

THE OWL.

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THE VALUE OF A CANDLE.



ALE pilgrims in a land unknown and drear,
They faltered on their way, for darkness fell
Around them, and dim sights and sounds of fear
Affrighted them; wild beasts were in the dell,
Serpents among the rocks, and phantom shapes
Glimmered above; in penitential garb,
One, stumbling, a black abyss scarce escapes,
And one is wounded by a hidden barb.
One wandered in a dreadful labyrinth
'Mid stifling vapors, one was in a grave
Close locked with gloom and worms, a marble plinth
Above, and flowers that could not cheer or save.

And all these pilgrims were with grief oppressed,
As for a loved one they no more might see,
And struggled in the darkness—nor could rest:
A voice cried, "Who will give them liberty
And light?" Then through the shadows and the mist
Beamed a soft golden light, and in its glow
The beasts shrank back, the wounds with balm were kissed,
The ways were smoothed, opened the grave gates low;
And to the longing eyes that burned to see
Appeared a radiant Lady and her Son;
Smiling, they passed; while in an ecstasy
Rejoiced the souls as if their goal were won.

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A simply sculptured image in a niche
Of Mary merciful, the Babe divine
In arms, and streaming o'er it soft and rich
A taper's light that burned before the shrine:
A suppliant kneeling low in fervent prayer:
"Give them eternal rest, O Lord, and Thou,
O Lady, to the souls departed bear
Love of thy Son, that they may solace know."

ETHAN HART MANNING.