



Our Lady of the Way.

Madonna della Strada.

I.



HE way is long—thro' weary wastes, it passes,
 Thro' deserts without water, without shade ;
 Across green marshes, treacherous morasses,
 It stretches, till the pilgrim grows afraid.
 For unknown peril, all the known, surpasses,
 And none can say where hangs the ambushade.

OUR LADY OF THE WAY, whate'er betide,
Madonna della Strada, be our guide !

II.

The way is steep—it reaches high and higher !
 The rough stones bruise the naked, wand'ring feet ;
 The sharp thorns pierce them, burn them, as with fire :
 There are no cooling springs to quench their heat.
 Now faints the heart with languor of desire,
 Longing for rest beside the waters sweet !

Madonna della Strada, gracious, be !
 OUR LADY OF THE WAY, we cry to thee !

III.

The way is dark—no moon or star is shining :
 The sun, long since, hath sunk behind the height.
 The cloud above us hath no silver lining,
 And all around is blackest, drearest night.
 And yet we know these shades may be enshrining
 The glory of a Morn, supremely bright !

Madonna della Strada ! lead us on,
 Until th' Eternal Day-Star on us dawn !

—ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.