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# MARY:

## THE QUEEN OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

### CHAPTER I

#### THE QUEEN'S PORTRAIT.

' And breaking as from distant gloom,  
A face comes painted on the air ;  
A presence walks the haunted room,  
Or sits within the vacant chair.  
And every object that I feel  
Seems charged by some enchanter's wand  
And keen the dizzy senses thrill,  
As with the touch of spirit hand,  
A form beloved comes again,  
A voice beside me seems to start,  
While eager fancies fill the brain,  
And eager passions hold the heart."

"MASTER, *we would see a sign from Thee,*" was the cunning challenge of the Scribes and Pharisees. They were certain that, in this at least, the hearts of the people would be with them. A sign, a scene, a symbol, were the constant demand and quest of the olden times, as of all times. Even Jehovah led forth to victory and trust, as necessity was upon Him in leading human followers, "with an *outstretched arm*, and with *signs and with wonders.*" The Jews, seemingly so doubtful and so querulous, after all articulated the longings of the universal humanity. The longing stimulated the effort to gratify it, and forthwith the artist became the teacher of the people. Presentments of Mary, as she might have been, and as she was imagined to have been by those most devout, were multiplied. Piety sought to express its regard for her by making her more real to faith through the instrumentality of the speaking canvas, but beyond this there was the desire to embody certain charms and virtues of character dear to all pure and devout ones. These were expressed by pictured faces, ideally perfect.