

Ah! such a picture as she stood that morn,
 Fair as a goddess in her virgin charms
 Of rounded beauty and unconscious grace
 Were sigh to make the blood in these dried veins
 Run with the fiery warmth of youth or prime;
 For her's was beauty such as seldom crowns
 A maiden on the verge of womanhood,
 A type of beauty, where all beauty meets
 Of soul, clear, crystal as the limpid streams.
 And love, the loveliest of all love which dreams
 Unsullied, high above all storms, and strong
 As love which triumphs over victor Death.
 Ah! smiling down, that set in tragic eye,
 Like some false beacon set by wanton hand
 To lure the trusting pilot to his doom,
 How little thought the maiden on that morn
 That gilded serpent in the garb of man
 Would dim the glory of her virgin dream,
 Even as the reptile oft had robbed the flower
 Of virgin blush until it slowly died
 Within the garden of old Antoine's hut.
 To-day is ours, but what to-morrow brings
 Is all unknown, 'tis Now we live, and of
 The Past we know, yet seldom learn thereby,
 Nor dreamed the maid of ill, or storm, or cloud,
 So full of joy and hope in sixteen years.
 Rejoicing in the presents made by those
 To whom the slightest gift meant sacrifice,
 Glad with the gladness that a maiden knows
 Whose heart is free, yet feels some secret war
 To whom the future paints in dazzling hues
 That which, alas! the future seldom yields,
 Save to the poet, as a passing dream.
 And Bebeé plucked her choicest flowers that morn
 To offer at the garden-shrine; and then
 To Father Francis ran in childlike glee
 To tell him of her fortune and her gifts.
 With outstretched hands the old man blessed his charge
 And bade her sit beside him as her wont,
 Then in his stumbling way, he told her of
 A dream that he at night had dreamed
 Of Bebeé, and her flowers, and thus it ran:
 Last night as thinking of old Antoine, I
 Revolved the many scenes which since I came
 To tend my flock, had made the sum of life;
 And falling in a dream, I walked within
 A lovely garden, burdened with the breath
 Of roses, in the smiling month of June,
 That o'er my soul stole as in sensuous wave,
 And quickened every pulse with pure delight;
 And queenly maidens, clothed in gauze-like robes
 Of filmy-clouds, which stirred by murmuring breeze
 All playfully revealed, and then concealed
 The mystic glory of their flowing limbs,
 Moved softly to the music of the wind,
 And gazing on their perfect lineaments—
 The matchless beauty of those maidens fair,
 My soul was drawn towards them, and I longed
 To know more of that beauty which was theirs,
 Then round one flower more brilliant than the rest
 These living blossoms grouped in faultless pose—
 While overhead, as floating with the clouds,
 Was borne the echo of entrancing strains,
 Which sometimes rolling seem to issue from
 The organ ere its trembling breath ascends—
 And dies amid the gloom of noble arch.
 And lo! before my eyes the central flower
 Burst forth to buoyant life and fragrance rare,
 While louder in tumultuous billows rolled

The music, as its choral-passion swept
 In bursting fury o'er the vault of heaven.
 Then silence followed, and a holy calm,
 Like calm of eve, crept o'er my soul and the
 All softly as from distant age was borne
 A maiden's cry, so strangely sad and sweet,
 Yet sweeter to my ear than it was sad,
 And when I fain would ask the central flower
 Whence came the cry and of its meaning then
 Where all was bright and shadow found no
 Behold the flower was changed, and in its place
 A maiden stood all clad in simple white,
 With form of classic outline, but whose face,
 More faultless than the visions Raphael saw,
 Was marred with tears; with tumult heaved
 As in deep anguish. And I spoke with her—
 Till all my soul, drawn by those weeping eyes
 Went out to her, for on this earth I know
 Of naught that sooner will the heart undoose
 Or knit in stronger bond of sympathy
 Than what to man is as pure elegy,
 A lovely woman—lovelier in her tears,
 And when the maiden's upturned gaze met mine
 As though in low, sweet tones to make reply,
 Lo! face and form and voice became thine own
 And then I woke, but still kept thinking of
 The flower, and one who seemed a larger flower.
 Nor has the vision left me since I rose;
 It haunted me even when I sang the mass.

And Bebeé, answering with her pretty smile
 Said, "Oh! how sweet it were to be like one
 Who in that garden walked amid the flowers
 At will. But I myself dwell with the flowers
 And tend their wants, and know them all by name
 But weep not, for why should I weep, except
 I lose one, or when Antoine passed away?"
 So Father Francis bless of the child again,
 Tho' with a troubled heart, for still the dream
 Lay heavy on him, as he thought of her,
 Nor could the old man all shake off a dread
 Lest somehow evil might betail the maid.

Then Bebeé, smiling, tript along and took
 Her basket to the town, and as she went
 Sang in the simple way the peasants sing
 This song which she had heard the maidens sing
 As busily their fingers plied among
 The fragrant blossoms at the market stand:

The rose to the lily proudly said
 "You are pale, my dear," then lost her head,
 Now if you had more of crimson hue
 'Tis plain more lovers would come to sue,
 For lovers they always love to see
 A maiden blush, as you now see me,
 While you as a maiden all forlorn
 Stand icy and cold this sunny morn,
 And the Sun smiles fondly, for he knows
 He is sure of welcome from the Rose.

The lily so lowly bowed her head
 To the rose, and then all sweetly said:
 "One lover I have, who loves me well
 We meet alone when the vesper bell;
 With its silver tongue has lulled to sleep
 The birds and the flowers; and silence deep
 Steals over the earth as fragrance rare
 From the shudd'ring blossoms fills the air,
 'Tis then in the lovely moonlight pale
 I hear the notes of my nightingale,
 And we dream of love while all is still,

