

# **Narrative and Legendary Poems: Among the Hills and Others From Volume I., The Works of Whittier**

**John Greenleaf Whittier**

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From Volume I., The Works of Whittier: Narrative and Legendary Poems  
#9 in our series by John Greenleaf Whittier

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NARRATIVE AND LEGENDARY

POEMS

BY  
JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

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AMONG THE HILLS

This poem, when originally published, was dedicated to Annie Fields, wife of the distinguished publisher, James T. Fields, of Boston, in grateful acknowledgment of the strength and inspiration I have found in her friendship and sympathy. The poem in its first form was entitled *The Wife: an Idyl of Bearcamp Water*, and appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1868. When I published the volume *Among the Hills*, in December of the same year, I expanded the Prelude and filled out also the outlines of the story.

PRELUDE.

ALONG the roadside, like the flowers of gold  
That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,  
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod,  
And the red pennons of the cardinal-flowers  
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.  
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,  
Vying-weary with its long flight from the south,  
Unfelt; yet, closely scanned, yon maple leaf  
With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,  
Confesses it. The locust by the wall  
Stabs the noon-silence with his sharp alarm.

A single hay-cart down the dusty road  
Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep  
On the load's top. Against the neighboring hill,  
Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,  
The sheep show white, as if a snowdrift still  
Defied the dog-star. Through the open door  
A drowsy smell of flowers-gray heliotrope,  
And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette--  
Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends  
To the pervading symphony of peace.  
No time is this for hands long over-worn  
To task their strength; and (unto Him be praise  
Who giveth quietness!) the stress and strain  
Of years that did the work of centuries  
Have ceased, and we can draw our breath once more  
Freely and full. So, as yon harvesters  
Make glad their nooning underneath the elms  
With tale and riddle and old snatch of song,  
I lay aside grave themes, and idly turn  
The leaves of memory's sketch-book, dreaming o'er  
Old summer pictures of the quiet hills,  
And human life, as quiet, at their feet.

And yet not idly all. A farmer's son,  
Proud of field-lore and harvest craft, and feeling  
All their fine possibilities, how rich  
And restful even poverty and toil  
Become when beauty, harmony, and love  
Sit at their humble hearth as angels sat  
At evening in the patriarch's tent, when man  
Makes labor noble, and his farmer's frock  
The symbol of a Christian chivalry  
Tender and just and generous to her  
Who clothes with grace all duty; still, I know  
Too well the picture has another side,--  
How wearily the grind of toil goes on  
Where love is wanting, how the eye and ear  
And heart are starved amidst the plenitude  
Of nature, and how hard and colorless  
Is life without an atmosphere. I look  
Across the lapse of half a century,  
And call to mind old homesteads, where no flower  
Told that the spring had come, but evil weeds,  
Nightshade and rough-leaved burdock in the place  
Of the sweet doorway greeting of the rose  
And honeysuckle, where the house walls seemed  
Blistering in sun, without a tree or vine  
To cast the tremulous shadow of its leaves  
Across the curtainless windows, from whose panes  
Fluttered the signal rags of shiftlessness.  
Within, the cluttered kitchen-floor, unwashed  
(Broom-clean I think they called it); the best room  
Stifling with cellar damp, shut from the air  
In hot midsummer, bookless, pictureless,  
Save the inevitable sampler hung  
Over the fireplace, or a mourning piece,  
A green-haired woman, peony-cheeked, beneath  
Impossible willows; the wide-throated hearth  
Bristling with faded pine-boughs half concealing

The piled-up rubbish at the chimney's back;  
And, in sad keeping with all things about them,  
Shrill, querulous-women, sour and sullen men,  
Untidy, loveless, old before their time,  
With scarce a human interest save their own  
Monotonous round of small economies,  
Or the poor scandal of the neighborhood;  
Blind to the beauty everywhere revealed,  
Treading the May-flowers with regardless feet;  
For them the song-sparrow and the bobolink  
Sang not, nor winds made music in the leaves;  
For them in vain October's holocaust  
Burned, gold and crimson, over all the hills,  
The sacramental mystery of the woods.  
Church-goers, fearful of the unseen Powers,  
But grumbling over pulpit-tax and pew-rent,  
Saving, as shrewd economists, their souls  
And winter pork with the least possible outlay  
Of salt and sanctity; in daily life  
Showing as little actual comprehension  
Of Christian charity and love and duty,  
As if the Sermon on the Mount had been  
Outdated like a last year's almanac  
Rich in broad woodlands and in half-tilled fields,  
And yet so pinched and bare and comfortless,  
The veriest straggler limping on his rounds,  
The sun and air his sole inheritance,  
Laughed at a poverty that paid its taxes,  
And hugged his rags in self-complacency!

Not such should be the homesteads of a land  
Where whoso wisely wills and acts may dwell  
As king and lawgiver, in broad-acred state,  
With beauty, art, taste, culture, books, to make  
His hour of leisure richer than a life  
Of fourscore to the barons of old time,  
Our yeoman should be equal to his home  
Set in the fair, green valleys, purple walled,  
A man to match his mountains, not to creep  
Dwarfed and abased below them. I would fain  
In this light way (of which I needs must own  
With the knife-grinder of whom Canning sings,  
"Story, God bless you! I have none to tell you!")  
Invite the eye to see and heart to feel  
The beauty and the joy within their reach,--  
Home, and home loves, and the beatitudes  
Of nature free to all. Haply in years  
That wait to take the places of our own,  
Heard where some breezy balcony looks down  
On happy homes, or where the lake in the moon  
Sleeps dreaming of the mountains, fair as Ruth,  
In the old Hebrew pastoral, at the feet  
Of Boaz, even this simple lay of mine  
May seem the burden of a prophecy,  
Finding its late fulfilment in a change  
Slow as the oak's growth, lifting manhood up  
Through broader culture, finer manners, love,  
And reverence, to the level of the hills.

O Golden Age, whose light is of the dawn,  
And not of sunset, forward, not behind,  
Flood the new heavens and earth, and with thee bring  
All the old virtues, whatsoever things  
Are pure and honest and of good repute,  
But add thereto whatever bard has sung  
Or seer has told of when in trance and dream  
They saw the Happy Isles of prophecy  
Let Justice hold her scale, and Truth divide  
Between the right and wrong; but give the heart  
The freedom of its fair inheritance;  
Let the poor prisoner, cramped and starved so long,  
At Nature's table feast his ear and eye  
With joy and wonder; let all harmonies  
Of sound, form, color, motion, wait upon  
The princely guest, whether in soft attire  
Of leisure clad, or the coarse frock of toil,  
And, lending life to the dead form of faith,  
Give human nature reverence for the sake  
Of One who bore it, making it divine  
With the ineffable tenderness of God;  
Let common need, the brotherhood of prayer,  
The heirship of an unknown destiny,  
The unsolved mystery round about us, make  
A man more precious than the gold of Ophir.  
Sacred, inviolate, unto whom all things  
Should minister, as outward types and signs  
Of the eternal beauty which fulfils  
The one great purpose of creation, Love,  
The sole necessity of Earth and Heaven!

.....

For weeks the clouds had raked the hills  
And vexed the vales with raining,  
And all the woods were sad with mist,  
And all the brooks complaining.

At last, a sudden night-storm tore  
The mountain veils asunder,  
And swept the valleys clean before  
The besom of the thunder.

Through Sandwich notch the west-wind sang  
Good morrow to the cotter;  
And once again Chocorua's horn  
Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake Ossipee,  
Once more the sunshine wearing,  
Stooped, tracing on that silver shield  
His grim armorial bearing.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky,  
The peaks had winter's keenness;  
And, close on autumn's frost, the vales  
Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors

With golden lights were checkered,  
Once more rejoicing leaves in wind  
And sunshine danced and flickered.

It was as if the summer's late  
Atoning for it's sadness  
Had borrowed every season's charm  
To end its days in gladness.

Rivers of gold-mist flowing down  
From far celestial fountains,--  
The great sun flaming through the rifts  
Beyond the wall of mountains.

We paused at last where home-bound cows  
Brought down the pasture's treasure,  
And in the barn the rhythmic flails  
Beat out a harvest measure.

We heard the night-hawk's sullen plunge,  
The crow his tree-mates calling  
The shadows lengthening down the slopes  
About our feet were falling.

And through them smote the level sun  
In broken lines of splendor,  
Touched the gray rocks and made the green  
Of the shorn grass more tender.

The maples bending o'er the gate,  
Their arch of leaves just tinted  
With yellow warmth, the golden glow  
Of coming autumn hinted.

Keen white between the farm-house showed,  
And smiled on porch and trellis,  
The fair democracy of flowers  
That equals cot and palace.

And weaving garlands for her dog,  
'Twixt chidings and caresses,  
A human flower of childhood shook  
The sunshine from her tresses.

Clear drawn against the hard blue sky,  
The peaks had winter's keenness;  
And, close on autumn's frost, the vales  
Had more than June's fresh greenness.

Again the sodden forest floors  
With golden lights were checkered,  
Once more rejoicing leaves in wind  
And sunshine danced and flickered.

It was as if the summer's late  
Atoning for it's sadness  
Had borrowed every season's charm  
To end its days in gladness.

I call to mind those banded vales  
Of shadow and of shining,  
Through which, my hostess at my side,  
I drove in day's declining.

We held our sideling way above  
The river's whitening shallows,  
By homesteads old, with wide-flung barns  
Swept through and through by swallows;

By maple orchards, belts of pine  
And larches climbing darkly  
The mountain slopes, and, over all,  
The great peaks rising starkly.

You should have seen that long hill-range  
With gaps of brightness riven,--  
How through each pass and hollow streamed  
The purpling lights of heaven,--

On either hand we saw the signs  
Of fancy and of shrewdness,  
Where taste had wound its arms of vines  
Round thrift's uncomely rudeness.

The sun-brown farmer in his frock  
Shook hands, and called to Mary  
Bare-armed, as Juno might, she came,  
White-aproned from her dairy.

Her air, her smile, her motions, told  
Of womanly completeness;  
A music as of household songs  
Was in her voice of sweetness.

Not fair alone in curve and line,  
But something more and better,  
The secret charm eluding art,  
Its spirit, not its letter;--

An inborn grace that nothing lacked  
Of culture or appliance,  
The warmth of genial courtesy,  
The calm of self-reliance.

Before her queenly womanhood  
How dared our hostess utter  
The paltry errand of her need  
To buy her fresh-churned butter?

She led the way with housewife pride,  
Her goodly store disclosing,  
Full tenderly the golden balls  
With practised hands disposing.

Then, while along the western hills  
We watched the changeful glory  
Of sunset, on our homeward way,  
I heard her simple story.

The early crickets sang; the stream  
Plashed through my friend's narration  
Her rustic patois of the hills  
Lost in my free-translation.

"More wise," she said, "than those who swarm  
Our hills in middle summer,  
She came, when June's first roses blow,  
To greet the early comer.

"From school and ball and rout she came,  
The city's fair, pale daughter,  
To drink the wine of mountain air  
Beside the Bearcamp Water.

"Her step grew firmer on the hills  
That watch our homesteads over;  
On cheek and lip, from summer fields,  
She caught the bloom of clover.

"For health comes sparkling in the streams  
From cool Chocorua stealing  
There's iron in our Northern winds;  
Our pines are trees of healing.

"She sat beneath the broad-armed elms  
That skirt the mowing-meadow,  
And watched the gentle west-wind weave  
The grass with shine and shadow.

"Beside her, from the summer heat  
To share her grateful screening,  
With forehead bared, the farmer stood,  
Upon his pitchfork leaning.

"Framed in its damp, dark locks, his face  
Had nothing mean or common,--  
Strong, manly, true, the tenderness  
And pride beloved of woman.

"She looked up, glowing with the health  
The country air had brought her,  
And, laughing, said: 'You lack a wife,  
Your mother lacks a daughter.

"To mend your frock and bake your bread  
You do not need a lady  
Be sure among these brown old homes  
Is some one waiting ready,--

"Some fair, sweet girl with skilful hand  
And cheerful heart for treasure,  
Who never played with ivory keys,  
Or danced the polka's measure.'

"He bent his black brows to a frown,  
He set his white teeth tightly.  
'T is well,' he said, 'for one like you

To choose for me so lightly.

"You think, because my life is rude  
I take no note of sweetness  
I tell you love has naught to do  
With meetness or unmeetness.

"'Itself its best excuse, it asks  
No leave of pride or fashion  
When silken zone or homespun frock  
It stirs with throbs of passion.

"'You think me deaf and blind: you bring  
Your winning graces hither  
As free as if from cradle-time  
We two had played together.

"'You tempt me with your laughing eyes,  
Your cheek of sundown's blushes,  
A motion as of waving grain,  
A music as of thrushes.

"'The plaything of your summer sport,  
The spells you weave around me  
You cannot at your will undo,  
Nor leave me as you found me.

"'You go as lightly as you came,  
Your life is well without me;  
What care you that these hills will close  
Like prison-walls about me?

"'No mood is mine to seek a wife,  
Or daughter for my mother  
Who loves you loses in that love  
All power to love another!

"'I dare your pity or your scorn,  
With pride your own exceeding;  
I fling my heart into your lap  
Without a word of pleading.'

"She looked up in his face of pain  
So archly, yet so tender  
'And if I lend you mine,' she said,  
'Will you forgive the lender?'

"'Nor frock nor tan can hide the man;  
And see you not, my farmer,  
How weak and fond a woman waits  
Behind this silken armor?

"'I love you: on that love alone,  
And not my worth, presuming,  
Will you not trust for summer fruit  
The tree in May-day blooming?'

"Alone the hangbird overhead,  
His hair-swung cradle straining,

Looked down to see love's miracle,--  
The giving that is gaining.

"And so the farmer found a wife,  
His mother found a daughter  
There looks no happier home than hers  
On pleasant Bearcamp Water.

"Flowers spring to blossom where she walks  
The careful ways of duty;  
Our hard, stiff lines of life with her  
Are flowing curves of beauty.

"Our homes are cheerier for her sake,  
Our door-yards brighter blooming,  
And all about the social air  
Is sweeter for her coming.

"Unspoken homilies of peace  
Her daily life is preaching;  
The still refreshment of the dew  
Is her unconscious teaching.

"And never tenderer hand than hers  
Unknits the brow of ailing;  
Her garments to the sick man's ear  
Have music in their trailing.

"And when, in pleasant harvest moons,  
The youthful huskers gather,  
Or sleigh-drives on the mountain ways  
Defy the winter weather,--

"In sugar-camps, when south and warm  
The winds of March are blowing,  
And sweetly from its thawing veins  
The maple's blood is flowing,--

"In summer, where some lilled pond  
Its virgin zone is baring,  
Or where the ruddy autumn fire  
Lights up the apple-paring,--

"The coarseness of a ruder time  
Her finer mirth displaces,  
A subtler sense of pleasure fills  
Each rustic sport she graces.

"Her presence lends its warmth and health  
To all who come before it.  
If woman lost us Eden, such  
As she alone restore it.

"For larger life and wiser aims  
The farmer is her debtor;  
Who holds to his another's heart  
Must needs be worse or better.

"Through her his civic service shows

A purer-toned ambition;  
No double consciousness divides  
The man and politician.

"In party's doubtful ways he trusts  
Her instincts to determine;  
At the loud polls, the thought of her  
Recalls Christ's Mountain Sermon.

"He owns her logic of the heart,  
And wisdom of unreason,  
Supplying, while he doubts and weighs,  
The needed word in season.

"He sees with pride her richer thought,  
Her fancy's freer ranges;  
And love thus deepened to respect  
Is proof against all changes.

"And if she walks at ease in ways  
His feet are slow to travel,  
And if she reads with cultured eyes  
What his may scarce unravel,

"Still clearer, for her keener sight  
Of beauty and of wonder,  
He learns the meaning of the hills  
He dwelt from childhood under.

"And higher, warmed with summer lights,  
Or winter-crowned and hoary,  
The ridged horizon lifts for him  
Its inner veils of glory.

"He has his own free, bookless lore,  
The lessons nature taught him,  
The wisdom which the woods and hills  
And toiling men have brought him:

"The steady force of will whereby  
Her flexile grace seems sweeter;  
The sturdy counterpoise which makes  
Her woman's life completer.

"A latent fire of soul which lacks  
No breath of love to fan it;  
And wit, that, like his native brooks,  
Plays over solid granite.

"How dwarfed against his manliness  
She sees the poor pretension,  
The wants, the aims, the follies, born  
Of fashion and convention.

"How life behind its accidents  
Stands strong and self-sustaining,  
The human fact transcending all  
The losing and the gaining.

"And so in grateful interchange  
Of teacher and of hearer,  
Their lives their true distinctness keep  
While daily drawing nearer.

"And if the husband or the wife  
In home's strong light discovers  
Such slight defaults as failed to meet  
The blinded eyes of lovers,

"Why need we care to ask?--who dreams  
Without their thorns of roses,  
Or wonders that the truest steel  
The readiest spark discloses?

"For still in mutual sufferance lies  
The secret of true living;  
Love scarce is love that never knows  
The sweetness of forgiving.

"We send the Squire to General Court,  
He takes his young wife thither;  
No prouder man election day  
Rides through the sweet June weather.

"He sees with eyes of manly trust  
All hearts to her inclining;  
Not less for him his household light  
That others share its shining."

Thus, while my hostess spake, there grew  
Before me, warmer tinted  
And outlined with a tenderer grace,  
The picture that she hinted.

The sunset smouldered as we drove  
Beneath the deep hill-shadows.  
Below us wreaths of white fog walked  
Like ghosts the haunted meadows.

Sounding the summer night, the stars  
Dropped down their golden plummets;  
The pale arc of the Northern lights  
Rose o'er the mountain summits,

Until, at last, beneath its bridge,  
We heard the Bearcamp flowing,  
And saw across the mapled lawn  
The welcome home lights glowing.

And, musing on the tale I heard,  
'T were well, thought I, if often  
To rugged farm-life came the gift  
To harmonize and soften;

If more and more we found the troth  
Of fact and fancy plighted,  
And culture's charm and labor's strength  
In rural homes united,--

The simple life, the homely hearth,  
With beauty's sphere surrounding,  
And blessing toil where toil abounds  
With graces more abounding.  
1868.

#### THE DOLE OF JARL THORKELL.

THE land was pale with famine  
And racked with fever-pain;  
The frozen fiords were fishless,  
The earth withheld her grain.

Men saw the boding Fylgja  
Before them come and go,  
And, through their dreams, the Urdarmoon  
From west to east sailed slow.

Jarl Thorkell of Thevera  
At Yule-time made his vow;  
On Rykdal's holy Doom-stone  
He slew to Frey his cow.

To bounteous Frey he slew her;  
To Skuld, the younger Norn,  
Who watches over birth and death,  
He gave her calf unborn.

And his little gold-haired daughter  
Took up the sprinkling-rod,  
And smeared with blood the temple  
And the wide lips of the god.

Hoarse below, the winter water  
Ground its ice-blocks o'er and o'er;  
Jets of foam, like ghosts of dead waves,  
Rose and fell along the shore.

The red torch of the Jokul,  
Aloft in icy space,  
Shone down on the bloody Horg-stones  
And the statue's carven face.

And closer round and grimmer  
Beneath its baleful light  
The Jotun shapes of mountains  
Came crowding through the night.

The gray-haired Hersir trembled  
As a flame by wind is blown;  
A weird power moved his white lips,  
And their voice was not his own.

"The AEsir thirst!" he muttered;  
"The gods must have more blood

Before the tun shall blossom  
Or fish shall fill the flood.

"The AEsir thirst and hunger,  
And hence our blight and ban;  
The mouths of the strong gods water  
For the flesh and blood of man!

"Whom shall we give the strong ones?  
Not warriors, sword on thigh;  
But let the nursling infant  
And bedrid old man die."

"So be it!" cried the young men,  
"There needs nor doubt nor parole."  
But, knitting hard his red brows,  
In silence stood the Jarl.

A sound of woman's weeping  
At the temple door was heard,  
But the old men bowed their white heads,  
And answered not a word.

Then the Dream-wife of Thingvalla,  
A Vala young and fair,  
Sang softly, stirring with her breath  
The veil of her loose hair.

She sang: "The winds from Alfheim  
Bring never sound of strife;  
The gifts for Frey the meetest  
Are not of death, but life.

"He loves the grass-green meadows,  
The grazing kine's sweet breath;  
He loathes your bloody Horg-stones,  
Your gifts that smell of death.

"No wrong by wrong is righted,  
No pain is cured by pain;  
The blood that smokes from Doom-rings  
Falls back in redder rain.

"The gods are what you make them,  
As earth shall Asgard prove;  
And hate will come of hating,  
And love will come of love.

"Make dole of skyr and black bread  
That old and young may live;  
And look to Frey for favor  
When first like Frey you give.

"Even now o'er Njord's sea-meadows  
The summer dawn begins  
The tun shall have its harvest,  
The fiord its glancing fins."

Then up and swore Jarl Thorkell

"By Gimli and by Hel,  
O Vala of Thingvalla,  
Thou singest wise and well!

"Too dear the AEsir's favors  
Bought with our children's lives;  
Better die than shame in living  
Our mothers and our wives.

"The full shall give his portion  
To him who hath most need;  
Of curdled skyr and black bread,  
Be daily dole decreed."

He broke from off his neck-chain  
Three links of beaten gold;  
And each man, at his bidding,  
Brought gifts for young and old.

Then mothers nursed their children,  
And daughters fed their sires,  
And Health sat down with Plenty  
Before the next Yule fires.

The Horg-stones stand in Rykdal;  
The Doom-ring still remains;  
But the snows of a thousand winters  
Have washed away the stains.

Christ ruleth now; the Asir  
Have found their twilight dim;  
And, wiser than she dreamed, of old  
The Vala sang of Him  
1868.

## THE TWO RABBINS.

THE Rabbi Nathan two-score years and ten  
Walked blameless through the evil world, and then,  
Just as the almond blossomed in his hair,  
Met a temptation all too strong to bear,  
And miserably sinned. So, adding not  
Falsehood to guilt, he left his seat, and taught  
No more among the elders, but went out  
From the great congregation girt about  
With sackcloth, and with ashes on his head,  
Making his gray locks grayer. Long he prayed,  
Smiting his breast; then, as the Book he laid  
Open before him for the Bath-Col's choice,  
Pausing to hear that Daughter of a Voice,  
Behold the royal preacher's words: "A friend  
Loveth at all times, yea, unto the end;  
And for the evil day thy brother lives."  
Marvelling, he said: "It is the Lord who gives  
Counsel in need. At Ecbatana dwells  
Rabbi Ben Isaac, who all men excels

In righteousness and wisdom, as the trees  
Of Lebanon the small weeds that the bees  
Bow with their weight. I will arise, and lay  
My sins before him."

And he went his way  
Barefooted, fasting long, with many prayers;  
But even as one who, followed unawares,  
Suddenly in the darkness feels a hand  
Thrill with its touch his own, and his cheek fanned  
By odors subtly sweet, and whispers near  
Of words he loathes, yet cannot choose but hear,  
So, while the Rabbi journeyed, chanting low  
The wail of David's penitential woe,  
Before him still the old temptation came,  
And mocked him with the motion and the shame  
Of such desires that, shuddering, he abhorred  
Himself; and, crying mightily to the Lord  
To free his soul and cast the demon out,  
Smote with his staff the blankness round about.

At length, in the low light of a spent day,  
The towers of Ecbatana far away  
Rose on the desert's rim; and Nathan, faint  
And footsore, pausing where for some dead saint  
The faith of Islam reared a domed tomb,  
Saw some one kneeling in the shadow, whom  
He greeted kindly: "May the Holy One  
Answer thy prayers, O stranger!" Whereupon  
The shape stood up with a loud cry, and then,  
Clasped in each other's arms, the two gray men  
Wept, praising Him whose gracious providence  
Made their paths one. But straightway, as the sense  
Of his transgression smote him, Nathan tore  
Himself away: "O friend beloved, no more  
Worthy am I to touch thee, for I came,  
Foul from my sins, to tell thee all my shame.  
Haply thy prayers, since naught availeth mine,  
May purge my soul, and make it white like thine.  
Pity me, O Ben Isaac, I have sinned!"

Awestruck Ben Isaac stood. The desert wind  
Blew his long mantle backward, laying bare  
The mournful secret of his shirt of hair.  
"I too, O friend, if not in act," he said,  
"In thought have verily sinned. Hast thou not read,  
'Better the eye should see than that desire  
Should wander?' Burning with a hidden fire  
That tears and prayers quench not, I come to thee  
For pity and for help, as thou to me.  
Pray for me, O my friend!" But Nathan cried,  
"Pray thou for me, Ben Isaac!"

Side by side  
In the low sunshine by the turban stone  
They knelt; each made his brother's woe his own,  
Forgetting, in the agony and stress  
Of pitying love, his claim of selfishness;  
Peace, for his friend besought, his own became;

His prayers were answered in another's name;  
And, when at last they rose up to embrace,  
Each saw God's pardon in his brother's face!

Long after, when his headstone gathered moss,  
Traced on the targum-marge of Onkelos  
In Rabbi Nathan's hand these words were read:  
"/Hope not the cure of sin till Self is dead;  
Forget it in love's service, and the debt  
Thou, canst not pay the angels shall forget;  
Heaven's gate is shut to him who comes alone;  
Save thou a soul, and it shall save thy own!/"  
1868.

#### NOREMBEGA.

Norembega, or Norimbegue, is the name given by early French fishermen and explorers to a fabulous country south of Cape Breton, first discovered by Verrazzani in 1524. It was supposed to have a magnificent city of the same name on a great river, probably the Penobscot. The site of this barbaric city is laid down on a map published at Antwerp in 1570. In 1604 Champlain sailed in search of the Northern Eldorado, twenty-two leagues up the Penobscot from the Isle Haute. He supposed the river to be that of Norembega, but wisely came to the conclusion that those travellers who told of the great city had never seen it. He saw no evidences of anything like civilization, but mentions the finding of a cross, very old and mossy, in the woods.

THE winding way the serpent takes  
The mystic water took,  
From where, to count its beaded lakes,  
The forest sped its brook.

A narrow space 'twixt shore and shore,  
For sun or stars to fall,  
While evermore, behind, before,  
Closed in the forest wall.

The dim wood hiding underneath  
Wan flowers without a name;  
Life tangled with decay and death,  
League after league the same.

Unbroken over swamp and hill  
The rounding shadow lay,  
Save where the river cut at will  
A pathway to the day.

Beside that track of air and light,  
Weak as a child unweaned,  
At shut of day a Christian knight  
Upon his henchman leaned.

The embers of the sunset's fires  
Along the clouds burned down;  
"I see," he said, "the domes and spires

Of Norembega town."

"Alack! the domes, O master mine,  
Are golden clouds on high;  
Yon spire is but the branchless pine  
That cuts the evening sky."

"Oh, hush and hark! What sounds are these  
But chants and holy hymns?"  
"Thou hear'st the breeze that stirs the trees  
Though all their leafy limbs."

"Is it a chapel bell that fills  
The air with its low tone?"  
"Thou hear'st the tinkle of the rills,  
The insect's vesper drone."

"The Christ be praised!--He sets for me  
A blessed cross in sight!"  
"Now, nay, 't is but yon blasted tree  
With two gaunt arms outright!"

"Be it wind so sad or tree so stark,  
It mattereth not, my knave;  
Methinks to funeral hymns I hark,  
The cross is for my grave!

"My life is sped; I shall not see  
My home-set sails again;  
The sweetest eyes of Normandie  
Shall watch for me in vain.

"Yet onward still to ear and eye  
The baffling marvel calls;  
I fain would look before I die  
On Norembega's walls.

"So, haply, it shall be thy part  
At Christian feet to lay  
The mystery of the desert's heart  
My dead hand plucked away.

"Leave me an hour of rest; go thou  
And look from yonder heights;  
Perchance the valley even now  
Is starred with city lights."

The henchman climbed the nearest hill,  
He saw nor tower nor town,  
But, through the drear woods, lone and still,  
The river rolling down.

He heard the stealthy feet of things  
Whose shapes he could not see,  
A flutter as of evil wings,  
The fall of a dead tree.

The pines stood black against the moon,  
A sword of fire beyond;

He heard the wolf howl, and the loon  
Laugh from his reedy pond.

He turned him back: "O master dear,  
We are but men misled;  
And thou hast sought a city here  
To find a grave instead."

"As God shall will! what matters where  
A true man's cross may stand,  
So Heaven be o'er it here as there  
In pleasant Norman land?

"These woods, perchance, no secret hide  
Of lordly tower and hall;  
Yon river in its wanderings wide  
Has washed no city wall;

"Yet mirrored in the sullen stream  
The holy stars are given  
Is Norembega, then, a dream  
Whose waking is in Heaven?

"No builded wonder of these lands  
My weary eyes shall see;  
A city never made with hands  
Alone awaiteth me--

"\_'Urbs Syon mystica\_'; I see  
Its mansions passing fair,  
'/Condita caelo/'; let me be,  
Dear Lord, a dweller there!"

Above the dying exile hung  
The vision of the bard,  
As faltered on his failing tongue  
The song of good Bernard.

The henchman dug at dawn a grave  
Beneath the hemlocks brown,  
And to the desert's keeping gave  
The lord of fief and town.

Years after, when the Sieur Champlain  
Sailed up the unknown stream,  
And Norembega proved again  
A shadow and a dream,

He found the Norman's nameless grave  
Within the hemlock's shade,  
And, stretching wide its arms to save,  
The sign that God had made,

The cross-boughed tree that marked the spot  
And made it holy ground  
He needs the earthly city not  
Who hath the heavenly found.  
1869.

MIRIAM.

TO FREDERICK A. P. BARNARD.

THE years are many since, in youth and hope,  
Under the Charter Oak, our horoscope  
We drew thick-studded with all favoring stars.  
Now, with gray beards, and faces seamed with scars  
From life's hard battle, meeting once again,  
We smile, half sadly, over dreams so vain;  
Knowing, at last, that it is not in man  
Who walketh to direct his steps, or plan  
His permanent house of life. Alike we loved  
The muses' haunts, and all our fancies moved  
To measures of old song. How since that day  
Our feet have parted from the path that lay  
So fair before us! Rich, from lifelong search  
Of truth, within thy Academic porch  
Thou sittest now, lord of a realm of fact,  
Thy servitors the sciences exact;  
Still listening with thy hand on Nature's keys,  
To hear the Samian's spherul harmonies  
And rhythm of law. I called from dream and song,  
Thank God! so early to a strife so long,  
That, ere it closed, the black, abundant hair  
Of boyhood rested silver-sown and spare  
On manhood's temples, now at sunset-chime  
Tread with fond feet the path of morning time.  
And if perchance too late I linger where  
The flowers have ceased to blow, and trees are bare,  
Thou, wiser in thy choice, wilt scarcely blame  
The friend who shields his folly with thy name.  
AMESBURY, 10th mo., 1870.

.....

One Sabbath day my friend and I  
After the meeting, quietly  
Passed from the crowded village lanes,  
White with dry dust for lack of rains,  
And climbed the neighboring slope, with feet  
Slackened and heavy from the heat,  
Although the day was wellnigh done,  
And the low angle of the sun  
Along the naked hillside cast  
Our shadows as of giants vast.  
We reached, at length, the topmost swell,  
Whence, either way, the green turf fell  
In terraces of nature down  
To fruit-hung orchards, and the town  
With white, pretenceless houses, tall  
Church-steeple, and, o'ershadowing all,  
Huge mills whose windows had the look  
Of eager eyes that ill could brook  
The Sabbath rest. We traced the track  
Of the sea-seeking river back,

Glistening for miles above its mouth,  
Through the long valley to the south,  
And, looking eastward, cool to view,  
Stretched the illimitable blue  
Of ocean, from its curved coast-line;  
Sombred and still, the warm sunshine  
Filled with pale gold-dust all the reach  
Of slumberous woods from hill to beach,--  
Slanted on walls of thronged retreats  
From city toil and dusty streets,  
On grassy bluff, and dune of sand,  
And rocky islands miles from land;  
Touched the far-glancing sails, and showed  
White lines of foam where long waves flowed  
Dumb in the distance. In the north,  
Dim through their misty hair, looked forth  
The space-dwarfed mountains to the sea,  
From mystery to mystery!

So, sitting on that green hill-slope,  
We talked of human life, its hope  
And fear, and unsolved doubts, and what  
It might have been, and yet was not.  
And, when at last the evening air  
Grew sweeter for the bells of prayer  
Ringing in steeples far below,  
We watched the people churchward go,  
Each to his place, as if thereon  
The true shekinah only shone;  
And my friend queried how it came  
To pass that they who owned the same  
Great Master still could not agree  
To worship Him in company.  
Then, broadening in his thought, he ran  
Over the whole vast field of man,--  
The varying forms of faith and creed  
That somehow served the holders' need;  
In which, unquestioned, undenied,  
Uncounted millions lived and died;  
The bibles of the ancient folk,  
Through which the heart of nations spoke;  
The old moralities which lent  
To home its sweetness and content,  
And rendered possible to bear  
The life of peoples everywhere  
And asked if we, who boast of light,  
Claim not a too exclusive right  
To truths which must for all be meant,  
Like rain and sunshine freely sent.  
In bondage to the letter still,  
We give it power to cramp and kill,--  
To tax God's fulness with a scheme  
Narrower than Peter's house-top dream,  
His wisdom and his love with plans  
Poor and inadequate as man's.  
It must be that He witnesses  
Somehow to all men that He is  
That something of His saving grace  
Reaches the lowest of the race,

Who, through strange creed and rite, may draw  
The hints of a diviner law.  
We walk in clearer light;--but then,  
Is He not God?--are they not men?  
Are His responsibilities  
For us alone and not for these?

And I made answer: "Truth is one;  
And, in all lands beneath the sun,  
Whoso hath eyes to see may see  
The tokens of its unity.  
No scroll of creed its fulness wraps,  
We trace it not by school-boy maps,  
Free as the sun and air it is  
Of latitudes and boundaries.  
In Vedic verse, in dull Koran,  
Are messages of good to man;  
The angels to our Aryan sires  
Talked by the earliest household fires;  
The prophets of the elder day,  
The slant-eyed sages of Cathay,  
Read not the riddle all amiss  
Of higher life evolved from this.

"Nor doth it lessen what He taught,  
Or make the gospel Jesus brought  
Less precious, that His lips retold  
Some portion of that truth of old;  
Denying not the proven seers,  
The tested wisdom of the years;  
Confirming with his own impress  
The common law of righteousness.  
We search the world for truth; we cull  
The good, the pure, the beautiful,  
From graven stone and written scroll,  
From all old flower-fields of the soul;  
And, weary seekers of the best,  
We come back laden from our quest,  
To find that all the sages said  
Is in the Book our mothers read,  
And all our treasure of old thought  
In His harmonious fulness wrought  
Who gathers in one sheaf complete  
The scattered blades of God's sown wheat,  
The common growth that maketh good  
His all-embracing Fatherhood.

"Wherever through the ages rise  
The altars of self-sacrifice,  
Where love its arms has opened wide,  
Or man for man has calmly died,  
I see the same white wings outspread  
That hovered o'er the Master's head!  
Up from undated time they come,  
The martyr souls of heathendom,  
And to His cross and passion bring  
Their fellowship of suffering.  
I trace His presence in the blind  
Pathetic gropings of my kind,--

In prayers from sin and sorrow wrung,  
In cradle-hymns of life they sung,  
Each, in its measure, but a part  
Of the unmeasured Over-Heart;  
And with a stronger faith confess  
The greater that it owns the less.  
Good cause it is for thankfulness  
That the world-blessing of His life  
With the long past is not at strife;  
That the great marvel of His death  
To the one order witnesseth,  
No doubt of changeless goodness wakes,  
No link of cause and sequence breaks,  
But, one with nature, rooted is  
In the eternal verities;  
Whereby, while differing in degree  
As finite from infinity,  
The pain and loss for others borne,  
Love's crown of suffering meekly worn,  
The life man giveth for his friend  
Become vicarious in the end;  
Their healing place in nature take,  
And make life sweeter for their sake.

"So welcome I from every source  
The tokens of that primal Force,  
Older than heaven itself, yet new  
As the young heart it reaches to,  
Beneath whose steady impulse rolls  
The tidal wave of human souls;  
Guide, comforter, and inward word,  
The eternal spirit of the Lord  
Nor fear I aught that science brings  
From searching through material things;  
Content to let its glasses prove,  
Not by the letter's oldness move,  
The myriad worlds on worlds that course  
The spaces of the universe;  
Since everywhere the Spirit walks  
The garden of the heart, and talks  
With man, as under Eden's trees,  
In all his varied languages.  
Why mourn above some hopeless flaw  
In the stone tables of the law,  
When scripture every day afresh  
Is traced on tablets of the flesh?  
By inward sense, by outward signs,  
God's presence still the heart divines;  
Through deepest joy of Him we learn,  
In sorest grief to Him we turn,  
And reason stoops its pride to share  
The child-like instinct of a prayer."

And then, as is my wont, I told  
A story of the days of old,  
Not found in printed books,--in sooth,  
A fancy, with slight hint of truth,  
Showing how differing faiths agree  
In one sweet law of charity.

Meanwhile the sky had golden grown,  
Our faces in its glory shone;  
But shadows down the valley swept,  
And gray below the ocean slept,  
As time and space I wandered o'er  
To tread the Mogul's marble floor,  
And see a fairer sunset fall  
On Jumna's wave and Agra's wall.

The good Shah Akbar (peace be his alway!)  
Came forth from the Divan at close of day  
Bowed with the burden of his many cares,  
Worn with the hearing of unnumbered prayers,--  
Wild cries for justice, the importunate  
Appeals of greed and jealousy and hate,  
And all the strife of sect and creed and rite,  
Santon and Gouroo waging holy fight  
For the wise monarch, claiming not to be  
Allah's avenger, left his people free,  
With a faint hope, his Book scarce justified,  
That all the paths of faith, though severed wide,  
O'er which the feet of prayerful reverence passed,  
Met at the gate of Paradise at last.

He sought an alcove of his cool hareem,  
Where, far beneath, he heard the Jumna's stream  
Lapse soft and low along his palace wall,  
And all about the cool sound of the fall  
Of fountains, and of water circling free  
Through marble ducts along the balcony;  
The voice of women in the distance sweet,  
And, sweeter still, of one who, at his feet,  
Soothed his tired ear with songs of a far land  
Where Tagus shatters on the salt sea-sand  
The mirror of its cork-grown hills of drouth  
And vales of vine, at Lisbon's harbor-mouth.

The date-palms rustled not; the peepul laid  
Its topmost boughs against the balustrade,  
Motionless as the mimic leaves and vines  
That, light and graceful as the shawl-designs  
Of Delhi or Umritsir, twined in stone;  
And the tired monarch, who aside had thrown  
The day's hard burden, sat from care apart,  
And let the quiet steal into his heart  
From the still hour. Below him Agra slept,  
By the long light of sunset overswept  
The river flowing through a level land,  
By mango-groves and banks of yellow sand,  
Skirted with lime and orange, gay kiosks,  
Fountains at play, tall minarets of mosques,  
Fair pleasure-gardens, with their flowering trees  
Relieved against the mournful cypresses;  
And, air-poised lightly as the blown sea-foam,  
The marble wonder of some holy dome  
Hung a white moonrise over the still wood,  
Glassing its beauty in a stiller flood.

Silent the monarch gazed, until the night

Swift-falling hid the city from his sight;  
Then to the woman at his feet he said  
"Tell me, O Miriam, something thou hast read  
In childhood of the Master of thy faith,  
Whom Islam also owns. Our Prophet saith  
'He was a true apostle, yea, a Word  
And Spirit sent before me from the Lord.'  
Thus the Book witnesseth; and well I know  
By what thou art, O dearest, it is so.  
As the lute's tone the maker's hand betrays,  
The sweet disciple speaks her Master's praise."

Then Miriam, glad of heart, (for in some sort  
She cherished in the Moslem's liberal court  
The sweet traditions of a Christian child;  
And, through her life of sense, the undefiled  
And chaste ideal of the sinless One  
Gazed on her with an eye she might not shun,--  
The sad, reproachful look of pity, born  
Of love that hath no part in wrath or scorn,)  
Began, with low voice and moist eyes, to tell  
Of the all-loving Christ, and what befell  
When the fierce zealots, thirsting for her blood,  
Dragged to his feet a shame of womanhood.  
How, when his searching answer pierced within  
Each heart, and touched the secret of its sin,  
And her accusers fled his face before,  
He bade the poor one go and sin no more.  
And Akbar said, after a moment's thought,  
"Wise is the lesson by thy prophet taught;  
Woe unto him who judges and forgets  
What hidden evil his own heart besets!  
Something of this large charity I find  
In all the sects that sever human kind;  
I would to Allah that their lives agreed  
More nearly with the lesson of their creed!  
Those yellow Lamas who at Meerut pray  
By wind and water power, and love to say  
'He who forgiveth not shall, unforgiven,  
Fail of the rest of Buddha,' and who even  
Spare the black gnat that stings them, vex my ears  
With the poor hates and jealousies and fears  
Nursed in their human hives. That lean, fierce priest  
Of thy own people, (be his heart increased  
By Allah's love!) his black robes smelling yet  
Of Goa's roasted Jews, have I not met  
Meek-faced, barefooted, crying in the street  
The saying of his prophet true and sweet,--  
'He who is merciful shall mercy meet!'"

But, next day, so it chanced, as night began  
To fall, a murmur through the hareem ran  
That one, recalling in her dusky face  
The full-lipped, mild-eyed beauty of a race  
Known as the blameless Ethiops of Greek song,  
Plotting to do her royal master wrong,  
Watching, reproachful of the lingering light,  
The evening shadows deepen for her flight,  
Love-guided, to her home in a far land,

Now waited death at the great Shah's command.  
Shapely as that dark princess for whose smile  
A world was bartered, daughter of the Nile  
Herself, and veiling in her large, soft eyes  
The passion and the languor of her skies,  
The Abyssinian knelt low at the feet  
Of her stern lord: "O king, if it be meet,  
And for thy honor's sake," she said, "that I,  
Who am the humblest of thy slaves, should die,  
I will not tax thy mercy to forgive.  
Easier it is to die than to outlive  
All that life gave me,--him whose wrong of thee  
Was but the outcome of his love for me,  
Cherished from childhood, when, beneath the shade  
Of templed Axum, side by side we played.  
Stolen from his arms, my lover followed me  
Through weary seasons over land and sea;  
And two days since, sitting disconsolate  
Within the shadow of the hareem gate,  
Suddenly, as if dropping from the sky,  
Down from the lattice of the balcony  
Fell the sweet song by Tigre's cowherds sung  
In the old music of his native tongue.  
He knew my voice, for love is quick of ear,  
Answering in song.

                    This night he waited near  
To fly with me. The fault was mine alone  
He knew thee not, he did but seek his own;  
Who, in the very shadow of thy throne,  
Sharing thy bounty, knowing all thou art,  
Greatest and best of men, and in her heart  
Grateful to tears for favor undeserved,  
Turned ever homeward, nor one moment swerved  
From her young love. He looked into my eyes,  
He heard my voice, and could not otherwise  
Than he hath done; yet, save one wild embrace  
When first we stood together face to face,  
And all that fate had done since last we met  
Seemed but a dream that left us children yet,  
He hath not wronged thee nor thy royal bed;  
Spare him, O king! and slay me in his stead!"

But over Akbar's brows the frown hung black,  
And, turning to the eunuch at his back,  
"Take them," he said, "and let the Jumna's waves  
Hide both my shame and these accursed slaves!"  
His loathly length the unsexed bondman bowed  
"On my head be it!"

                    Straightway from a cloud  
Of dainty shawls and veils of woven mist  
The Christian Miriam rose, and, stooping, kissed  
The monarch's hand. Loose down her shoulders bare  
Swept all the rippled darkness of her hair,  
Veiling the bosom that, with high, quick swell  
Of fear and pity, through it rose and fell.

"Alas!" she cried, "hast thou forgotten quite

The words of Him we spake of yesternight?  
Or thy own prophet's, 'Whoso doth endure  
And pardon, of eternal life is sure'?  
O great and good! be thy revenge alone  
Felt in thy mercy to the erring shown;  
Let thwarted love and youth their pardon plead,  
Who sinned but in intent, and not in deed!"

One moment the strong frame of Akbar shook  
With the great storm of passion. Then his look  
Softened to her uplifted face, that still  
Pleaded more strongly than all words, until  
Its pride and anger seemed like overblown,  
Spent clouds of thunder left to tell alone  
Of strife and overcoming. With bowed head,  
And smiting on his bosom: "God," he said,  
"Alone is great, and let His holy name  
Be honored, even to His servant's shame!  
Well spake thy prophet, Miriam,--he alone  
Who hath not sinned is meet to cast a stone  
At such as these, who here their doom await,  
Held like myself in the strong grasp of fate.  
They sinned through love, as I through love forgive;  
Take them beyond my realm, but let them live!"

And, like a chorus to the words of grace,  
The ancient Fakir, sitting in his place,  
Motionless as an idol and as grim,  
In the pavilion Akbar built for him  
Under the court-yard trees, (for he was wise,  
Knew Menu's laws, and through his close-shut eyes  
Saw things far off, and as an open book  
Into the thoughts of other men could look,)  
Began, half chant, half howling, to rehearse  
The fragment of a holy Vedic verse;  
And thus it ran: "He who all things forgives  
Conquers himself and all things else, and lives  
Above the reach of wrong or hate or fear,  
Calm as the gods, to whom he is most dear."

Two leagues from Agra still the traveller sees  
The tomb of Akbar through its cypress-trees;  
And, near at hand, the marble walls that hide  
The Christian Begum sleeping at his side.  
And o'er her vault of burial (who shall tell  
If it be chance alone or miracle?)  
The Mission press with tireless hand unrolls  
The words of Jesus on its lettered scrolls,--  
Tells, in all tongues, the tale of mercy o'er,  
And bids the guilty, "Go and sin no more!"

.....

It now was dew-fall; very still  
The night lay on the lonely hill,  
Down which our homeward steps we bent,  
And, silent, through great silence went,  
Save that the tireless crickets played  
Their long, monotonous serenade.

A young moon, at its narrowest,  
Curved sharp against the darkening west;  
And, momentarily, the beacon's star,  
Slow wheeling o'er its rock afar,  
From out the level darkness shot  
One instant and again was not.  
And then my friend spake quietly  
The thought of both: "Yon crescent see!  
Like Islam's symbol-moon it gives  
Hints of the light whereby it lives  
Somewhat of goodness, something true  
From sun and spirit shining through  
All faiths, all worlds, as through the dark  
Of ocean shines the lighthouse spark,  
Attests the presence everywhere  
Of love and providential care.  
The faith the old Norse heart confessed  
In one dear name,--the hopefulest  
And tenderest heard from mortal lips  
In pangs of birth or death, from ships  
Ice-bitten in the winter sea,  
Or lisped beside a mother's knee,--  
The wiser world hath not outgrown,  
And the All-Father is our own!"

#### NAUHAUGHT, THE DEACON.

NAUHAUGHT, the Indian deacon, who of old  
Dwelt, poor but blameless, where his narrowing Cape  
Stretches its shrunk arm out to all the winds  
And the relentless smiting of the waves,  
Awoke one morning from a pleasant dream  
Of a good angel dropping in his hand  
A fair, broad gold-piece, in the name of God.

He rose and went forth with the early day  
Far inland, where the voices of the waves  
Mellowed and Mingled with the whispering leaves,  
As, through the tangle of the low, thick woods,  
He searched his traps. Therein nor beast nor bird  
He found; though meanwhile in the reedy pools  
The otter plashed, and underneath the pines  
The partridge drummed: and as his thoughts went back  
To the sick wife and little child at home,  
What marvel that the poor man felt his faith  
Too weak to bear its burden,--like a rope  
That, strand by strand uncoiling, breaks above  
The hand that grasps it. "Even now, O Lord!  
Send me," he prayed, "the angel of my dream!  
Nauhaught is very poor; he cannot wait."

Even as he spake he heard at his bare feet  
A low, metallic clink, and, looking down,  
He saw a dainty purse with disks of gold  
Crowding its silken net. Awhile he held  
The treasure up before his eyes, alone

With his great need, feeling the wondrous coins  
Slide through his eager fingers, one by one.  
So then the dream was true. The angel brought  
One broad piece only; should he take all these?  
Who would be wiser, in the blind, dumb woods?  
The loser, doubtless rich, would scarcely miss  
This dropped crumb from a table always full.  
Still, while he mused, he seemed to hear the cry  
Of a starved child; the sick face of his wife  
Tempted him. Heart and flesh in fierce revolt  
Urged the wild license of his savage youth  
Against his later scruples. Bitter toil,  
Prayer, fasting, dread of blame, and pitiless eyes  
To watch his halting,--had he lost for these  
The freedom of the woods;--the hunting-grounds  
Of happy spirits for a walled-in heaven  
Of everlasting psalms? One healed the sick  
Very far off thousands of moons ago  
Had he not prayed him night and day to come  
And cure his bed-bound wife? Was there a hell?  
Were all his fathers' people writhing there--  
Like the poor shell-fish set to boil alive--  
Forever, dying never? If he kept  
This gold, so needed, would the dreadful God  
Torment him like a Mohawk's captive stuck  
With slow-consuming splinters? Would the saints  
And the white angels dance and laugh to see him  
Burn like a pitch-pine torch? His Christian garb  
Seemed falling from him; with the fear and shame  
Of Adam naked at the cool of day,  
He gazed around. A black snake lay in coil  
On the hot sand, a crow with sidelong eye  
Watched from a dead bough. All his Indian lore  
Of evil blending with a convert's faith  
In the supernal terrors of the Book,  
He saw the Tempter in the coiling snake  
And ominous, black-winged bird; and all the while  
The low rebuking of the distant waves  
Stole in upon him like the voice of God  
Among the trees of Eden. Girding up  
His soul's loins with a resolute hand, he thrust  
The base thought from him: "Nauhaught, be a man  
Starve, if need be; but, while you live, look out  
From honest eyes on all men, unashamed.  
God help me! I am deacon of the church,  
A baptized, praying Indian! Should I do  
This secret meanness, even the barken knots  
Of the old trees would turn to eyes to see it,  
The birds would tell of it, and all the leaves  
Whisper above me: 'Nauhaught is a thief!'  
The sun would know it, and the stars that hide  
Behind his light would watch me, and at night  
Follow me with their sharp, accusing eyes.  
Yea, thou, God, seest me!" Then Nauhaught drew  
Closer his belt of leather, dulling thus  
The pain of hunger, and walked bravely back  
To the brown fishing-hamlet by the sea;  
And, pausing at the inn-door, cheerily asked  
"Who hath lost aught to-day?"

"I," said a voice;  
"Ten golden pieces, in a silken purse,  
My daughter's handiwork." He looked, and to  
One stood before him in a coat of frieze,  
And the glazed bat of a seafaring man,  
Shrewd-faced, broad-shouldered, with no trace of wings.  
Marvelling, he dropped within the stranger's hand  
The silken web, and turned to go his way.  
But the man said: "A tithe at least is yours;  
Take it in God's name as an honest man."  
And as the deacon's dusky fingers closed  
Over the golden gift, "Yea, in God's name  
I take it, with a poor man's thanks," he said.  
So down the street that, like a river of sand,  
Ran, white in sunshine, to the summer sea,  
He sought his home singing and praising God;  
And when his neighbors in their careless way  
Spoke of the owner of the silken purse--  
A Wellfleet skipper, known in every port  
That the Cape opens in its sandy wall--  
He answered, with a wise smile, to himself  
"I saw the angel where they see a man."  
1870.

#### THE SISTERS.

ANNIE and Rhoda, sisters twain,  
Woke in the night to the sound of rain,

The rush of wind, the ramp and roar  
Of great waves climbing a rocky shore.

Annie rose up in her bed-gown white,  
And looked out into the storm and night.

"Hush, and hearken!" she cried in fear,  
"Hearest thou nothing, sister dear?"

"I hear the sea, and the splash of rain,  
And roar of the northeast hurricane.

"Get thee back to the bed so warm,  
No good comes of watching a storm.

"What is it to thee, I fain would know,  
That waves are roaring and wild winds blow?

"No lover of thine's afloat to miss  
The harbor-lights on a night like this."

"But I heard a voice cry out my name,  
Up from the sea on the wind it came.

"Twice and thrice have I heard it call,  
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!"

On her pillow the sister tossed her head.

"Hall of the Heron is safe," she said.

"In the tautest schooner that ever swam  
He rides at anchor in Anisquam.

"And, if in peril from swamping sea  
Or lee shore rocks, would he call on thee?"

But the girl heard only the wind and tide,  
And wringing her small white hands she cried,

"O sister Rhoda, there's something wrong;  
I hear it again, so loud and long.

"Annie! Annie! I hear it call,  
And the voice is the voice of Estwick Hall!"

Up sprang the elder, with eyes aflame,  
"Thou liest! He never would call thy name!

"If he did, I would pray the wind and sea  
To keep him forever from thee and me!"

Then out of the sea blew a dreadful blast;  
Like the cry of a dying man it passed.

The young girl hushed on her lips a groan,  
But through her tears a strange light shone,--

The solemn joy of her heart's release  
To own and cherish its love in peace.

"Dearest!" she whispered, under breath,  
"Life was a lie, but true is death.

"The love I hid from myself away  
Shall crown me now in the light of day.

"My ears shall never to wooer list,  
Never by lover my lips be kissed.

"Sacred to thee am I henceforth,  
Thou in heaven and I on earth!"

She came and stood by her sister's bed  
"Hall of the Heron is dead!" she said.

"The wind and the waves their work have done,  
We shall see him no more beneath the sun.

"Little will reek that heart of thine,  
It loved him not with a love like mine.

"I, for his sake, were he but here,  
Could hem and 'broider thy bridal gear,

"Though hands should tremble and eyes be wet,  
And stitch for stitch in my heart be set.

"But now my soul with his soul I wed;  
Thine the living, and mine the dead!"  
1871.

MARGUERITE.

MASSACHUSETTS BAY, 1760.

Upwards of one thousand of the Acadian peasants forcibly taken from their homes on the Gaspereau and Basin of Minas were assigned to the several towns of the Massachusetts colony, the children being bound by the authorities to service or labor.

THE robins sang in the orchard, the buds into blossoms grew;  
Little of human sorrow the buds and the robins knew!  
Sick, in an alien household, the poor French  
neutral lay;  
Into her lonesome garret fell the light of the April  
day,  
Through the dusty window, curtained by the spider's  
warp and woof,  
On the loose-laid floor of hemlock, on oaken ribs  
of roof,  
The bedquilt's faded patchwork, the teacups on the  
stand,  
The wheel with flaxen tangle, as it dropped from  
her sick hand.

What to her was the song of the robin, or warm  
morning light,  
As she lay in the trance of the dying, heedless of  
sound or sight?

Done was the work of her bands, she had eaten her  
bitter bread;  
The world of the alien people lay behind her dim  
and dead.

But her soul went back to its child-time; she saw  
the sun o'erflow  
With gold the Basin of Minas, and set over  
Gaspereau;

The low, bare flats at ebb-tide, the rush of the sea  
at flood,  
Through inlet and creek and river, from dike to  
upland wood;

The gulls in the red of morning, the fish-hawk's  
rise and fall,  
The drift of the fog in moonshine, over the dark  
coast-wall.

She saw the face of her mother, she heard the song

she sang;  
And far off, faintly, slowly, the bell for vespers  
rang.

By her bed the hard-faced mistress sat, smoothing  
the wrinkled sheet,  
Peering into the face, so helpless, and feeling the  
ice-cold feet.

With a vague remorse atoning for her greed and  
long abuse,  
By care no longer heeded and pity too late for use.

Up the stairs of the garret softly the son of the  
mistress stepped,  
Leaned over the head-board, covering his face with  
his hands, and wept.

Outspake the mother, who watched him sharply,  
with brow a-frown  
"What! love you the Papist, the beggar, the  
charge of the town?"

Be she Papist or beggar who lies here, I know  
and God knows  
I love her, and fain would go with her wherever  
she goes!

"O mother! that sweet face came pleading, for  
love so athirst.  
You saw but the town-charge; I knew her God's  
angel at first."

Shaking her gray head, the mistress hushed down  
a bitter cry;  
And awed by the silence and shadow of death  
drawing nigh,

She murmured a psalm of the Bible; but closer  
the young girl pressed,  
With the last of her life in her fingers, the cross  
to her breast.

"My son, come away," cried the mother, her voice  
cruel grown.  
"She is joined to her idols, like Ephraim; let her  
alone!"

But he knelt with his hand on her forehead, his  
lips to her ear,  
And he called back the soul that was passing  
"Marguerite, do you hear?"

She paused on the threshold of Heaven; love, pity,  
surprise,  
Wistful, tender, lit up for an instant the cloud of  
her eyes.

With his heart on his lips he kissed her, but never

her cheek grew red,  
And the words the living long for he spake in the  
ear of the dead.

And the robins sang in the orchard, where buds to  
blossoms grew;  
Of the folded hands and the still face never the  
robins knew!  
1871.

#### THE ROBIN.

MY old Welsh neighbor over the way  
Crept slowly out in the sun of spring,  
Pushed from her ears the locks of gray,  
And listened to hear the robin sing.

Her grandson, playing at marbles, stopped,  
And, cruel in sport as boys will be,  
Tossed a stone at the bird, who hopped  
From bough to bough in the apple-tree.

"Nay!" said the grandmother; "have you not heard,  
My poor, bad boy! of the fiery pit,  
And how, drop by drop, this merciful bird  
Carries the water that quenches it?"

"He brings cool dew in his little bill,  
And lets it fall on the souls of sin  
You can see the mark on his red breast still  
Of fires that scorch as he drops it in.

"My poor Bron rhuddyn! my breast-burned bird,  
Singing so sweetly from limb to limb,  
Very dear to the heart of Our Lord  
Is he who pities the lost like Him!"

"Amen!" I said to the beautiful myth;  
"Sing, bird of God, in my heart as well:  
Each good thought is a drop wherewith  
To cool and lessen the fires of hell.

"Prayers of love like rain-drops fall,  
Tears of pity are cooling dew,  
And dear to the heart of Our Lord are all  
Who suffer like Him in the good they do! "  
1871.

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