

"THE MASTER CALLETH FOR THEE."

Beneath a glowing Eastern sky
A vineyard ripened fair,
The grapes hung blue and crimson red,
In the golden, scented air,
Hard by, the presses waited,
To run with ruddy wine,
Heart-offerings to the master,
From the sun-empurpled vine.

As by the gate we journeyed,
There came the Lord's sweet call,
"Come work ye in my vineyard,
There is room to serve for all."
We thought of the hours of labor,
Of our hands stained red with toil,
Of heavy burdens we must bear,
O'er the sun-baked, thorny soil.

Of the slow ingathering, bunch by bunch,
From the leagues of trellised vine,
And tho' we wrought the long days thro',
Others would quaff the wine,
We thought of the shade so cool and sweet,
Where fronded palm trees wave,
Of running waters calling us,
Our pilgrim feet to lave.

Of shadowing rocks, and mosses green,
Where trickling fountains fall,
And ripening pomegranates hang,
On many a sunlit wall.
Of gardens sweet with spices, where
We fain would lingering stray,
Of tinkling lutes and shepherd pipes
In song and roundelay.

Of dalliance soft in lily fields
To catch the wood-dove's note,
Of moonlight seas 'neath shining sails,
In calm content to float,
Unbinding our sandals, dusty and worn
To rest in the noontide ray,
Again we heard the Master's call,
"I need thee, come work to-day."

Thro' days and nights as we travelled on,
Still came that pleading tone:
"If ye love me, will ye leave me thus,
The wine-press to tread alone?"
Then we bound our girdles up afresh,
And sought out duty's path,
We journeyed back to the open door,
And knocked with our pilgrim staff.

We noted the hand that held the latch
Was marked with a blood-red stain,
That traces of thorn-thrusts seamed the brow
That bore the lines of pain.

That His locks were wet with the dews of night,
His garments crimson dyed,
And as He smiled and welcomed us
We saw His pierced side.

Then with grateful hearts we thanked Him,
That with patient, tender word,
He had called us back some work to do,
In the vineyard of our Lord.
Thro' many waving summers,
We have striven to prune and twine,
Have helped in the Master's vintage
To garner the precious wine.

Sometimes we have grown a-weary,
Of'times the yield seemed scant,
Dark rain-clouds sweeping by have broke,
Full many a tendriled plant.—
Some who entered the door that day,
Still work with earnest hand,
And some have earned a well-earned rest
In yon fair Summerland.

At times the fruitage of our toil,
The enemy sought by stealth,
Or lured us to give up our task,
With dreams of ease and wealth.
Has said that our Master's work was hard
And our toil had ill requite,
That out beyond the vineyard walls,
Was many a rare delight.

But a look at the patient, pain-scarred face,
A glance at the widening fields,
And we knew the world no guerdon held,
Like the joy His service yields,
And of hearing His loving words of praise,
When some eve at set of sun,
He will say:—"Come rest each striving one,
Thou hast faithful been,—well done."

Then mayhap the fruit of some vine that here
We trained on a thankless sod,
Will be the wine we shall drink anew,
In the Kingdom of our God.
When with sandals loosed, and staff laid down,
And bearing the victor's palm,
In heaven's sweet joy we'll sup with Him,
At the marriage feast of the Lamb.

—Mary W. Alloway.

"I OFTEN think if I were in England *how I would plead* with Christian men and women to leave the fashions of the world, with the terrible expense which compliance with these involves, and consent to spend and be spent in saving a lost world!"—ALEXANDER MACKAY, Central Africa, in "*The Presbyterian Record*."