

Bedivere to cast the brand Excalibur into the lake, but the jewels tempt him and he hides it. When asked what he saw, he says—

I heard the water lapping on the crag
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.

Not until the third time has he courage to shut his eyes and hurl it, when lo, an arm, "clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful," reaches up and takes it.

Then Arthur bids Sir Bedivere carry him to the margin, where the barge awaits him, with its funeral scarf, its decks "dense with stately forms," "black-stoled, black-hooded," and its three queens crowned with gold, ready to receive their king.

And from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars.

And the tallest and fairest—
Charity—lays his head upon her

lap. Sir Bedivere makes sad complaint, but Arthur reproves him, and begs him to pray for his soul.

For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain.
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of
prayer

Both for themselves and those who call
them friend?

For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

And thus he passes to the island-valley of Avilion,

Where falls not hail or rain or any snow
Nor ever wind blows loudly.

And Bedivere climbs higher and higher, "straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand," comforting himself with the thought that Arthur passes to be "king among the dead," but when his wound is healed he will return.

And the new sun rose, bringing the new
year.

AN EASTER HYMN.

I have no gift of fragrant spice,
No gems for thine adorning,
But empty, asking hands I bring
To greet thine Easter morning.

Here humbly to Thy feet, dear Lord,
I come with Mary kneeling.
O, speak the recognizing word,
Thine heart of love revealing!

Low in the sepulchre of doubt
My soul is prostrate sleeping,
And worldly pride and worldly care
Their sentinel watch are keeping.

Help, Lord! All human aid is vain!
My faith is fainting, dying!

Roll back the stone of unbelief
Before the portal lying!

He hears my prayer, He heeds my cry,
And answers to my pleading;
"Thrust forth thine hand into My side,
For thee 'tis pierced and bleeding.

"Touch thou the nail-prints in these hands
O, here is no deceiving!
Dear, timid soul, no longer doubt,
Not faithless, but believing."

Of peace and joy, of hope and heaven,
Thou art the bounteous Giver;
Take the poor heart Thy blood hath bought,
And seal it Thine for ever!

—Fanny M. McCauley.

AN EASTER FLOWER GIFT.

O dearest blooms the seasons know
Flowers of the Resurrection blow,
Our hope and faith restore;
And through the bitterness of death
And loss and sorrow, breathe a breath
Of life for evermore!

The thought of Love Immortal blends
With fond remembrances of friends;
In you, O sacred flowers,
By human love made doubly sweet,
The heavenly and the earthly meet,
The heart of Christ and ours!

—John Greenleaf Whittier.