

## RIENZI.

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BY MARGARET E. HENDERSON, OSHAWA, ONT.

Methought I wandered one long day beneath  
 The noon-day clearness of the Italian sky,  
 And o'er the Palatinus roamed alone  
 Amid the crumbling glory of old Rome,  
 While Tiber's legendary stream oft kissed  
 The shores, mute witnesses of many a scene,  
 In whose historic fame the past still lives.  
 By pillar, ivy-clad, or tottering wall  
 I pondered long and deeply, till at last  
 The hazy calmness of that summer day,  
 And the low music of old Tiber's roll  
 Soon soothed my senses into fitful sleep.  
 Awhile they slept, when o'er my slumb'rous thought  
 The thickly clustering memories of the past  
 Claimed sovereignty, and, through the gaps of time,  
 I breathed an older air, and drank my soul  
 Of those old days, in inspirations strong.  
 An earlier Italy I knew and loved,  
 Ay, loved—though fallen from her glory's time,  
 That time when Roman freemen were as kings,  
 And the State's honour was to all her sons  
 Dearer than life itself, dearer than love—  
 Her proudest names were hollow memories,  
 Not lofty aspirations, to whose height  
 The youthful patriot, with longing look,  
 A trembling, upward glance would fain direct.  
 O sunny Italy, though loved, how changed  
 From thy young loveliness—thy children, slaves.  
 Thy fostered sciences, thine arts, forgot—  
 And thy rich legacy of melody  
 And deathless harmonies alike unsung !  
 Alas ! but slowly beat those pulses now,  
 As, sluggishly, the life-blood courses from  
 The once proud heart of Italy, whose fate  
 My soul with sadness fills, when, lo ! before  
 My half-averted gaze, a beacon light  
 Of brilliancy surpassing, a swift flash  
 Of phosphorescent splendour shines amid  
 Her mediæval gloom ! The morning breaks ;  
 Italia's night of darkness ushers in  
 The rosy dawn of freedom for her sons,  
 Who from Rienzi's lips learn those grand names  
 Emblazoned on the scroll of deathless fame,