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THE VIRGIN OF THE VALLEY.



IN the valley of Ambato, in the distant Argentine,
The Choya Indians labor 'neath the cinnamon and vine,
Or kneel with child-like fervor at la Vergen del Valle's
shrine.

A *Virgo purissima*, divinely innocent,
Yet majestic of aspect, in each chiselled lineament;
Child-grace and love maternal in exquisite beauty blent.

Long ago, so run their legends, dim centuries ago,
Ere foot of missionary had crossed the Andes' snow,
Angels brought the Lady's image to its rock shrine in the glow
Of the spirit-haunted moonbeams. There in the morning light
Smiled she on her savage children from her niche's gentle height,
And they gazed in breathless wonder on the vision strange and
bright.

Soon they learned to offer homage to the Daughter of the Air:
To lay their simple joys and sorrows in her presence bare,
And bow in adoration to the Greater Spirit there.

At length, far over oceans, came a priest, a holy one,
Who told the wondering Indians of the Virgin and her Son,
And they led him to the wild where Mary's gracious image shone.
Still in her rock-throned majesty Ambato's Virgin stands;
But has been crowned with gems and gold by consecrated hands,
And before her pious pilgrims kneel from many distant lands.

E. C. M. T.