

By unseen choristers was sung,
As like a bride in all her pride
That lady fair and rich and young
Moved stately to the altar's side.

The white-robed boys grouped round the priest,
The grey nuns clustered round the bride,
And when the bridal music ceased
And laud of the beatified
Was said and sung, and all the rite
Of marriage, but no marriage bed,
By sacrament and candle light
The lady to the church was wed.

The service o'er, the dying notes
Sank solemn in the cloisters' awe,
As when on summer night there floats
The far voice of Niagara,
Which she had heard as bride and spouse
And, mayhap, in her ear heard now
As refrain to the final vows
That bound the fillet on her brow.

Kind drops welled up in many eyes
When—doffed her raiment rich and rare,
She gave as a last sacrifice
The silken treasure of her hair,—
Deft severed by the cruel shears
The shining curls fell where she stood,
Thus gave she, without sigh or tears,
The glory of her womanhood.

With steady eye the lady scanned
The book and vows emblazoned there,—
The white pen matched her whiter hand,
The ink not darker than her hair
Nor paper fairer than her fame,—
And—(words she ne'er would write again,)
In small, sharp letters signed her name,
Hélène née Boulée, veuve Champlain.