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Selected Poetry.

SONG BY THE MYSTIC.

BY FATHER RYAN.

walked down the valley of Silence—
down the deep voiceless valley— alone;
and I heard not the sound of a footstep
around me, save God's and my own;
and the hush of my heart was as holy
as love is where angels have flown.

long ago was I weary of voices
whose music my heart could not win;
long ago was I weary of noises
that fretted my soul with their din;
long ago was I weary of places
where I met but the human and sin.

walked through the world with the worldly;
craved what the world never gave,
and I said,—“In the world each Ideal,
that shines like a star on life's wave,
rested on the shores of the Real,
and sleeps like a dream in a grave.”

and still did I pine for the Perfect,
and still found the False with the True;
I sought 'mid the Human for Heaven,
but caught a mere glimpse of its blue;
and I wept when the clouds of the Mortal
veiled even that glimpse from my view.

and I toiled on,—heart-tired of the Human,
and I moaned 'mid the mazes of men;
all I knelt long ago at an altar,
and heard a voice call me:—since then,
I walk down the valley of Silence
that lies far beyond mortal ken.

Do you ask what I found in the valley?
Is my resting place with the Divine;
and I fell at the foot of the Holy,
and about me a voice cried,—“Be mine.”
and there rose from the depths of my spirit
a echo:—“My heart shall be thine.”

Do you ask how I live in the valley?
I weep and I dream and I pray,
and my tears are as sweet as the dew-drops
that fall on the roses of May;
and my prayer, like a perfume from censer,
ascendeth to God night and day.

In the hush of the valley of Silence
I dream all the songs that I sing,
and the music floats down the deep valley,
and each finds a word for a wing,
that to men, like the Dove of the Deluge,
the message of Peace they may bring.

So far on the deep there are billows
that never shall break on the beach;
and I have heard songs in the Silence
that never shall float into speech;
and I have had dreams in the valley
so lofty for language to reach.

and I have seen thoughts in the valley,
do you know how my spirit was stirred!
and they wear holy veils on their faces,
and their footsteps can scarcely be heard:
they pass through the valley, like virgins
in pure for the touch of a word.

Do you ask me the place of the valley,—
Yo hearts that are sorrowed by care?
It lieth afar between mountains,
And God and his Angels are there;
And one is the dark mountain of Sorrow,
And one the bright mountain of Prayer.

THE GREEK CHORUS.

AN ORATION.

BY W. G. PARSONS.

WE seek in vain 'mid the annals of the
past for the origin of poetry and music.
No research has disclosed their incep-
tion,—no line of thought certainly reach-
ed back to that point at which the two
spirits, linked in a holy wedlock, announ-
ced their first born to the responsive world
of the emotions.

The indefiniteness of our information
on this point is however trivially insigni-
ficant when compared with the certainty
of our knowledge regarding the marvel-
lous sway which these grand harmonic
forces have ever exerted on the impressible
human race. Mighty in positive influ-
ence, they alternately inhale and breathe
out the spirit of the age in which they
are produced, and thus present the truest
social dial on which we recognize the
minute hand of advancement.

The thoughtful student of History can
indeed better afford to be ignorant of the
legal enactments and penal codes of that
nation whose inner life he would under-
stand, than of the warblings of its min-
strels, or the spontaneous, gushing effusions
of its men of song.

What should we know of the true
character of the primitive Celt, roaming
in wild freedom among his Highland Hills,
but for the florid, tender and expressive
strains of the memorable Ossian!—What
of the spirit of the hardy old Norsemen
sweeping the seas in triumph, were it not
for the soul-stirring productions of their
Scalds, or the enchanting rhapsodies of
their Eddas, which, penned in their God-
given runic rhyme, have floated down in
safety to us through the channels of the
years?

We must not, however, look to these
boreal regions chiefly for the highest lyric
developments, rather let us turn to the
proverbial land of love and song—the

balmy clime of the South. There amid
the purple ranges and under the genial
sky of Greece, the poetic principle was
nurtured with a watchful care. The ex-
quisite beauty of the country,—its rich
and picturesque variety of hill and dale,—
the spontaneous fertility of its soul,—the
sweetness of its temperature,—the almost
unbroken serenity of its skies, and the
smooth and glassy sea that bathed the
heated shore,—harmonized all the ruder
passions of the people and called forth the
noblest and finest feelings of the soul.
They soon became enamoured of the ele-
gant and the beautiful, and employed all
the melody and grace of their language
in ascriptions of praise to the recognized
divinities of flood and field.

The fullest notes of the matchless poetry
of Greece were struck in the morn of her
life by the Muse's most gifted son, whose
deep melodious strains rang out, not
alone for the few scattered isles of Ionian,
but for an enchanted world, as the tide
of his song sweeps down the stream of
time.

“In swelling and limitless billows.”

Yet long anterior to the production of
this unique Iliad, the choral song, after-
ward so elaborately and brilliantly devel-
oped, prevailed in that classic land. It
were as impossible to ascertain the exact
period of its origin, as to discover when
the idea of the Pan Hellenian Zeus arose—
both secrets are locked in the secure Treas-
ury of Time. It is however evident
that its rise was in connection with the
worship of the Greeks. As their altar fires
sprang heavenward consuming the propi-
tatory sacrifice offered by suppliant
votaries of Apollo the choric song of joy
arose, an ardent accompaniment to the
lightning play of flame. In the praise
accorded to Dionysus as controller of the
seasonal changes, this rudimentary dithy-
ramb was improved by its union with
measured movement as expressed in the
rhythmic dances. Subsequently the
inventive genius of Thespis, the renowned
father of Tragedy, introduced an actor who
should hold converse with the chorus
and thus relieve them from continuous
concerted actions. It was not, however,
until the golden age of Pericles arrived,
when all that was grand and imposing in