
Where man will never leave a deeper mark,  
On leagues of fissured clay and scorching stones,  
Than may be printed there by bleaching bones.

Within this belt, that keeps a savage guard,  
As round a treasure sleeps a dragon ward,  
A forest stretches far of precious trees ;  
Whence came, one day, an odor-laden breeze  
Of jam-wood bruised, and sandal sweet in smoke.  
For there long dwelt a numerous native folk  
In that heart-garden of the continent, —  
There human lives with aims and fears were  
    spent,  
And marked by love and hate and peace and pain,  
And hearts well-filled and hearts athirst for gain,  
And lips that clung, and faces bowed in shame ;  
For, wild or polished, man is still the same,  
And loves and hates and envies in the wood,  
With spear and boka and with manners rude,  
As loves and hates his brother shorn and sleek,  
Who learns by lifelong practice how to speak  
With oily tongue, while in his heart below  
Lies rankling poison that he dare not show.

Afar from all new ways this people dwelt,  
And knew no books, and to no God had knelt,

And had no codes to rule them writ in blood ;  
But savage, selfish, nomad-lived and rude,  
With human passions fierce from unrestraint,  
And free as their loose limbs ; with every taint  
That earth can give to that which God has given ;  
Their nearest glimpse of Him, o'er-arching heaven,  
Where dwelt the giver and preserver, — Light,  
Who daily slew and still was slain by Night.

A savage people they, and prone to strife ;  
Yet men grown weak with years had spent a life  
Of peace unbroken, and their sires, long dead,  
Had equal lives of peace unbroken led.  
It was no statute's bond or coward fear  
Of retribution kept the shivering spear  
In all those years from fratricidal sheath ;  
But one it was who ruled them, — one whom  
    Death  
Had passed as if he saw not, — one whose word  
Through all that lovely central land was heard  
And bowed to, as of yore the people bent,  
In desert wanderings, to a leader sent

To guide and guard them to a promised land.  
O'er all the Austral tribes he held command, —  
A man unlike them and not of their race,  
A man of flowing hair and pallid face,  
A man who strove by no deft juggler's art  
To keep his kingdom in the people's heart,  
Nor held his place by feats of brutal might  
Or showy skill, to please the savage sight ;  
But one who ruled them as a King of kings,  
A man above, not of them, — one who brings,  
To prove his kingship to the low and high,  
The inborn power of the regal eye !

Like him of Sinai with the stones of law,  
Whose people almost worshipped when they saw  
The veiled face whereon God's glory burned ;  
But yet who, mutable as water, turned  
From that veiled ruler who had talked with God,  
To make themselves an idol from a clod :  
So turned one day this savage Austral race  
Against their monarch with the pallid face.  
The young men knew him not, the old had heard  
In far-off days, from men grown old, a word

That dimly lighted up the mystic choice  
Of this their alien King, — how once a voice  
Was heard by their own monarch calling clear,  
And leading onward, where as on a bier  
A dead child lay upon a woman's knees ;  
Whom when the old King saw, like one who sees  
Far through the mist of common life, he spoke .  
And touched him with the Pearl, and he awoke,  
And from that day the people owned his right  
To wear the Pearl and rule them, when the light  
Had left their old King's eyes. But now, they said,  
The men who owned that right were too long  
    dead ;  
And they were young and strong and held their  
    spears  
In idle resting through this white King's fears,  
Who still would live to rule them till they changed  
Their men to puling women, and estranged  
To Austral hands the spear and coila grew.  
  
And so they rose against him, and they slew  
The white-haired men who raised their hands to  
    warn,

And true to ancient trust in warning fell,  
While o'er them rang the fierce revolvers' yell.  
Then midst the dead uprose the King in scorn,  
Like some strong, hunted thing that stands at  
bay

To win a brief but desperate delay.  
A moment thus, and those within the ring  
'Gan backward press from their unarmèd King,  
Who swept his hand as though he bade them fly,  
And brave no more the anger of his eye.  
The heaving crowd grew still before that face,  
And watched him take the ancient carven case,  
And ope it there, and take the Pearl and stand  
As once before he stood, with upraised hand  
And upturned eyes of inward worshipping.

Awe-struck and dumb, once more they owned him  
King,  
And humbly crouched before him ; when a sound,  
A whirring sound that thrilled them, passed o'er-  
head,  
And with a spring they rose : a spear had sped

With aim unerring and with deathful might,  
And split the awful centre of their sight, —  
The upraised Pearl ! A moment there it shone  
Before the spear-point, — then forever gone !

. . . . .

The spell that long the ruined huts did shroud  
Was rent and scattered, as a hanging cloud  
In moveless air is torn and blown away  
By sudden gust uprising ; and one day  
When evening's lengthened shadows came to hush  
The children's voices, and the awful bush  
Was lapt in sombre stillness, and on high  
Above the arches stretched the frescoed sky, —  
When all the scene such chilling aspect wore  
As marked one other night long years before,  
When through the reaching trees the moonlight  
shone  
Upon a prostrate form, and o'er it one  
With kingly gesture. Now the light is shed  
No more on youthful brow and daring head,



But on a man grown weirdly old, whose face  
Keeps turning ever to some new-found place  
That rises up before him like a dream ;  
And not unlike a dreamer does he seem,  
Who might have slept, unheeding time's sure  
flow,

And woke to find a world he does not know.  
His long white hair flows o'er a form low bowed  
By wondrous weight of years : he speaks aloud  
In garbled Swedish words, with piteous wist,  
As long-lost objects rise through memory's mist.  
Again and once again his pace he stays,  
As crowding images of other days  
Loom up before him dimly, and he sees  
A vague, forgotten friendship in the trees  
That reach their arms in welcome ; but agen  
These olden glimpses vanish, and dark men  
Are round him, dumb and crouching, and Le  
stands

With guttural sentences and upraised hands,  
That hold a carven case, — but empty now,  
Which makes more pitiful the aged brow

Full-turned to those tall tuads that did hear  
A son's fierce mandate and a mother's prayer.

Ah, God! what memories can live of these,  
Save only with the half-immortal trees  
That saw the death of one, the other lost?

The weird-like figure now the bush has crost  
And stands within the ring, and turns and moans,  
With arms out-reaching and heart-piercing tones,  
And groping hands, as one a long time blind  
Who sees a glimmering light on eye and mind.  
From tree to sky he turns, from sky to earth,  
And gasps as one to whom a second birth  
Of wondrous meaning is an instant shown.

Who is this wreck of years, who all alone,  
In savage raiment and with words unknown,  
Bows down like some poor penitent who fears  
The wrath of God provoked? — this man who hears  
Around him now, wide circling through the wood,  
The breathing stillness of a multitude?

Who catches dimly through his straining sight  
The misty vision of an impious rite ?  
Who hears from one a cry that rends his heart,  
And feels that loving arms are torn apart,  
And by his mandate fiercely thrust aside ?  
Who is this one who crouches where she died,  
With face laid earthward as her face was laid,  
And prays for her as she for him once prayed ?

'Tis Jacob Eibsen, Jacob Eibsen's son,  
Whose occult life and mystic rule are done,  
And passed away the memory from his brain.  
'Tis Jacob Eibsen, who has come again  
To roam the woods, and see the mournful gleams  
That flash and linger of his old-time dreams.

The morning found him where he sank to rest  
Within the mystic circle : on his breast  
With withered hands, as to the dearest place,  
He held and pressed the empty carven case.

That day he sought the dwellings of his folk ;  
And when he found them, once again there broke

The far-off light upon him, and he cried  
From that wrecked cabin threshold for a guide  
To lead him, old and weary, to his own.  
And surely some kind spirit heard his moan,  
And led him to the graves where they were laid.  
The evening found him in the tuads' shade,  
And like a child at work upon the spot  
Where they were sleeping, though he knew it not.

Next day the children found him, and they gazed  
In fear at first, for they were sore amazed  
To see a man so old they never knew,  
Whose garb was savage, and whose white hair  
grew  
And flowed upon his shoulders; but their awe  
Was changed to love and pity when they saw  
The simple work he wrought at; and they came  
And gathered flowers for him, and asked his  
name,  
And laughed at his strange language; and he  
smiled  
To hear them laugh, as though himself a child.

Ere that brief day was o'er, from far and near  
The children gathered, wondering; and though  
    fear

Of scenes a long time shunned at first restrained,  
The spell was broken, and soon naught remained  
But gladsome features, where of old was dearth  
Of happy things and cheery sounds of mirth.  
The lizards fled, the snakes and bright-eyed things  
Found other homes, where childhood never sings;  
And all because poor Jacob, old and wild,  
White-haired and fur-clad, was himself a child.  
Each day he lived amid these scenes, his ear  
Heard far-off voices growing still more clear;  
And that dim light that first he saw in gleams  
Now left him only in his troubled dreams.

From far away the children loved to come  
And play and work with Jacob at his home.  
He learned their simple words with childish lip,  
And told them often of a white-sailed ship  
That sailed across a mighty sea, and found  
A beauteous harbor, all encircled round

With flowers and tall green trees ; but when they  
asked

What did the shipmen then, his mind was tasked  
Beyond its strength, and Jacob shook his head,  
And with them laughed, for all he knew was said.

The brawny sawyers often ceased their toil,  
As Jacob with the children passed, to smile  
With rugged pity on their simple play ;  
Then, gazing after the glad group, would say  
How strange it was to see that snowy hair  
And time-worn figure with the children fair.

So Jacob Eibsen lived through years of joy, —  
A patriarch in age, in heart a boy.

Unto the last he told them of the sea  
And white-sailed ship ; and ever lovingly,  
Unto the end, the garden he had made  
He tended daily, 'neath the tuads' shade.

But one bright morning, when the children came  
And roused the echoes calling Jacob's name,

The echoes only answered back the sound.  
They sought within the huts, but nothing found  
Save loneliness and shadow, falling chill  
On every sunny searcher : boding ill,  
They tried each well-known haunt, and every  
throat  
Sent far abroad the bushman's cooing note.  
But all in vain their searching : twilight fell,  
And sent them home their sorrowing tale to tell.  
That night their elders formed a torch-lit chain  
To sweep the gloomy bush ; and not in vain, —  
For when the moon at midnight hung o'erhead,  
The weary searchers found poor Jacob — dead !

He lay within the tuad ring, his face  
Laid earthward on his hands ; and all the place  
Was dim with shadow where the people stood.  
And as they gathered there, the circling wood  
Seemed filled with awful whisperings, and stirred  
By things unseen ; and every bushman heard,  
From where the corse lay plain within their sight,  
A woman's heart-wail rising on the night.

For over all the darkness and the fear  
That marked his life from childhood, shining clear,  
An arch, like God's bright rainbow, stretched  
    above,  
And joined the first and last, — his mother's love

They dug a grave beneath the tuads' shade,  
Where all unknown to them the bones were laid  
Of Jacob's kindred ; and a prayer was said  
In earnest sorrow for the unknown dead,  
Round which the children grouped.

  Upon the breast  
The hands were folded in eternal rest ;  
But still they held, as dearest to that place  
Where life last throbbed, the empty carven case.







## OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

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### "SONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN SEAS."

BY JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

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#### *New York Arcadian.*

"Like the smell of new-mown hay, or the first breath of spring, or an unexpected kiss from well-loved lips, or any other sweet, fresh, wholesome, natural delight, is to the professional reviewer the first perusal of genuine poetry by a new writer. Not for a long time have we experienced so fresh and joyous a surprise, so perfect a literary treat, as has been given us by these fresh and glowing songs by this young and hitherto utterly unknown poet. There is something so thoroughly new and natural and lifelike, something so buoyant and wholesome and true, so much original power and boldness of touch in these songs, that we feel at once that we are in the presence of a new power in poetry. This work alone places its author head and shoulder above the rank and file of contemporary versifiers. . . . The closing passages of 'Uncle Ned's' second tale, are in the highest degree dramatic,—thrilling the reader like the bugle-note that sounds the cry to arms. Finally, several of the poems are animated by a spirit so affectionate and pure, that we feel constrained to love their writer, offering, as they do in this respect, so marked and pleasant a contrast with too much of the so-called poetry of these modern times."

#### *Baltimore Bulletin.*

"Mr. O'Reilly is a true poet — no one can read his stirring measures and his picturesque descriptive passages without at once recognizing the true singer, and experiencing the contagion of his spirit. He soars loftily and grandly, and his song peals forth with a rare roundness and mellowness of tone that cheers and inspirits the hearer. His subjects belong to the open air, to new fields or untrod wilds, and they are full of healthy freshness, and the vigor of sturdy, redundant life. We hail Mr. O'Reilly with pleasure, and we demand for him the cordial recognition he deserves."

*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

"We may safely say that we lay these poems down with a feeling of delight that there has come among us a true poet, who can enchant by the vivid fire of his pictures without having recourse to a trick of words, or the re-dressing and re-torturing of old forgotten ideas. These poems, for the most part, are fresh and lifelike as the lyrics which led our forefathers to deeds of glory. With scarce a line of mawkish sentiment, there is the deep heart-feeling of a true poet. His descriptions bear the impress of truth and the realism of personal acquaintance with the incidents described. There is the flow of Scott in his narrative power, and the fire of Macaulay in his trumpet-toned tales of war. We are much mistaken if this man does not in the course of a few years walk the course, and show the world how narrative poetry should be written. He has it in him, and genius cannot be kept under hatches. Passing over 'The Dog Guard,' a fearful picture, we come to 'The Amber Whale.' It is impossible to describe the intense interest that surrounds this dramatic description. A more exciting chase could hardly be conceived, and as we stand with bated breath, while the mate drives his lance home to the vitals, and the boats go hissing along in the wake of the wounded monster, we seem to behold the sea red with blood, and mark the flukes as they sweep the captain's boat into eternity. Here is a portion of the story:—

"Then we heard the captain's order, "Heave!" and saw the harpoon fly,  
As the whales closed in with their open jaws: a shock, and a stifled cry  
Was all that we heard; then we looked to see if the crew were still  
afloat,—

But nothing was there save a dull red patch, and the boards of the shattered boat.

"But that was no time for mourning words: the other two boats came in,  
And one got fast on the quarter, and one aft the starboard fin  
Of the Amber Whale. For a minute he paused, as if he were in doubt  
As to whether 'twas best to run or fight. "Lay on!" the mate roared  
out,

"And I'll give him a lance!" The boat shot in; and the mate, when he  
saw his chance

Of sending it home to the vitals, four times he buried his lance.'

"We next come to 'The Dukite Snake,' a tale so simply told, so beautifully sad, that the heart goes out in pity to the poor young husband in his terrible grief. The Dukite Snake never goes alone. When one is killed the other will follow to the confines of the earth, but he will have revenge. Upon this fact the poet has wrought a picture so true and so dramatic that it almost chills the blood to read a tale so cruel and so life-like. . . . Among the remaining poems of length, we have 'The Fishermen of Wexford,' 'The Flying Dutchman,' and 'Uncle Ned's Tales.' All are good; but the last are

rules many years, inheriting and wearing the magic pearl. At last the young men of the tribe begin to question his authority, and one of them, with a spear-thrust, destroys the great pearl. Jacob Eibsen then seems repossessed by a white man's soul, and returns to the spot long since abandoned by his kindred, and finds it occupied by English settlers, whose children's simple, childlike playmate he becomes, and remains till death. The plot is good; and it is always managed with a sober simplicity, which forms an excellent ground for some strong dramatic effects. The Australian scenery and air and natural life are everywhere summoned round the story without being forced upon the reader. Here, for instance, is a picture at once vivid and intelligible,—which is not always the case with the vivid pictures of the word-painters. After the rains begin in that southern climate,—

“ ‘Earth throbs and heaves

With pregnant prescience of life and leaves;  
The shadows darken 'neath the tall trees' screen,  
While round their stems the rank and velvet green  
Of undergrowth is deeper still; and there,  
Within the double shade and steaming air,  
The scarlet palm has fixed its noxious root,  
And hangs the glorious poison of its fruit;  
And there, 'mid shaded green and shaded light,  
The steel-blue silent birds take rapid flight  
From earth to tree and tree to earth; and there  
The crimson-plumaged parrot cleaves the air  
Like flying fire, and huge brown owls awake  
To watch, far down, the stealing carpet-snake,  
Fresh-skinned and glowing in his changing dyes,  
With evil wisdom in the cruel eyes  
That glint like gems as o'er his head flits by  
The blue-black armor of the emperor-fly;  
And all the humid earth displays its powers  
Of prayer, with incense from the hearts of flowers  
That load the air with beauty and with wine  
Of mingled color. . . .

“ ‘And high o'erhead is color: round and round  
The towering gums and tuads, closely wound  
Like cables, creep the climbers to the sun,  
And over all the reaching branches run  
And hang, and still send shoots that climb and wind  
Till every arm and spray and leaf is twined,  
And miles of trees, like brethren joined in love,  
Are drawn and laced; while round them and above,  
When all is knit, the creeper rests for days  
As gathering might, and then one blinding blaze  
Of very glory sends, in wealth and strength,  
Of scarlet flowers o'er the forest's length!’

“There are deep springs of familiar feeling (as the mother's grief for the estrangement of her savage-hearted son) also touched in this poem, in which there is due artistic sense and enjoyment of the weirdness of the

motive; and, in short, we could imagine ourselves recurring more than once to the story, and liking it better and better. 'The Dog Guard' is the next best story in the book;—a horrible fact, treated with tragic realism, and skilfully kept from being merely horrible. . . . Some of the best poems in the book are the preludes to the stories."

*Boston Advertiser.*

"The first, and in many respects the best poem in the book, is 'The King of the Vasse,' which is a story of the very earliest settlement of Australia by Europeans, and before a convict settlement was established there. There is to it far greater care and finish than to any of the other long poems. In some parts it is weird and strange to a degree; in others it is pathetic,—everywhere it is simple, with a pleasant flow of rhythm, and closely true to nature. It is followed by 'The Dog Guard,' a poem which leaves an impression on the mind like Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner'—a subject which, but for great skill in the treatment, would have been repulsive. As it stands in the book it shows eminent descriptive power, and a certain freedom and daring that lifts it far above the commonplace. Interspersed among the longer poems are short verses, which must answer the same purpose in the book as the organist's interludes, helping out the value of that which precedes, and that which follows. Some of these are more than excellent. They stand out as a peculiar feature of the book, adding to its completeness, as they will add to the poet's reputation. Preceding 'The Dog Guard' we have the following, which perhaps is as characteristic as any of the preludes. It will be seen that the burden of this, as indeed of the whole book, is Western Australia:—

"'Nation of Sun and Sin,  
Thy flowers and crimes are red,  
And thy heart is sore within  
While the glory crowns thy head.  
Land of the songless birds,  
What was thine ancient crime,  
Burning through lapse of time  
Like a prophet's cursing words?

"'Aloes and myrrh and tears  
Mix in thy bitter wine:  
Drink, while the cup is thine  
Drink, for the draught is sign  
Of thy reign in coming years.'

"Mr. O'Reilly has done his work faithfully and well; he has given us in his book more than he promised us in the preface; and to-day, with his first poetical venture before the public, he has added another to the laurels he has already won in other fields."

simply superb. We doubt if more vivid pictures of war were ever drawn. The incidents are detailed with such lifelike force, that to any one who had ever felt the enthusiastic frenzy of battle, they bring back the sounds of the shells and the shout of advancing columns. They are lifelike as the pages of Tacitus, and stir the blood to a fever heat of warlike enthusiasm. They are strains to make soldiers."

*London Athenæum.*

"MR. O'REILLY is the poet of a far land. He sings of Western Australia, that poorest and loveliest of all the Australias, which has received from the mother country only her shame and her crime. Mr. O'Reilly, in a short poem, speaks of the land as 'discovered ere the fitting time,' endowed with a peerless clime, but having birds that do not sing, flowers that give no scent, and trees that do not fructify. Scenes and incidents, however, known to the author, in this perfumeless and mute land, have been reproduced by him in a series of poems of much beauty. 'The King of the Vasse,' a legend of the bush, is a weird and deeply pathetic poem, admirable alike for its conception and execution."

*Atlantic Monthly.*

"In a modest, well-worded prelude, the poet says:—

"From that fair land and drear land in the South,  
Of which through years I do not cease to think,  
I brought a tale, learned not by word of mouth,  
But formed by finding here one golden link  
And there another; and with hands unskilled  
For such fine work, but patient of all pain  
For love of it, I sought therefrom to build  
What might have been at first the goodly chain.

"It is not golden now: my craft knows more  
Of working baser metal than of fine;  
But to those fate-wrought rings of precious ore  
I add these rugged iron links of mine."

"This is not claiming enough for himself, but the reader the more gladly does him justice because of his modesty, and perhaps it is this quality in the author which oftenest commends his book. 'The King of the Vasse' is the story of a child of the first Swedish emigrants to Australia, who lies dead in his mother's arms when they land. A native chief, coming with all his people to greet the strangers, touches the boy's forehead with a great pearl, which he keeps in a carven case or shrine, and the mighty magic of it calls him back to life, but with a savage soul, as his kindred believe; for he deserts them for the natives, over whom he

*New York Tribune.*

"These songs are the most stirring tales of adventure imaginable, chiefly placed in Western Australia, a penal colony, which has 'received from the mother country only her shame and her crime.' The book is the very melodrama of poetry. . . . Mr. O'Reilly is a man whose career has been full of wild and varied adventure, and who has put these stirring scenes—all of which he saw, and part of which he was—into verse as spontaneous and unconventional as the life he describes. His rhymed tales are as exciting as ghost stories, and we have been reading them while the early sullen November night closed in, with something the same feeling, the queer shiver of breathless expectation, with which we used to listen to legends of ghosts and goblins by our grandmother's firelight. Not that the supernatural figures too largely in these tales,—the actors in them are far more formidable than any disembodied spirits. . . . 'The King of the Vasse' is a wonderful story, in which a dead child is raised to life by a pagan incantation and the touch of a mystic pearl on the face,—which will charm the lovers of the miraculous. 'The Amber Whale,' 'The Dog Guard,' and 'Haunted by Tigers,' are in the same vein with 'The Monster Diamond.' Thrilling tales all of them. 'Chunder Ali's Wife' is a charming little Oriental love story; a 'Legend of the Blessed Virgin' is full of tenderness and grace, for Mr. O'Reilly is both a Catholic and an Irishman; and I cannot close my extracts from his book more fittingly than with his heartfelt lines to his 'Native Land':—

" 'It chanced to me upon a time to sail  
 Across the Southern Ocean to and fro;  
 And, landing at fair isles, by stream and vale  
 Of sensuous blessing did we ofttimes go.  
 And months of dreamy joys, like joys in sleep,  
 Or like a clear, calm stream o'er mossy stone,  
 Unnoted passed our hearts with voiceless sweep,  
 And left us yearning still for lands unknown.

" 'And when we found one,—for 'tis soon to find  
 In thousand-isled Cathay another isle,—  
 For one short noon its treasures filled the mind,  
 And then again we yearned, and ceased to smile.  
 And so it was, from isle to isle we passed,  
 Like wanton bees or boys on flowers or lips;  
 And when that all was tasted, then at last  
 We thirsted still for draughts instead of sips.

" 'I learned from this there is no Southern land  
 Can fill with love the hearts of Northern men.  
 Sick minds need change; but, when in health they stand  
 'Neath foreign skies their love flies home again.



And thus with me it was: the yearning turned  
From laden airs of cinnamon away,  
And stretched far westward, while the full heart burned  
With love for Ireland, looking on Cathay!

“ ‘My first dear love, all dearer for thy grief!  
My land that has no peer in all the sea  
For verdure, vale, or river, flower or leaf, —  
If first to no man else, thou’rt first to me.  
New loves may come with duties, but the first  
Is deepest yet, — the mother’s breath and smiles:  
Like that kind face and breast where I was nursed  
Is my poor land, the Niobe of isles.’ ”

*Mr. R. H. Stoddard, in Scribner’s Monthly.*

“ ‘The King of the Vasse,’ the opening poem in Mr. O’Reilly’s volume, is a remarkable one; and if the legend be the creation of Mr. O’Reilly, it places him high among the few really imaginative poets. . . . This, in brief, is the outline of the ‘King of the Vasse.’ In it we could point out many faulty lines. William Morris could have spun off the verse more fluently, and Longfellow could have imparted to it his usual grace. Still, we are glad that it is not from them, but from Mr. O’Reilly, that we receive it. The story is simply and strongly told, and is imaginative and pathetic. It is certainly the most poetic poem in the volume, though by no means the most striking one. ‘The Amber Whale’ is more characteristic of Mr. O’Reilly’s genius, as ‘The Dog Guard’ and ‘The Dukite Snake’ are more characteristic of the region in which he is most at home. . . . He is as good a balladist as Walter Thornbury, who is the only other living poet who could have written ‘The Old Dragoon’s Story.’ ”

*Boston Gazette.*

“This is a volume of admirable poetry. The more ambitious poems in the book are in narrative form, and are terse and spirited in style, and full of dramatic power and effect. Mr. O’Reilly is both picturesque and epigrammatic, and writes with a manly straightforwardness that is very attractive. . . . Of the sickly sentimentality that forms the groundwork of so much of our modern poetry, not a trace is to be found in this book. The tone throughout is healthy, earnest, and pure. There is also an independence and originality of thought and treatment that are very striking, and which prove not the least attractive features of the book. Some of the stories are conceived with unusual power, and are developed with scarcely less effect and skill.”

*Boston Times.*

"Some reminiscences of his romantic life, the poet has woven into the verses that fill this volume. Very grim reminiscences they are, of crime and death and horrors dire; but they represent faithfully, we have no doubt, the society, or rather savagery, of those far and fearsome lands. Most of the poems are stories, sombre in substance, but told with a vehement vigor that is singularly harmonious with their themes. The opening poem, 'The King of the Vasse,' preserves a strange and pathetic legend, which the poet has wrought into a powerful, but most painful story. His imagination revels in pictures of weird desolation and the repulsive and appalling prodigies of animal and vegetable life in the tropic world; and the effect of these presented in quick succession, and varied only by episodes of human sin or suffering, is positively depressing. Such passages as this abound in the poem:—

"In that strange country's heart, whence comes the breath  
Of hot disease and pestilential death,  
Lie leagues of wooded swamp, that from the hills  
Seem stretching meadows; but the flood that fills  
These valley basins has the hue of ink  
And dismal doorways open on the brink,  
Beneath the gnarled arms of trees that grow  
All leafless to the top, from roots below  
The Lethe flood; and he who enters there  
Beneath this screen sees rising, ghastly bare,  
Like mammoth bones within a charnel dark,  
The white and ragged stems of paper-bark,  
That drip down moisture with a ceaseless drip,—  
With lines that run like cordage of a ship;  
For myriad creepers struggle to the light,  
And twine and meet o'erhead in murderous fight  
For life and sunshine. . . .

"Between the water and the matted screen,  
The bald-head vultures, two and two, are seen  
In dismal grandeur, with revolting face  
Of foul grotesque, like spirits of the place;  
And now and then a spear-shaped wave goes by,  
Its apex glittering with an evil eye  
That sets above its enemy and prey  
As from the wave in treacherous, slimy way  
The black snake winds, and strikes the bestial bird,  
Whose shriek-like wailing on the hills is heard."

"The 'Dog Guard' is a tale of horrors. 'The Amber Whale' and 'Haunted by Tigers' are founded on whaling incidents, and the latter, especially, is eloquent with the woe of tragedy. There are a few poems in the volume written in a lighter mood. 'Uncle Ned's Tale' is a very spirited tale of battle. 'The Fishermen of Wexford' is one of the best pieces in the collection—almost severe in its simple realism, but tenderly

pathetic. We have rarely seen a first volume of poems so rich in promise as is this. It is singularly free from the faults of most early poems, and exhibits a maturity of thought and a sober strength of style that would do credit to any of our older poets."

*Boston Commercial Bulletin.*

"His descriptive powers are remarkably strong and vivid, and his imagination powerful and vigorous. Yet it is evident from a glance at the minor poems of 'Golu,' and my 'Mother's Memory,' that the author has an imagination that will not desert him on brighter and more graceful flights of fancy. Altogether the volume is one of much more than ordinary originality and excellence."

*Worcester Palladium.*

"He shows originality and good descriptive power, and he treats his subjects *con amore*. . . . The author had the very best reason in the world for writing this collection, and a second volume will be awaited with reason; for strong points are displayed, and a person who writes because his heart wills it, sooner or later wins the heart of the public."

*Bangor Whig.*

"There is no one of the poems the book contains that has not running through it a sort of realism that at once takes possession of the reader's mind, and he looks upon it, as it were, as an actual event."

*Mr. Newell (Orpheus C. Kerr) in The Catholic Review.*

"Judged in all the phases of his talent presented by this book, Mr. O'Reilly is unquestionably a man of true poetic verve and temperament, with too much reverence for the noble gift of song to sophisticate it with inawkish affectations or conceited verbal ingenuities. No obscure line patches his page; no fantastic mannerism accentuates his style; no pretend-  
edly metaphysical abstraction egotizes what he thinks worthy of gift to mankind."

*Utica Herald.*

"In the leading poem of Mr. O'Reilly's collection, entitled 'The King of the Vasse,' there are novelties of scene and legend which alone claim the attention. . . . The poem is in many respects a wonderful one, and contains many subtleties of thought and expression, which it is impossible to reproduce in scanty extract."

*Literary World, Boston.*

... "Mr. O'Reilly unquestionably possesses poetical talent of a high and rare order. He excels in dramatic narrative, to which his natural intensity of feeling lends a peculiar force. His verse is sometimes careless, and often lacks finish; but writers are few, nowadays, who have a better capital in heart or hand for successful poetical work than that which is evidenced in this volume."

*New York Independent.*

"The first and longest poem in this book, 'The King of the Vasse,' introduces us into a new country, and proves that the author's dreary Australian experiences were a gain to literature. . . . 'The Dog Guard' and 'The Amber Whale' are even better, the first being an addition of real value to our literature. Throughout the lesser poems which compose the remainder of the volume, there is such an evenness of excellence as to give good proof that the author need not confine himself to narrative poetry in order to claim an honorable place in our literature."

*Chicago Times.*

"This book is a striking instance that 'you find poetry nowhere unless you bring some with you.' The thousands of despairing wretches who have toiled in the chain-gangs as Mr. O'Reilly did, saw no poems in the soil which seemed to give them back the impress only of the British arrow cut on the sole of their convict shoes. But the radiant imagination and tender heart of the patriot felon found poetry on every side of him, and in his hands the driest stick becomes an Aaron's rod, and buds and blossoms. The most delightful portion of the book is its Australian legends. These reveal extraordinary dramatic power, and their rhythmical construction is perfect. Unique and incomparable, they will keep a permanent place in literature, and the romance of their origin and authorship will scarcely add anything to their beauty and completeness as poems. . . . 'Modern poets put a great deal of water in their ink,' says Goethe. O'Reilly's ink contains just water enough to keep the fluid from becoming thick. It flows like a limpid stream, flecked with clouds and sunlight, and here and there tossing with so much force into fissures of Australian rocks as to send up glittering, snowy showers of spray. O'Reilly is undoubtedly destined to reach a high place as an English poet. He is now a very young man."

*Christian Era.*

"As a poet, his writings have called forth admiration, and as an editor, he is worthy of great praise."

*Mr. E. P. Whipple, in the Boston Globe.*

"The Boston editors can boast of having a poet in their ranks, and they should naturally cherish him. . . . More than half his volume is devoted to what he saw, felt, collected, and imagined during a forced sojourn in Australia. The remaining portion consists of occasional poems, very tender, fanciful, earnest, individual, and manly, claiming nothing which they do not win by their own inherent force, grace, melody, and 'sweet reasonableness,' or it may be at times their passionate unreasonableness. Nobody can read the volume without being drawn to its author. He is so thoroughly honest and sincere that he insists that his imaginations are but memories."

*New York Evening Mail.*

"Most of the songs are stories of the bush or of the sea, and, strangely, the subjects are almost without exception, illustrations of the awful surety of the punishment that lays in wait for the sin of him whom men harm not—the key of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner.' It is almost the old Greek Fate that stalks through these tales of outlawry and wrong, and if they be indeed the legends of a convict land, they are themselves a strange showing of how crime haunts and hunts the soul. . . . Mr. O'Reilly has the natural gift of telling a story capitally, and all these tales in verse are interesting as well as powerful. He has other qualifications also as a poet; his Australian landscapes are drawn with fine artistic skill, and testify to their own truth, and about some of his pictures there is a weirdness that touches on the supernatural."

*Boston Post.*

"Of the author's genius in poetry the public are so well aware, through his fugitive pieces, that no commendation is necessary. His style is vigorous and manly, and combines a delicacy of sentiment with clearness of thought and vivacity of imagery. Most of these poems have a peculiar interest, from the fact that they are of a narrative form, 'relics of an unknown sphere,' of the writer's personal experience and adventure in Australia. They are uneven in merit, but by far the greater number have already taken a permanent place among the living poems of the day."

*Danbury News.*

"His poems, aside from their intrinsic merit and romantic interest, are worth close study, as examples of the effects produced upon the mind of a prisoner by the wild luxuriance and fantastic forms which nature assumes in Australia."

*New York Tablet.*

"The 'Amber Whale,' 'Dog Guard,' and 'Monster Diamond,' are among the best known of his longer poems, and they have already taken their place amongst the best narrative poems of the age. . . . We hail with very great pleasure this first collection of Mr. O'Reilly's poems, which we hope will meet with the kindly welcome it deserves from all lovers of ballad poetry."

*Cincinnati Times.*

"Amid the frantic strivings of modern poets to obtain a reputation for originality by wild mouthings, odd, strange, and revolting conceits, by soaring toward the empyrian, and diving into the infinite, by a false mysticism and luxuriance of verbiage, covering a poverty of ideas, it is refreshing to find one poet who is content to be original within the domain of common sense; who courts the muses, not with the freedom of a literary libertine, but modestly, yet with true poetic ardor. . . . In view of all this we take it as a most encouraging thing that such a book of poetry as 'Songs from the Southern Seas' is published, and still more encouraging its evident approval by critics and acceptableness to the public. In some of the poems, notably in 'The King of the Vasse,' there are traces of the influence of Wm. Morris, and Mr. O'Reilly could not be influenced from a sweeter, purer source; in narrative passages there is evidence of a study of Scott, and the poet could not study in this department a better model; in the war lyrics there is an evident following of the style of Macaulay, and a singer of more stirring battle-songs never lived; but throughout the book there is hardly a trace of Swinburne or the Swinburnian school. The poems are strong, earnest, and the offspring of genuine emotion. . . . Mr. O'Reilly's war lyrics, under the title of 'Uncle Ned's Tales,' are the most spirited that have been produced for a long time. They have all the ring and fire of Macaulay; they stir one's blood like the neigh of a war-horse or the blast of a bugle."

*Hartford Post.*

"Some of the short poems are full of thoughtful earnestness and the true poet's yearning tenderness, while seldom have more stirring lines told tales of war than those of 'Uncle Ned's Stories.' "

*San Francisco Monitor.*

"The volume now before us contains 'The King of the Vasse,' 'The Dog Guard,' 'The Amber Whale,' and a number of minor pieces, all of which are marked by much dramatic power and beauty of imagery, showing him to be a poet in the truest sense of the word."

*Irish American.*

"Originality, whether of ideas, construction, or of subjects, is the principal something invariable sought for, and but seldom found, in the generation of 'poets' with which this era of ours is so lavishly supplied. In the volume before us, however, this essential poetic quality is so strikingly manifest, that, in recognition of it, we must assign Mr. O'Reilly a very high place among the few who, in our day, write readable and meritorious verse. But this is not the only feature in Mr. O'Reilly's muse worthy of remark; the vigor of his lines, the aptness of his similes, the effectiveness of his climaxes,—all testify to the existence in the author of that true poetic disposition, which is ever inborn, and never acquired. To those who may be sceptical of our judgment, we say, read the 'Songs from the Southern Seas,' and realize the pleasure they are calculated to afford even the most critical."

*Detroit Post.*

"They are evidently not fictions, but faithful transcripts of his own feelings; the imagery is not stolen or borrowed, but original."

*Hartford Courant.*

"The volume not only contains a great deal of vigorous and interesting poetry, but it gives excellent promise for the future."

*Albany Journal.*

"For wild adventure and thrilling experience they will compare with the most weird and exciting legends."

*Dublin Nation.*

"The narratives themselves are interesting; they have usually a tragic turn, and are worked out with no small degree of skill. . . . Some of the word-pictures of Australian scenery are exceedingly realistic and vivid. . . . Some of the minor poems in this book afford much better indications of the poetic capacities of the author; and the effect of the entire volume is to lead us to believe that he has within him powers which will enable him to rise far above the mark to which he has here attained."

*Lawrence American.*

"There is a vein of fire and earnestness, a glow of enthusiasm, that cannot but attract to the writer, and win no slight admiration for his genius; and his countrymen will especially be pleased with the graceful volume."

*Catholic Record of Philadelphia.*

"It has seldom been our good fortune to discover a volume of verses in which the realistic and poetic elements were so powerfully and ably combined. Mr. O'Reilly selects his themes from among scenes and characters which would naturally be supposed to be the least congenial to the muse of song, for Erato is not usually considered at home among Nantucket tars on New Bedford whaling-ships, in Australian penal colonies, or the after-dark pranks of shameless youngsters. The luxurious arcades and flowering groves of the tropics may, indeed, be for a time her abode, and she may not disdain to occasionally bathe in the sparkling waters of sunny Southern seas, but we will stake our character for penetration on the assertion that Mr. O'Reilly is a handsome Irishman from the vicinity of Blarney Castle, for he has so completely fascinated her that she follows him with her most favoring smiles wherever or whenever he bids her presence. She is beside him in the murderer's secluded shelter; she rides with him on the storm-winds that whistle around the Horn; she sits beside him in the agonizing cruise when the wounded amber whale drags his boat through the mighty Southern spray; she perches on an oil barrel on New Bedford's wharves, or peeps with him through the windows of a New-England meeting-house. Wherever he lists, she lets him sing,—sing the tenderest of songs, in the manliest of tones."