

A porter's lodge, of ample size,  
Half hid by sheltering trees.

She clapped her hands with joy, and cried,  
"Oh! there's the Wicket Gate,  
And I must seek admittance there,  
Before it is too late."

Gently she knocks--'tis answered soon,  
And at the open door  
Stands a tall, stout man--poor Marian felt  
As she ne'er had felt before.

With tearful eyes, and trembling hand,  
Flushed cheek, and anxious brow,  
She said, "I hope you're Watchful, Sir,  
I want Discretion now."

"Oh yes, I'm watchful," said the man,  
"As a porter ought to be;  
I s'pose you've lost your way, young Miss,  
You've lost your shoe, I see."

"Missus," he cried to his wife within,  
"Here's a child here, at the door,  
You'll never see such a one again,  
If you live to be fourscore.  
She wants discretion, so she says,  
Indeed I think 'tis true;  
But I know some who want it more,  
Who will not own they do."

"Go to the Hall," his wife replies,"  
"And take the child with you,  
The ladies there are all so wise,  
They'll soon know what to do."

The man complied, and led the child  
Through many a flowery glade;  
"Is that the Palace Beautiful?"  
The little Pilgrim said,  
"There, to the left, among the trees?  
Why, Miss, 'tis mighty grand;  
Call it a palace, if you please,  
'Tis the finest in the land."

Now we be come to the fine old porch,  
And this is the Marble Hall;  
Here, little lady, you must stay,  
While I the servant call."

Tired and sad he left the child,  
But he quickly re-appeared,  
And with him the lady of the house--  
Poor Marian's heart was cheered,  
"Sweet little girl," the lady said,  
In accents soft and kind,  
"I'm sure you sadly want some rest,  
And rest you soon shall find."

To a room where three young ladies sat,  
The child was quickly led;  
"Piety, Prudence, and Charity,"  
To herself she softly said.  
"What is your name, my little dear?"  
Said the eldest of the three,  
Whom Marian, in her secret thought,  
Had christened Piety.

"We'll send a servant to your friends,  
How uneasy they must be!"  
Admiringly she watched the child,  
Who, indeed, was fair to see;  
Around her bright and lovely face  
Fell waves of auburn hair,  
As modestly she told her name,  
With whom she lived, and where.

"How did you lose your way my love?"  
She gently raised her head,  
"I do not think I've lost my way,"  
The little Pilgrim said,

"This is the Palace Beautiful,  
May I stay here to-night?"  
They smiled and said, "We're glad our house  
Finds favor in your sight:--"

"Yes, gladly will we keep you here,  
For many nights to come."  
"Thank you," said Marian, "but I soon  
Must seek my heavenly home.  
The valley of the Shadow of Death  
Is near this house, I know"--  
She stopped, for she saw, with great surprise,  
Their tears began to flow.

She little thought the mourning dress,  
Which all the ladies wore,  
Was for one whom they had dearly loved,  
And should see on earth no more.  
Their brother had been called away,  
Their brightest and their best;  
No wonder, then, that Marian's words  
Roused grief in every breast.

Sobs only for awhile were heard;  
At length the ladies said,  
"My love, you have reminded us  
Of our loved and early dead;  
But this you could not know, my dear,  
And it indeed is true;  
We are all near to Death's dark door,  
Even little girls like you."

"Yes," said the timid, trembling child,  
"I know it must be so;  
But, ma'am, I hope that Piety  
May be with me when I go.  
And will you show me your armoury,  
When you have time to spare?  
I hope you have some small enough  
For a little girl to wear."

No more she said, for Piety,  
As Marian called her, cast  
Her arms around the Pilgrim's neck,  
The secret's out at last.  
"You puzzled all," said Piety;  
"But now, I see, you've read  
A glorious book, which, unexplained,  
Has turned your little head."

"Oh, dearly, when I was a child,  
I loved that Pilgrim Tale;  
But then mamma explained it well--  
And if we can prevail  
On your kind aunts to let you stay  
Sometime with us, my dear,  
You shall read that book with my mamma,  
And she will make it clear."

Now we'll return to Marian's home,  
And see what's passing there.  
The servants all had company,  
And a merry group they were.  
They had not missed our Pilgrim long,  
For they knew she oft would play  
In that old garden, with a book,  
The whole of the livelong day.

"Betty," at last, said the housekeeper,  
"Where can Miss Marian be?  
Her dinner was in the basket packed,  
But, sure, she'll come in to tea!"  
They sought her here, they sought her there,  
But they could not find the child;  
And her poor old aunts, when they came home,  
With grief were almost wild.

The coachman and the footman too,  
In different ways were sent;  
But none thought of the narrow way  
In which the Pilgrim went.